



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 21, 2024

Day 71

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

First Session

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Party standings:

United Conservative: 49

New Democrat: 37

Vacant: 1

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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 21, 2024

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Hon. members, it being the last sitting day of the week, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by the hon. Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

Hon. Members:

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

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, you'll be surprised to know I have no introductions today. [interjections] Whoa, whoa, whoa. I'm right here.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park has a school group to introduce.

Mr. Kasawski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly students, chaperones, and staff of Lakeland school in Sherwood Park. Would you please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore has a school group.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm excited to introduce an extraordinary group of parents and students from the Strathmore Homeschool Explorers ranging kindergarten to grade 12. It's my pleasure to welcome you to the Alberta Legislature. I hope you have an unforgettable experience and an incredible day ahead. Please all rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today and introduce to you and through you a group of grade 5 and 6 students from the Wildwood school in my constituency. I actually share this region with the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland. He grew up there. I think his aunt actually works at the school. He joined me for the photo today. I'd like to ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly our friends, our partners, members of the Alberta Real Estate Association. I'd

ask that you all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce to you today Morten Paulsen, senior adviser at Osborne Interim Management, and Terri Duncan, the executive director of Children's Autism Services, two critical partners to the province when it comes to standing up for children with autism and their families. I'd ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today and introduce to you and through you an incredible teacher from Grande Yellowhead public school division – and I appreciate the Member for West Yellowhead sharing this cherished group – Ms Lisl Gunderman. She's going to be retiring. This is probably one of her last trips to the Leg., but she's done so many great things for that community. Please rise and receive the warm applause of the Assembly.

Mr. Haji: It's an honour, Mr. Speaker, to rise and introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly Alyssa Ozdemir. She works at Fort Edmonton Park and guides visitors and educates about Canada's first Muslim mosque in the country, the Al Rashid mosque. It's fascinating to talk about the stories that she introduces to the visitors about the community spirit and how the mosque was built. I ask her to rise and receive . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Mrs. Petrovic: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I want to introduce a school group. They'll be joining us at 2 p.m. Right now they're just finishing up their behind-the-scenes tour of the Legislative Assembly. They are a grade 11 and 12 class from Livingstone-Macleod who drove six hours to be here. So although they're not in here, I'm hoping that we may cheer loud enough that they can hear us out in the rotunda as they finish up their tour.

Thank you. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce or reintroduce to you and through you a constituent of mine, Margaret Carroll, who's a board director with the Alberta Real Estate Association, a terrific community member, and someone that I care about deeply as a friend. Margaret, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly again.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce a constituent, Michael O'Neill, a teacher of 46 years. Ironically, it was just five years ago today that he was here to protest the movement of the teacher's pension into AIMCo. Turns out his fears were well placed. I'd like him to rise, and I ask for the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise today and introduce to you and through you two dedicated community

ambassadors from the Latino diaspora. Estephanía Peña and Erick are the leaders from the Mexican society who support and empower the Hispanic community in Alberta. I would like to request them to rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly my guests from the Hindu temple here in Edmonton: Taral, Nixan, and Rahul Patel as well as Sean Gillis from Grande Prairie real estate association, who is the chair. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week the Premier had a town hall with Alberta's great Latino community, and Mr. Francisco Escobar, a psychologist from Colombia who now calls Edmonton home, was there. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Member Irwin: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the esteemed Calgary-Buffalo MLA I'd like to introduce four realtors who are here for the area conference and who I also got to meet today. They are Christine Richards, Michelle Eldjarnson, Julie Bowser, and Rob Vanovermeire. Please rise and receive the traditional welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Johnson: Yes. It's a pleasure to rise and present to you and through you my dear friends Angela and Peighton Melton, who are here today to show their support for Bill 29, Fairness and Safety in Sport Act. Please rise and receive the warm and traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise today and introduce to you and through you two inspirational women from the Latino community. Deborah Fonseca and Katherine Caballero are the co-presidents of the University of Alberta Latin American Students' Association, currently pursuing their undergraduate degrees in media studies and animal health respectively. I ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Chamber.

Members' Statements

Holodomor Remembrance

Member Eremenko: Today we remember Holodomor, a tragedy of unimaginable scale. From 1932 to 1933 10 million Ukrainians perished in a famine not caused by nature but by deliberate human actions. The systemic genocide of death by hunger, the English translation of Holodomor, was the result of brutal policies that stripped families of their grain, their livelihoods, and ultimately their lives. Entire villages were left to wither, their voices silenced, their stories nearly erased. The Holodomor was not just a famine; it was an attack on Ukrainian people and their culture. It was an attempt to break the resilience of a nation that refused to submit, yet even in the face of such suffering, Ukraine endured. The strength and determination of its people carried the memory of those lost through generations.

As we stand here today, we honour the victims – the mothers, fathers, children, and elders – whose lives were cruelly taken. We also pay tribute to the survivors who bore witness to this atrocity and carried their truth forward, often at great personal risk. Many fled to Alberta, settled in rural communities, and were crucial in shaping our agriculture, economy, and culture across this province. Today as Ukraine once again fights for its sovereignty amidst brutal aggression, let their sacrifice remind us of the importance of vigilance against tyranny and oppression. Let it inspire us to defend freedom, human rights, and the dignity of all people. May we never forget Holodomor, and may we commit ourselves to a world where such suffering is never repeated.

Thank you.

1:40

Holodomor Remembrance

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Mr. Speaker, it is with deep reverence that I rise today to acknowledge Holodomor memorial day, a solemn occasion that takes place on the fourth Saturday of November across Canada and much of the world. The word Holodomor comes from two Ukrainian words: "holod" for hunger, "moryty" for a slow, painful death, which are two cruelties that millions of Ukrainians had forced upon them by the Soviet government in the 1930s.

In his push to quell Ukrainian identity and force industrialization on the Soviet Union, the dictator Joseph Stalin carried out a campaign of deliberate mass starvation unlike any other in history. By sealing the borders and sending Soviet troops to confiscate food, millions of people living in the breadbasket of Europe were left unable to feed themselves. We may never know the true death toll that was accumulated during those dark months between 1932 and '33. The sheer scale of genocide and the Soviet regime's repression of information surrounding the famine have made it impossible to do anything but estimate the number in millions.

As a relative of Ivan Pylypow, one of the first Ukrainian settlers to Canada, the parliamentary secretary for settlement services and Ukrainian evacuees, also the MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, the constituency with the highest Ukrainian population in Alberta, I consider it a personal duty of mine to keep the memory of this unthinkable tragedy alive. Today we know that, despite this act of monumental evil, Stalin failed and the Ukrainians' identity was not extinguished. The Ukrainian people have persisted longer than the regime that sought to repress them.

Today Ukraine again faces a threat to its existence from a larger neighbour. Vladimir Putin, hoping to revive the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire, has violated Ukrainian sovereign borders and caused the death of millions of people. On this Holodomor memorial day my thoughts aren't only with those who lost their lives in the famine decades ago but with the brave men and women fighting for freedom, democracy, and their existence today.

Slava Ukraini.

Provincial Pension Plan Proposal

Member Hoyle: Mr. Speaker, Albertans rely on the CPP to make up their income in their retirement years so they can retire comfortably and with dignity. Albertans trust their CPP. It's been around since the 1960s and praised globally for stability, portability, security, and investment strategies. Albertans are telling us loud and clear that they do not want their CPP touched. They are scared that the Premier will gamble away their retirement savings by playing political games, toying with an Alberta pension plan.

This fear is becoming a reality by the politicization of AIMCo by the UCP this week. AIMCo is the pension fund manager that manages \$170 billion of Albertan assets and likely manager of the proposed

APP. Under the UCP AIMCo underperformed, with losses up to \$2.1 billion in 2020 alone. A political appointment will not solve this. The new chair of AIMCo, Stephen Harper, was a cosigner of the firewall letter, which called on the Alberta government to set up its own pension program. Now he'll have the opportunity to decide who, what, where, and how the retirement funds of hundreds of thousands of Albertans will be invested.

This Premier is building on the disastrous idea to create an APP. This sends a horrific message to Albertans who are fearful of no longer having a pension if the UCP government gambles their pensions in their pet project. On this side of the House we'll always stand up to protect the pensions of Albertans from the games and schemes of this UCP government.

Hands off our CPP. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Nurse Practitioner Program

Mrs. Petrovic: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government is committed to strengthening Alberta's primary health care system and delivering innovative solutions to ensure that Albertans can access the health care they need when and where they need it most.

As parliamentary secretary for health workforce engagement I've had the chance to meet with nurse practitioners across the province, and today I'm happy to share some of the updates on the success of Alberta's nurse practitioner primary care program. Through this program, which was launched by our government in April, nurse practitioners are now practising independently in communities across the province.

This program is a game changer for our health care system, with 33 nurse practitioners already practising in rural and remote areas like Coaldale, Consort, and Two Hills. This means that now more than 30,000 Albertans have access to vital primary care. Mr. Speaker, since the program was announced, we have had a promising response with a total of 67 applications submitted, with 56 being approved already, and as more practitioners receive their approval, an additional 21,000 Albertans will benefit through this program.

The program allows nurse practitioners to operate autonomously, offering comprehensive care, accepting walk-in appointments, and ensuring after-hours availability. These highly skilled professionals are providing a fundamental service to address gaps in care, particularly in rural and remote areas. This initiative highlights our government's commitment to modernizing primary care, ensuring it remains patient focused and accessible to all Albertans. By fully utilizing the expertise of nurse practitioners, we're not only easing the burden on our health care system but also delivering on our promise to improve access to timely and high-quality care.

Mr. Speaker, this government is grateful for the dedication of our nurse practitioners, who are playing a critical role in strengthening health care for Albertans. I am proud to say the nurse practitioner primary care program is the right step to ensuring all Albertans can receive the care when and where they need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Organ and Tissue Donation

Dr. Metz: Imagine what it feels like to know that your kidneys are failing and that your future is severe fatigue and spending three days a week tied to a dialysis machine. You won't be able to travel, and you'll miss many family events. Dialysis keeps you alive, but it does not give you a life. Severe disability faces those with other organ failure.

Now imagine there's a solution, organ transplant, but transplant may never be available to you. It takes an average of seven to 10 years to receive a kidney from a deceased donor. Besides a limited number of donors, there is limited government support for the actions needed to improve your chances of getting a transplant even though early treatment saves lives, keeps people productive, and costs much, much less to the health care system.

In Alberta 483 organ transplants were performed in 2023; 84 per cent were from deceased donors, and 59 per cent were kidneys. But by year-end there were still 455 people on the wait-list, 81 more had been withdrawn from the list, usually because they were no longer medically appropriate, and 38 died waiting.

We need to improve access to organ donation. This is a nonpartisan issue. For the well-being of those with failing organs and to reduce the future health care costs, we need to invest in organ donation programs, assure donor assessments are rapid and that more potential donors are assessed, and we need to increase public awareness, including the option of living kidney donation. One small step this government can take is to give Albertans the choice of opting on their tax form to receive information about organ donation.

Alberta Olympians and Paralympians

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, as the shadow minister for Tourism and Sport I have the luxury of witnessing amazing athletes from across our province compete. The Albertans here today who competed for Team Canada are among the best athletes in the world. Thirty-four Albertans represented Canada at the 2024 Paris Olympics, the highest number of athletes from Alberta on Team Canada since the 1988 Winter Olympics were held here in Calgary. Olympians and Paralympians demonstrate to the entire province the value of hard work, discipline, and teamwork. Their stories serve as an inspiration for young athletes across our province. Watching these talented athletes represent their communities inspires more young people to play and stay in sport.

From small-town volunteer hockey coaches to sports medicine students, it takes a village to support athletes through each stage of their career. So many coaches, parents, and organizations across Alberta play a vital role at every stage of an athlete's journey, from development and education to competition to training, counselling, and mental health support. High-performance success in Alberta, like that of our Olympians, depends on broad access and positive experiences in all phases of an athlete's journey in sport. The successes of these athletes are a reminder to remain committed to the relentless pursuit of a safe, inclusive, and barrier-free sports system.

The Alberta NDP are deeply committed to growing opportunities for all Albertans to play in sport in our province. As a shadow minister and a proud sports mom I will work every day to help eliminate barriers and grow Albertans' access to sport.

Thank you for making Alberta proud.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition has question 1.

Provincial Second-quarter Fiscal Update

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, the fiscal update says that while the government is doing well with a big surplus, average Albertans are not. The update today says that unemployment will rise to 7.4 per cent. It says Albertans won't see more doctors or nurses hired to fix the health care crisis, and it has nothing to make life more affordable.

The government today announced not a single new measure to make the average Albertan's cost of living better. When the government is saying the bottom line is fine, why is the Premier doing nothing to make life more affordable for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to rise and commend the Finance minister for the prudent work that he's done in managing the budget. We knew at the beginning of the year that there was volatility in oil and gas prices, and we also know that in order to balance the budget, it has to average \$74 on the year. I'd ask the Official Opposition Leader to consult what WTI is right now to know why it is we've built in that measure of prudence. We want to make sure that we run surpluses, which allow us to pay down debt, put money into savings, and then be able to deliver on one-time support for Albertans, which we've done in the past. We want to make sure that we run a balanced budget this year.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, we know WTI is \$69 today, and Finance admitted that it will be tough to balance the books next year if oil drops below \$70 a barrel, which it has and it does, so the resource roller coaster continues. But Albertans want stability from their government. They want a budget not built on oil price fluctuations but on reliable, stable, prudent planning. The fiscal update also shows natural gas production down along with weakness in agriculture, manufacturing, other sectors. Why is the Premier having such a hard time diversifying the economy?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I mean, the wealth creators are diversifying our economy in an amazing way. We've managed over the last three years to see over \$700 million of venture capital come into our market. We have also seen nearly \$3 billion announced in agri-food processing investment. We have the single largest investment with Dow Chemical's net-zero petrochemical project; Air Products, which is a net-zero hydrogen product. We've developed out our aerospace industry. We've had some of the largest film and television productions in the entire country take place in our province. We're doing an amazing job of diversifying the economy.

Ms Gray: What the government hasn't done and hasn't put in their fiscal update is exactly what could happen to Alberta's export markets if the new U.S. administration brings in big tariffs on our agricultural products. Today's update also shows employment growth is now the slowest that it's been since COVID, and unemployment will still stay high. Albertans are tired of the high unemployment, highest inflation in the country, lowest minimum wage agenda that this Premier has apparently laid as her economic foundation. Why can't the Premier deliver a fiscal plan that assures Albertans of good-paying jobs, high-quality public services, and an affordable life for all?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, no one wanted to live here when they were running things for four years. People kept leaving. Their energy minister at the time said: go get a job in British Columbia if you can't find one here. That was their job-creation plan. In the last three years we have had 450,000 people move to Alberta. We have been the leader in private-sector job creation and growth; 100,000 new jobs created year over year. Our industry in the construction field is responding. We've seen year-over-year increases in home builds. We're heading in the right direction.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition for her second set of questions.

Alberta Energy Regulator Salaries

Ms Gray: Albertans don't agree with the direction, Mr. Speaker, because with their \$4 billion surplus the Premier has decided to hand out to their insider friends at Alberta Energy Regulator large bonuses and pay increases. Yesterday they very quietly boosted the pay of directors and the chair. Albertans do not want AER brass to get rich. They want them to do their jobs and to ensure Alberta is developed responsibly. After her buddy David Yager's \$70,000 report that recommended giving more cash, she appointed him to the board. Why is she giving a Christmas bonus?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite consult the record, you'll see that this is actually an adjustment back to the levels that they were paying when they were in government, and they also should know that 100 per cent of the cost of the Alberta Energy Regulator is paid for by the industry that is being regulated. There are no taxpayer dollars going in to support the AER. In fact, what we're doing is making sure that we're attracting the very best people to return the AER to, I think, its former glory of being the very best regulator of oil and gas. I think we're going to have some good people as a result.

Ms Gray: Better pay should equal better performance, and that's not what Albertans are getting. What they get is an AER board chair filing an expense on July 30 that is mind-blowing, a \$1,637 dinner – \$1,637 dinner – 109 hours if that was minimum wage, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier tell Albertans who attended this \$1,600 dinner? Why is she giving AER board members double their pay at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars more a year? And why does she think that the board chair deserves a Christmas bonus raise to \$174,000 a year?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, let's remember the AER is a quasi-judicial board that has independence. It has an independent board with an independent director, and they make independent decisions funded independently by industry. If there are issues, they will be dealt with on an internal basis. I don't want the members opposite to give taxpayers the impression that these costs are being funded out of taxpayer dollars. They are not. These are 100 per cent industry levies, and they are going to operate in a way that makes sure that they can do the work that they do of delivering the best oversight of our oil and gas industry.

Ms Gray: News flash: there are issues. The AER board chair also expensed a \$1,000 dinner on March 20 at none other than the Calgary Petroleum Club. The AER picked up grilled squid, 10-ounce rib-eye and sirloin, filet mignon, caper butter salmon, roast duck, wild boar bolognese, lots of chocolate cake, and apple arugula salads on the side. Does the Premier agree with the expense policies of the AER and these kinds of incredibly fancy and expensive dinners? If not, why is she giving the AER chair and board a big Christmas bonus? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, no doubt the members opposite could go and discuss with the industry, that is paying the levies, to see if they have issues with the head of the AER going to meet them at the Petroleum Club. That seems like the kind of thing that you would expect that a member of the Alberta Energy Regulator would do. As I said, once again, you cannot have the same policies for an independent organization that is industry funded versus the very strict rules that we have for public agencies, that are government funded and taxpayer funded.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has a question today.

Automobile Insurance

Ms Pancholi: Mr. Speaker, Albertans pay more for car insurance than anywhere else in Canada by a lot. The Premier promised to fix Alberta's auto insurance system, but in a stunningly tone-deaf move her fix is that Albertans will actually pay more for car insurance, a lot more, 7.5 per cent more next year and 7.5 per cent more the year after. Adding insult to literal injury, the Premier has removed the ability for Albertans to access full compensation for their injuries. How can the Premier think Albertans should actually pay more for car insurance than they already are? How can she be so out of touch with everyday Albertans?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I don't think everyday Albertans or the opposition, anybody that's thinking about this can believe that we can change the system without actually changing the system. The system is broken. That is very clear. The rates that are being charged do not cover the actual costs of the system. We have things like profit provisions at the rate board. We're able to watch the profit of insurance companies. Currently there's one profitable insurance company left in Alberta. Two have already left. Likely, more will. We're going to have short-term reform, moving towards longer term reform. I'll tell you more today.

Ms Pancholi: What Albertans can't believe is that this government is making them pay more when they're already struggling through an affordability crisis. Raising the highest insurance rates in the country by 15 per cent over two years to maybe reduce them a little bit in the third year means that at the end of all this, Albertans will still be paying the highest car insurance in the country. That's the math. The UCP scrapped the NDP's insurance caps, forcing Albertans to endure massive premium hikes year after year on top of soaring costs for groceries, housing, and utilities. Bringing in the only private, no-fault industry in the country? Well, that's a recipe for a UCP disaster. Whose interest is the government serving this time? It's not Albertans'.

2:00

Mr. Horner: It is absolutely Albertans and only Albertans. They have been entirely front of mind for us as we've gone through this endeavour. Nobody is going to be untouched through this process. That's what large change involves. We've done consultation with the medical community, the brokerages, the insurance companies, the legal community, and Albertans at large through a large survey. That's front of mind for us. I can't wait to do the announcement this afternoon, where people will see the changes that are going to come, short term and long. I can assure you that insurance companies will not be made whole through this process.

Ms Pancholi: It's hard to believe that the Minister of Finance can't wait to tell Albertans that they're going to be paying more for car insurance. A woman on AISH shared with me that she's living on \$1,800 a month, spends \$1,200 on rent, leaving just \$600 for groceries, utilities, and everything else. Now the UCP is telling her that she will have to pay another \$450 for the next two years for car insurance with more increases to come, not to mention, of course, that the UCP is quietly giving themselves permission to deindex her AISH. It feels like the cost-of-living crisis is a joke to the UCP. Decreasing benefits and increasing costs are the actions of a government that is not listening to Albertans. Will the minister just admit that they are not even pretending to try anymore?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, we could have kept plodding along, attempting to tweak at the edges a system that was broken. That's not what we're going to do. We can't do that for Albertans. We have the second-highest auto insurance rates in the country, behind only Ontario, and that's artificial because of the caps that are in place. We have to make a choice right now to find a way to take material costs out of the system so that we can get to savings in 2027. If we don't do that, we will either have to raise the caps completely, build a public insurer, and then fill it full of money, like B.C. had to.

Deaths of Children in Care

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Mr. Speaker, as a newborn I was apprehended from my 17-year-old mother, who fought to get me back out of the system. I adopted my oldest daughter when she aged out of care at 18; she's now 33 years old. We are both thriving because we have family who love us. The child advocate told us that 47 children will never have a chance to have a loved family because they have died. These are not numbers or a trend; they are our loved ones, who we mourn. Will the minister acknowledge that the government has systemically and is systemically failing our children and our families?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of children and social services.

Mr. Turton: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Again, just to the member's question, my heart goes out to any of the families that are affected by the loss of one of their children. As the Minister of Children and Family Services over the last 14 months we've been working very hard with First Nations leaders and communities to look for ways to increase those cultural connections and those family connections because we realize that those one-on-one relationships that can come about from a loving kinship care provider or from a parent are important. They lead to the lifelong ambitions of children. We're doing our best to help support these children in care.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Mr. Speaker, Katie loved visiting with her family. She was learning the alphabet when she died at 23 months old from fentanyl and methamphetamine toxicity poisoning. Her mother has been charged with her passing. Gage was a sweet, smart, gentle, curious toddler who loved to laugh and play but at 18 months died from blunt force trauma. These parents have been criminally charged in their deaths. We will all mourn the loss of these beautiful children, and now their parents are gone. Will the minister tell us how he will invest in supporting parents with at-risk families to prevent these kinds of tragedies from ever happening again?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of child and family services.

Mr. Turton: Well, thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. We're working very hard with First Nations communities throughout the entire province to ensure that Indigenous children receive the benefits from cultural and family connections, providing those culturally appropriate prevention and early intervention services through our family resource networks. They help families stay together. We know that these are having a positive impact on children throughout the province. We are recruiting and training kinship care providers and staff and ensuring that contracted child intervention services are culturally responsive to support our Indigenous youth.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Mr. Speaker, anyone who reads the advocate's heartbreaking report will see that the system needs to change. The government reduced the eligibility of financial supports from children aged 24 to 26, removing two years of support. We support the advocate. The minister, instead, accused us of wanting to keep these children in bondage. On this side of the House we are trying

to keep these children alive. Will the minister commit to accepting the advocate's recommendations?

Mr. Turton: Mr. Speaker, we work with the OCYA and are looking forward to implementing the recommendations. Since 2013 CFS has implemented 105 of the 111 recommendations that have come before our ministry. We know that these are making a positive difference for the lives of so many children.

I just want to correct the record as well. There are soft supports that remain in place for children aging out of care after the age of 22. We have some supports that actually go to the age of 31. We're going to continue to have those conversations, look at investing into children at an earlier age to ensure that they're more resilient and able to help cope as they progress into adulthood.

AIMCo Governance

Mr. Kasawski: AIMCo's staff gathered for a meeting two weeks back. Things turned joyless quickly, not because of AIMCo's financial returns but because the Minister of Finance showed up, fired the CEO and other executives. Then the minister joined the other 170 remaining AIMCo staff and told them he had taken over the Crown corporation and put himself in charge of it all. To the minister: what message did he intend to share with the staff of AIMCo with his radical new type of governance?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the member was watching the news, but I'm no longer on the board of AIMCo. That came out yesterday. I'm proud to welcome our 22nd Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, as the new board chair. I would just say this. I take no comfort ever in dismissing people, but you should do it face to face if you can. I felt it warranted to notify the staff that were there that they were appreciated, it was going to be a reset of a mandate, and that, you know, we need to continue being professional and working in the best interests of all Albertans.

Mr. Kasawski: Given that pension plans are set up to deliver on a promise of a reliable income for workers when they retire and given that workers fund their own pensions along with their employers, so these are their assets and not the government's, and given that taxpayers are not on the hook to fund workers' pensions and the government does not backstop pension plans, does the minister know that funds managed by AIMCo are not government money to be controlled?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do know that, and I can assure you that the incoming board chair does as well. AIMCo is there to invest on their behalf after they heed their guidance about the type of risk rating they want to take, what they think they need to invest in to keep their pension funds fully funded. They're there to invest on their behalf and offer the products they need to meet the goals that they have. That's the relationship, and that's what will continue.

Mr. Kasawski: Given that Stephen Harper has been advocating since he signed the firewall letter in 2001 to have Alberta withdraw from the Canada pension plan and given that Harper approached this government months ago about taking over as chair of AIMCo and given that you are messing around with people's retirement savings plans and ultimately their opportunity to retire, will the minister explain to Albertans why he put a politician in charge of their retirement savings? Albertans have told you before, and we'll tell you again.

Some Hon. Members: Hands off our CPP.

Mr. Horner: They're so choreographed today, Mr. Speaker. It's cute. But, no, I would say that it's well known that Prime Minister Harper was one of the authors of the firewall letter. I'd let everyone in the House know that he did a couple things after 2004, too, like lead a G7 country through the great recession in better shape than anywhere else. I certainly wouldn't want to besmirch anyone's reputation in this House and certainly not his. I think he's a great Albertan and a proud Canadian. I think we're lucky to have him. He has a stellar international reputation, and people want to work with him.

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie has the call.

Provincial Second-quarter Fiscal Update (continued)

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Finance for providing the second-quarter update today, that prioritizes fiscal responsibility while caring for the needs of our province. Over the past three years we have welcomed more than 450,000 people who have embraced the hard-working, can-do attitude, the entrepreneurial spirit, and community-minded values that define Alberta. Could the Minister of Finance explain to the House how we are using our budget to address the growing needs of Alberta's families and our surging population?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance, the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. What we did announce this morning was our Q2 update, where we sit in the first half of the year. I'm happy to report that our fiscal position has improved to show a \$4.6 billion surplus because of a strong economy, improved sensitivities around natural resources. As far as what we spent it on so far this year: largely health, social services, and education to deal with the population surge and also a large chunk of the contingency on dealing with disasters and wildfire, including Jasper.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the very positive revenue growth reflected in today's Q2 update and the expected surplus and further given that our United Conservative government is carefully managing Alberta's finances to ensure supports for Albertans are available now and in the future, can the Minister of Finance outline how the government plans to prioritize these funds, pay down Alberta's debt, and also strengthen the heritage fund for future generations?

Mr. Horner: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Well, the fiscal rules that we've implemented are so important for Alberta. I know the members opposite mentioned the roller coaster ride of oil. The fiscal framework is our best tool to manage volatile revenues, so it's so important, when you are in a good year and you are in a surplus position, that you use it wisely, pay down debt, invest in the heritage fund or one-time expenses that won't drive the operating line. Happy to say the book value of the heritage fund is now at \$24.3 billion, up from \$23.4 billion in the first quarter.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the reply. Now, given that it's clear that Alberta's strong fiscal position is the result of our United Conservative government's planning and fiscal framework and further given that he mentioned the government is facing immense pressure on our programs

because of population growth, can the same minister tell the House what this means for Budget 2025 and what the government is doing to prepare for the extra costs and burden that this will place on our revenue?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member. We've allocated more than a billion dollars currently to address Health, Education, and Seniors, Community and Social Services. We are monitoring the forecasts of oil closely. I know there's a lot of geopolitical uncertainty right now, so we're monitoring those things but also monitoring our spending pressures. Four point four per cent population growth: you know, it's something that's hard to get in front of. You're always going to be chasing it somewhat, but we'll continue to do that and meet the needs of Albertans.

School Construction in Calgary-Foothills

Mr. Ellingson: This government continues to ignore the need for schools in Calgary-Foothills. The government did announce the school accelerator program to build 90 schools in the next three years. While the minister stated that school announcements were no longer tied to the budget, no schools were named in the announcement. Minister, there are four schools in the Simons Valley in the CBE capital plan. Why haven't we heard one of those schools being built for the families in Calgary-Foothills?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. Very proud of the fact that our government has implemented an aggressive new school building program that will see almost 100 new schools built in our communities of greatest need. At the same time we'll also be modernizing over 20 schools in other communities to make sure that Albertans have the schools that they need. As it relates to specific projects and specific priorities, we will be announcing the first tranche of 30 new schools in the coming months, and we will have more details to share with Albertans about which schools will be built and exactly where.

Mr. Ellingson: Given that the minister has stated that rapidly growing communities will be prioritized for the school accelerator program and given that the suburban neighbourhoods of Calgary and Edmonton are the fastest growing communities in Alberta and given that these public school boards have detailed capital plans for schools to be built on designated serviced lands, will the minister today announce the public schools that they will build in Calgary-Foothills?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, no. We take a diligent approach to evaluating all of the school projects. Maybe the opposition would just stand up in the Assembly and announce projects without due consideration and evaluation, but that's not how we do things. We take the requests from all of our school divisions across the province. We evaluate them. We look at considerations such as safety. We look at considerations such as utilization and need. We score, we evaluate all of those, and then we make a final decision. When we're there and when we've made that decision, I'll be happy to let the member know.

Mr. Ellingson: Yeah. We will build public schools for all the children in Alberta.

Given that this summer while the Alberta NDP was engaging with families in Calgary-Foothills, we collected over 1,300

signatures of people demanding a local school, and, Minister, you'll see me table the petition today, given that every day parents are expressing their frustration with the government ignoring their needs and the needs of their children, given that Calgary-Foothills continues to grow by adding hundreds of residents every month, will the minister announce his intention to build the Sage Hill-Kincora middle school in Calgary-Foothills?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me update the member. I think I've done it before, but happy to do it again. You know, the way it works is that our school divisions evaluate the priorities and needs that they know that their community and their division needs. They submit those needs to us. We evaluate and score them and then determine which projects are able to proceed. The project that the member is referring to is quite far down the way on the priority list for the Calgary board of education. They have other projects that are of higher priority. I know the member is talking to his constituents and collecting signatures, but we will take the guidance and advice from the Calgary board of education as to which schools are the highest priority.

Homeless Supports and Affordable Housing

Member Irwin: Four people have been found dead in Edmonton bus shelters over the past two weeks. These are people. They loved and were loved. They mattered. Unhoused Albertans are dying at unprecedented rates, frostbite amputations have spiked, and it's winter out there. Shelters in Edmonton last night were at 98 per cent capacity; 94 per cent for the rest of Alberta. The UCP's approach isn't working, yet the minister keeps doubling down, saying that he's confident. Well, I'm confident that we'll have more preventable deaths on our streets unless the UCP acts. How is any of this acceptable? What is your plan?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of community and social services.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any death is unfortunate. We actually don't know the circumstances of those individuals' deaths. We'll let the Chief Medical Examiner do their job, and once we know the results of those deaths, we will take action if they have some sort of issue associated with the government.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident in our plan. We are confident in our partners. This government has invested more money than any government in history, including the NDP, to be able to keep care of the homeless in our largest cities across this province. We continue to exercise our plan, which is to get people to both housing and emergency shelter to keep them safe. Yet again I will stress that the NDP's plan is to keep them outside. That's not going to happen.

Member Irwin: Minister, these are real people, people like my constituent Robert, who's been staying at a shelter for five months. Like so many living in the shelter system, he suffers physical and mental health issues due to childhood trauma. While in a shelter Robert has been assaulted many times. He's had everything stolen, including his medication, CPAP machine, and specialized size 15 shoes. He dreams of having a place of his own, one where he doesn't need to worry about being robbed or hurt, and he's been told that there's just no housing available. To the minister: what do I tell Robert? Where can he go for permanent housing, not a shelter?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the very first thing we need to have stop is the NDP misleading Albertans. The reality is that our shelter system has secure places for people's property, that our shelter systems have security, that the hard-working men and women who work each and every day in those shelter systems to keep care of the poor deserve better than that member and the Official

Opposition continuing to stand in this Chamber and cast doubt on the hard work that they do. The reality is this. Our shelter system is safe, it is available for people, and it will be there to care for people, and we will continue to invest in housing at the same time.

Member Irwin: Given that I'll support shelter staff every single day and I'm so grateful for the work they do, but you need to be listening to the real-life experiences of people like my constituents, like Margaret and Conrad, who are on fixed incomes – they experienced an unmanageable 20 per cent increase in their rent. They lost their housing. Conrad uses a wheelchair due to suffering a stroke six years ago, Margaret is his caregiver, and after many months of searching for accessible housing, they haven't found a single thing that they can afford. So to the minister supposedly responsible for housing: when will he take action on astronomical rent increases and expand safe, affordable, and accessible housing options for Margaret, Conrad ... [interjections]

2:20

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

While the Speaker is very sympathetic to the constituents which you represent, I do think that it's important that the question is phrased in such a manner that it confines within the rules of the Assembly.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government, under the leadership of this Premier, has taken action on affordable housing from day one of her leadership. That is why we see record-breaking construction levels when it comes to housing. That is why we see purpose-built rentals increasing. That's why we see an unprecedented investment of \$9 billion to create 82,000 more affordable houses and households across this province. That's real action. When the NDP was in power, they saw affordability wait-lists go up by 74 per cent, and they built under 1,000 affordable houses. We built that many this month.

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

Home Construction and Red Tape Reduction

Mr. Lundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A top priority for our UCP government is ensuring all Albertans have access to housing that meets their needs. Last week our government announced a new online portal called Stop Housing Delays that will allow developers, municipalities, and other housing partners to report red tape and unnecessary home building delays. Can the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services please tell the House how the portal will help remove barriers so Alberta can continue building homes at a record pace?

Mr. Nixon: We heard loud and clear from industry that builds homes that the red tape that was put in place under the NDP government and created a situation where we were short 120,000 market houses under their leadership, Mr. Speaker, created an untenable situation. So this government focused on reducing that red tape, working side by side with industry, and it increased residential construction rates in our province by 34 per cent. The new portal will create another avenue into government to communicate where more of those red tape blocks are happening, either from our government or from municipal governments or other organizations, so we can continue to take action and create more homes in this great province.

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

Mr. Lundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given the importance of eliminating housing delays and the large number of factors that cause them and further given that these factors may be the responsibility of different ministries, can the same minister please tell the House what measures are being implemented to

ensure complaints are directed to the appropriate area of government so that meaningful solutions can be found?

Mr. Nixon: We will be using the same format we used, that was put in place by the hon. minister of red tape reduction, to be able to make sure that we could reduce red tape across government when it comes to the information that we receive through the portal. We will then take action and/or communicate with the appropriate level of government where action will have to be taken. We are confident that this will continue to be able to expand the great work that we've done, which has already resulted – get this, Mr. Speaker – this year alone in 10,000 more apartment units in this province. We're seeing it work. Rent in Calgary, for example, just went down by 2.7 per cent.

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

Mr. Lundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that a key part of maintaining the Alberta advantage is our government's commitment to keeping the dream of home ownership alive and given that increasing housing is the best way to stabilize costs and make housing more attainable for Albertans, can the minister please update the House on the progress Alberta has made in increasing our housing supply?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. The number one thing we need to do about maintaining affordability in our housing market in this province is to continue to increase supply. As I've said, we've increased supply by 34 per cent in the residential construction industry this year alone. That is a record. The last time it was even close to this was 1979. The number one thing, though, that we have done is that we have rejected the NDP's plan to bring in rent control, that would collapse this industry, and I want to point out that the only provinces that have done that have seen their rental stock go down, the rents go up, more people be homeless. Not this province; we continue to break records each and every month.

Victims' Services

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, it used to be that when Albertans fell victim to crime, they had the comfort of knowing that supports were available from people they knew in the community they lived in, but now that's gone, thanks to the UCP's decision to strip funding from local organizations, who've done this work for decades, in favour of regional hubs. We've received reports that after a recent fatal motor vehicle accident near Westlock, victims and witnesses needed support, but when police called the minister's new 24-hour support intake, they were told that there was no one available. To the minister of public safety: what do you have to say to these victims who needed help but couldn't get it because you broke the system?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank all those folks that are out there helping victims of crime and victims of tragedy. That's precisely why we reorganized the system, whereby we provide consistent funding throughout the province of Alberta. We make sure that there is predictable and sustainable funding. I can tell you that we certainly have support from many jurisdictions all throughout this province to make sure that victims of crime and victims of tragedy are getting the resources they need. Certainly, if he has an example of somebody who is not, we'll make sure that we address that.

Mr. Shepherd: Given that we've also received reports that following a domestic violence incident in Westlock, a mother and her one-year-

old child were left by the side of the road and given that police called victims' services regional hub, who said they'd engage victims' services in Slave Lake, but given that the woman needed formula for her child, stores were closed, she had no way to get to Slave Lake, police had to drive her there, taking an officer away from Westlock for three hours, to the minister. Last month in an op-ed you promised victims of crime or tragedy that your government would be there regardless of where they lived. One month later, what do you have to say to this mother and her child?

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, that sounds very serious. Why is the member waiting till question period to let me know? This is something that he should be addressing with either me right away, letting the RCMP know, or letting the authorities know so that person can actually get the help that they need. I'm not going to play the political games that the members opposite are playing right now. We're going to make sure that victims of crime, victims of tragedy are getting the supports that they need. I can tell you that if there are people that are not, I need to know so we can address that issue. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Shepherd: Given that after five years of the UCP Albertans outside Edmonton and Calgary can't count on being able to get the support of a family doctor, cancer treatment, or an emergency room and given that thanks to the UCP, they also can't count on their children getting support in overcrowded classrooms in underfunded schools and given the UCP has also made sure they can't count on having access to their pension, affordable electricity and insurance, or even their right to vote, losing supports for victims of crime: I guess that's just the cherry on top. Mr. Speaker, is there any system this government won't make worse before Albertans get the chance to vote for better in 2027?

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, none of what that member is saying is accurate. I can tell you that we have support from many mayors, many reeves. We have support from people throughout the province of Alberta who say that they are finally getting the supports that they need. I can tell you that there were 14 municipalities all throughout the province of Alberta that were getting zero victims' services, that were getting zero supports for victims of tragedy. We have now provided consistent funding. We provided predictable, sustainable funding. We're going to continue to support the people in rural Alberta, and we're not going to play the political games that they're playing on that side of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Tourism in Alberta

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a good day in Alberta. We live in one of the most beautiful places in the world, both in its places and its peoples. Many want to visit Alberta, a blessed land of freedom and prosperity. Tourism is big in Alberta, producing billions in visitor revenues, producing more than 260,000 jobs. To the Minister of Tourism and Sport: what news of our great tourism industry?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport, the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a time to be alive it is in Alberta, because the tourism sector is booming. In 2023 we saw \$12.7 billion of visitor spend in this province, \$3 billion of which came from international visitors. That's a 20 per cent increase,

because we're doing things right and our plan is working. This record-setting year is a result of the hard-working entrepreneurs and the amazing people developing product and our partners who are bringing visitors into Alberta from around the country and from around the world. We're going to continue to show that Alberta is the best place to live, to play, and to visit.

Mr. Stephan: Given that Alberta's government has a super big goal for tourism to reach \$25 billion in visitor spending by 2035 and given that we just met with the industry at their annual Tourism Industry Association dinner and given that the subject matter experts have many insights for how tourism in Alberta can compete and excel, to the minister: what say ye of how we are working with our tourist industry experts to reach this goal?

2:30

Mr. Schow: Well, Mr. Speaker, dare I say that it's super duper to be in Alberta right now. What we're doing is we're listening. We joined the people at the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta dinner the other night with the Premier, and we spoke to them about the plan we have going forward, and we listened to what they want to see for the future in this province. One thing that's really important is four-season resorts. We've heard it from Albertans – they want to explore more of their backyard – we've heard it from Canadians, and we've heard it from international visitors. Everybody wants more Alberta, and we're going to give it to them.

Mr. Stephan: Given that sports tourism is very big, driving major sporting events and sports fans across the world, and given that fans to major sporting events benefit local businesses and support upgrades to infrastructure and given that Alberta is a great destination for sporting events and fans and given that it is good to see super-duper Alberta athletes, to the minister: what news of how we are supporting more sports tourism in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Alberta has a rich history in sports and sport tourism. That's why we continue to invest in bringing world-class attractions and events right here to the province of Alberta. We invested in the Canadian Finals Rodeo and saw record attendance, over \$30 million of economic driving, and 5,500 jobs. We also hosted 20 more international sporting events through the major sporting events grant. All of this drives interest in our province. All this drives people to come here and watch sporting events. Today it's great to have some of Alberta's best in the gallery as we welcome Olympians and Paralympians from around Alberta representing us on the international stage. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Alberta Energy Regulator Salaries (continued)

Mr. Schmidt: It sure pays to be friends with this government, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Energy quietly hiked the salaries at the AER. The chair now makes a very big \$174,000 a year, and the board members now make a super-duper \$112,000 a year. This government had no problem hiking utility bills, auto insurance rates, income taxes, gas taxes, and more. And who can forget the jobs minister, who was cheered on by his colleagues when he refused to support minimum wage increases? Can the minister please explain to this House why people he puts on boards get big, fat raises while Albertans pay more?

Mr. Jean: Yes, it is true, Mr. Speaker. The industry is paying for the AER and all the raises that all of the AER board members are receiving. We think it's fair that they should receive a competitive salary and wage for the time they put into what is a very important subject. The oil and gas industry in Alberta last year brought in \$183 billion. It's huge. It pays for schools and hospitals and all sorts of infrastructure that people love. But there's no taxpayer money in that. It's for the AER, paid for by industry.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given that if the minister bothered to read his budget, he would see a line item for \$231 million that he pays out to operate the AER and given that the chief hearing commissioner got a pay increase from \$248,000 to \$258,000 this year and given that the government ran on making life more affordable, only they forgot to mention that it's only for their best friends, can the minister explain how on one hand he says that minimum wage earners work enough but AER board members need a big, fat pay raise?

Mr. Jean: I think I explained, Mr. Speaker, that the big, fat pay raise was paid by the industry that they oversee. It's not paid for by taxpayers. Now, it's done by way of a levy, and it's true that sometimes the government has to supply the money before it's paid for by industry, because that's the way it works, but it's still paid for by industry. I would be happy to sit down with the member opposite and any members of the NDP to explain this journal entry operation clearly and succinctly.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the minister spent \$20 million more than he took in from the industry to operate the AER last year and given that Alberta has the lowest minimum wage in Canada at \$15, why does the minister think that his chair and board members need a salary equal to six times the minimum wage while minimum wage earners get nothing?

Mr. Jean: As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, these salaries are competitive. In fact, I would suggest they're less than competitive. They're the same rate that the NDP were paying some seven or eight years ago. These people do very important work for the people of Alberta, and it's paid for by the industry that they oversee. Now, I can't think of a better thing for the taxpayers of Alberta than the way we are managing this particular file. It's being done properly, and it's done in the best interests of Albertans.

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

Provincial Nature Strategy

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The new Alberta nature strategy will recognize and communicate the value of nature and the importance of biodiversity, but Alberta already has a biodiversity framework. The nature strategy will recognize our dependence on a healthy environment, but we already have regional land use plans designed to do that; we just haven't completed or implemented them. The nature strategy will draw from Indigenous wisdom and world views, but we already have processes for that, too. To the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas: how is the nature strategy new when these programs already exist?

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

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually very grateful to the member for the question. Just recently we were able to host our first-ever nature strategy summit, which brought together a number of stakeholders from all different industries and communities

across our province. They had said that this is the first time that they've ever been brought together in such a way to discuss exactly these types of items. This is a great opportunity for us to protect this area of provincial jurisdiction when it comes to designating our provincial lands, protecting us from federal overreach, and striking a vision for us moving forward.

Dr. Elmeligi: Well, given that the stakeholders that I spoke with that were at that consultation didn't actually think it was that meaningful or effective and given that the nature strategy is meant to respond to global biodiversity interests and replace the federal nature strategy and given that the federal nature strategy emphasizes the efforts of all Canadians across political lines and jurisdictions to address biodiversity loss and climate change and given that the Minister of EPA is using this nature strategy as another excuse to pick a fight with Ottawa rather than advance environmental protections in collaboration with all, is this really about protecting Alberta biodiversity?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, I'm certain that some of the NGOs that the member opposite might have spoken to are opposed to talking about economics and affordability for everyday Canadians or having hunters, fishers, ranchers, agricultural producers as part of those discussions. We need to have a balanced discussion. It matters. It matters to Albertans that we balance environment, economic growth, affordability for Albertans, and, of course, making sure that we are protecting our provincial jurisdiction when it comes to biodiversity goals.

Dr. Elmeligi: Given that most of the time when we talk about balancing these interests it actually means dismissing environmental concerns and given that our existing programs to protect our environment are okay but not always enforced or adequately funded and given that we continually lose more wetlands than we restore, we add species to the at-risk list every year, we lose critical habitat every day, and water for communities continues to be polluted, but, hey, we'll have a strategy report to sit on a shelf somewhere, and given that from where I sit it appears the minister's lack of on-the-ground action is actually the biggest risk to protecting Alberta's environment, where is the ...

The Speaker: The hon. minister of environment.

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite, we are proud of our province. We are leaders in conservation while we continue to be a beacon of hope and a place that people continue to choose to call home and grow their businesses in all of our major industries. We are leaders in conservation. More than 60 per cent of our lands are public lands, and a large portion of these lands make up working landscapes used by farmers, by ranchers, and conservationists, who have helped us steward our environments and will continue to help us steward our environments for decades yet to come.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-East has a question.

2:40 Health Care System Capacity

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our universal, accessible, publicly funded health care is highly regarded in the world. As the government works to enhance health care, Albertans deserve access to high-quality and timely, equitable medical services. To the minister: how will refocusing health care in Alberta intend to reduce wait times in the emergency rooms and speed up the treatment of the most serious cases?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health has risen.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Refocusing Alberta's health care system will ensure that all Albertans have access to the most effective care and front-line service delivery. We recognize that long wait times at emergency departments are not acceptable. Speeding up access to care, particularly with primary care, and decreasing emergency department wait times continues to be one of our top priorities, and it is a key element of refocusing health care. We'll continue to add more front-line staff and make necessary changes so that we can further bring down wait times right across the province.

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

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Minister. Given the increasing demand among Albertans, including in Calgary-East, for improvements to the health care system and given that Albertans are advocating that their health needs must be met promptly and effectively, including our timely access to needed surgeries, to the same minister: what measures have been implemented to reduce wait times for surgeries in Alberta?

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to bringing down those surgery wait times and having more surgeries done in clinically approved time frames. Budget 2024 is investing \$305 million in Alberta surgical initiative to support 310,000 surgeries in the '24-25 fiscal year, and we have \$313 million over three years allocated towards renovating and adding operating rooms and centres right across the province. We're also utilizing our chartered surgical facilities, adding more than 6,000 orthopaedic surgeries this year and more to come.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Minister. Given that the respiratory illness season is under way and that there will be increases on the demands and capacity challenges to our health care system and given that health workers will be under enormous strain to deliver the care that Albertans deserve, can the minister please provide Albertans programs that support our resilient and highly trained health workforce?

The Speaker: The minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're very proud of our workforce. They're doing a tremendous job, particularly under strain, as we go through this respiratory virus season. We're continuing to work with our postsecondaries to train more physicians, more nurses, more health care aides. We've added many programs, including the rural, remote, northern program, and we're also recruiting more physicians and retaining more physicians and nurse practitioners in rural areas. Actually, I just announced yesterday the upgrades and the updates to our nurse practitioner program. We also have the new rural and remote bursary program for family medicine resident physicians.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. I understand that on a very rare occasion there may be some consent amongst members for a request for unanimous consent. It's even rarer to do it during the daily Routine, but perhaps we'll make the exception.

Mr. Schow: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. I do rise to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to revert back to Introduction of Guests.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader has an introduction.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct honour to rise and introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, sitting in the gallery, Alberta's 2024 Olympic and Paralympic athletes. This past summer in Paris on the world's biggest stage they showed us the power of sport and its ability to bring people together. Today we express our pride and our gratitude for their achievements. These outstanding people are more than just athletes; they're role models, ambassadors, and the sources of hope for communities across our province. They inspire us to dream bigger, work harder, and believe in the extraordinary. I want to invite them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly, please. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will continue with the remainder of the daily Routine.

For those of you travelling home today, please do so safely.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills has a petition.

Mr. Ellingson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present today to the House this petition of 1,300 signatures gathered over the summer at events in Calgary-Foothills demanding the Sage Hill-Kincora middle school in Calgary-Foothills.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat has a tabling.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with the five copies of an article calling out, again, the federal government's gun grab as nothing but a red herring and the biggest confiscation of property.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of hon. Mr. Horner, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, pursuant to the provincial judges and applications judges registered and unregistered pension plans regulation provincial judges and applications judges registered and unregistered pension plans 2022-23 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, there were no points of order, and a gold star for everyone.

Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. the Deputy Government House Leader.

Evening Sitings

51. Mr. Williams moved on behalf of Mr. Schow:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) and for the duration of the 2024 fall sitting of the First 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.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Deputy Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 51. This is not a debatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 4(1).

[Government Motion 51 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: Hon. members, I would like to call the committee to order.

Bill 24 Alberta Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2024

The Deputy Chair: Are there any members wishing to speak to the bill? I recognize the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I stand today to introduce an amendment to Bill 24 to the House.

The Deputy Chair: Members, this amendment will be referred to as amendment A5.

The Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul can proceed.

2:50

Mr. Cyr: I'm introducing an amendment to the reasonable limits clause in the Alberta Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2024. This amendment reads: myself to move that Bill 24, Alberta Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2024, be amended in section 4(c) as follows: (a) in the proposed section 1(2), by striking out "demonstrably justified" and substituting "demonstrably and proportionately justified, based on evidence"; (b) in the proposed section 1(3), by striking out "demonstrably justified" and substituting "demonstrably and proportionately justified."

This amendment will add the words "proportionately" and "based on evidence" to the proposed reasonable limits clause contained in the Alberta Bill of Rights. The first change, adding "proportionately," will clarify that limits on rights should be subjected to proportionality analysis under what's known as the Oakes test. This will require a government to show that limitations of rights pursue a pressing and substantial objective, that the limitation is rationally connected to an objective, that it limits rights as little as reasonably possible, and that the effects of the limitation are proportional to the objective.

The second change, adding "based on evidence," will clarify that if a law is challenged and found to limit rights, the government bears the burden of putting forward any evidence that is necessary to demonstrate that the limitation of rights is justified. By including a reasonableness limits clause based on the Oakes test, this bill will set a higher bar for justifying the limit on rights than is currently the case under the court decision interpreting the Alberta Bill of Rights.

We introduced the original amendment in response to concerns we have heard in recent years about the government placing limitations on Albertans' rights. Mr. Chair, like the proposed amendment I brought forward today, the entire set of changes to the Alberta Bill of Rights is to make sure that this important civil rights document continues to

protect Albertans from government action that reasonably limits their rights, now and into the future.

As we have heard in the House, the proposed changes, including this amendment, respond to concerns that many members have heard from their constituents. I actively solicited opinions from my constituents and am pleased to say that both I and the government of Alberta have listened to their concerns. I have heard from many Albertans and groups supporting civil and speech rights and freedoms. My office has received numerous e-mails with suggestions and ideas: thank you so much. I've heard them loud and clear.

Albertans have expressed concerns about being coerced to receive medical treatments, Mr. Chair. The proposed amendments to the Bill of Rights, including this House amendment, address these concerns, with added protections for medical consent and the right not to be compelled or coerced into violations of their bodily autonomy.

As we have heard in this House, Albertans also raised concerns about the federal government's firearms confiscation program and how this restricts their rights and freedoms when it comes to lawful firearm ownership. Our government is committed to standing up for lawful firearm owners in Alberta and affirms our intent that provincial laws should not interfere with the right to legally acquire, keep, and use firearms, Mr. Chair.

Some have said that the proposed amendments are merely symbolic, and I expect that we might hear that again today from the NDP as this debate plays out. I believe that Albertans who care about their rights and freedoms and feel these rights have not always been respected would disagree. Protections for personal autonomy, freedom of expression, property rights, firearm rights, and more effective enforcement of rights will provide Albertans with protections against government actions that infringe on their rights.

With that, Mr. Chair, I encourage everyone to support this amendment to this bill.

The Deputy Chair: Are there any others wishing to make comment? The hon. Minister of Justice has risen to speak.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I've really appreciated the debate, the robust conversations that we've had on this amendment, on the Alberta Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2024, in its entirety. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul for bringing forward this amendment.

As you know, Mr. Chair, this is the first time that a significant update to the Alberta Bill of Rights has been undertaken since 1972. This is important work and something that I know many of us have been hearing from our constituents. I want to thank everyone for sharing their viewpoints on this bill and for your commitment to ensuring that Albertans have the most robust civil rights document and that their rights and freedoms are respected in this province.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will echo my government colleagues and encourage everyone to support this amendment and this bill.

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

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 30 Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The Member for Edmonton-Meadows has risen to speak.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill 30, Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. I wanted to say in starting that I do support the changes proposed in

this bill, that have been asked for for many years by the construction industry and condominium corporations. The few things this bill is doing: it's basically amending three acts, the Condominium Property Act, the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act, and the Public Works Act.

Around the Condominium Property Act it is proposing to create another condominium property tribunal to add another option for condominium owners and related parties. In case of disputes they will have another option. Before they were just bound by the narrow scope and lack of resolutions. They could only go to court, and the court, we know, is not only a lengthy process, but in many cases – I'm concerned about all three amendments under this bill, that what we're trying to ease is to save people's time and trying to help resolve the issues the industry is facing or that occur while at the same time, you know, there is really no follow-up process for the industries, stakeholders, or individuals.

Under the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act, I think we are debating this in the House at least three times, I remember, in the last four years. The issue is still pertaining. Sometimes we have to discuss this to bring it in line with other government laws, and sometimes there are issues that we hear from stakeholders. So it is changing to 28 days, you know, the payment rules from the day of notice and the payment to subcontractors in 35 days and the subcontractor-to-subcontractor payments, 42 days.

3:00

From the industry practices, the first-hand stories, and my dealings, yeah, it's a bit concerning to me why we are creating those different segments for these individuals. Because they are less effective or powerful? No clue. Like, what is the reason, if the contractor's contractor needs to be paid in 28 days, why these are contracted for 35 days and then subcontractors from subcontractors another 42 days? If the money is in your account, then those people need to get paid. If contractors' operations are affected by not receiving the payments on time, so do the people working on the next level of the operation. I would really like to see some explanation from the ministry on what kind of feedback he had. Like, is this either only one stakeholder lobby we are working on, or are we trying to address the whole issue in the industry? That is very important to know.

The other thing I really wanted to say: I hear stories from both sides. Like, I ran my own business, small-scale business, where I dealt with thousands and thousands of people in 20 years, and they would share their stories. They were in construction industries. They were in the trucking industry. There were a number of different businesses but same concerns. You had a job to do. You contracted the work. That's another issue, actually. The biggest issue in the industry is, legally, the contractor's contractor. Either it's written or it's a verbal contract, but there's a huge issue about when it comes to getting paid. Then your agreement on verbal issues is a big problem, so clarity on those things does matter.

Also, I don't know if the concerns that industry shares are exactly the responsibility of the service ministry or not, but as a House, as an elected member it's my duty to bring that feedback back to the House.

There are also the project owners. In many cases the big and effective project owners have a different kind of power or control when it comes to getting their projects completed, when it comes to making payments to their contractors, compared to the smaller project owners or the individuals who are getting their work completed. When their job is not 100 per cent completed, they are just left in limbo. No one comes to fix those small problems. Those could be big for the small-business owner to complete the job. There have been stories where the contractor walked away with the money but never showed up to complete their jobs, and the people

are left with no options, no choices but to look for other people and to work with those professionals. They are not willing to take on someone else's work.

The other thing I really wanted to say, what I hear from my constituents, the community leagues, and what has been the biggest concern – I'm happy to see the scope of this bill is, you know, expanded to the Crown corporations, but also government needs to invest into communities, into government projects, infrastructure, where we can create more jobs, where we can just, you know, help keep the economy going, where we can create more work.

We had examples like the Calgary green line: very devastating effects. Me and my colleagues in Mill Woods, three of us, the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie: we do attend Mill Woods Presidents' Council meetings. One of the biggest concerns in the last four years that constantly – constantly – keeps coming up is that there's no funding available from the grant programs that used to exist. Their infrastructure is deteriorating. Their projects are planned, but they're not going anywhere because the government has cut the grant programs, even their CFEP or any other grant programs. That is impacting communities. That is impacting our constituents.

Government also needs to work simultaneously, same time, on those fronts if we want to build a vibrant and healthy community and if we want to promote fairness in the system. After all, when we are creating this, it's for good reason. I see this is a good amendment. That's why I'm supporting.

But creating this legislation is not going to be the problem solved. It doesn't mean that if there are 28 days or 35 days, somebody issues notice and knows they're going to start getting paid – before they were not because there was just lack of clarity. No. This is not the only case. The bad actors are bad actors. It's the reason why we're saying our judicial system is very costly and expensive. It is not accessible to everyone. We need to make it to the reach of every single Albertan. I can go on and on and list a number of genuine cases where everyone knows who is right and what the challenges are, where the problem is, but the problems are not solved because the vulnerable party does not have resources to access the system to get justice. This is a very big problem in this province.

With that, I conclude my remarks. I hope that when we discuss next time, we can expand the scope of these amendments to other operations in the industry as well. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Are there any others wishing to speak? The Member for Edmonton-Decore has risen.

Mr. Haji: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise to speak to Bill 30, Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. I will speak to the element related to prompt payment and the implications that it has on Albertans if we do not close the existing loopholes.

3:10

Thirty-six per cent of people in Edmonton are renters. Basically, I'm talking about 360,000 renters in the capital region. What that means is that these are people who have experienced an increase in rent. These are people who struggle in terms of making sure that they don't lose their existing shelters if rent is delayed, because the next step to that is the process of eviction. What that means, Mr. Chair, is that this impacts entirely our system and its interconnectedness. That is why we need to create safeguards that will protect people from falling into that houselessness.

One of the things that we can create is that people get payments on time and prompt payment. That is why I feel it is so important to ensure workers are paid on time, to avoid the consequence of that not happening. That can only happen in the situation where there

are loopholes within existing systems, and this legislation is the area that we need to address.

Mr. Chair, as we know, the province is now, based on the data from yesterday, experiencing the highest inflation rate. The cities of Edmonton and Calgary have the highest in the country, in fact, higher than Vancouver, which is a very expensive city, and inflation that is higher than in Toronto, which is so expensive. What that means is that any situation that puts people, workers into a situation where they cannot meet their financial obligations – they fall into difficulties.

On that basis, that's why it is important to address the loopholes of prompt payment, meaning that any situation where workers fall into that, they are not able to pay, will have a consequence that will impact on their living conditions. Therefore, Mr. Chair, prompt payment will help the cash flow. It will help the contractors. It will help the subcontractors. It will help our other systems. When I say "other systems," it means that that is between somebody meeting their payment obligations, whether, like, just rent or other financial obligations they have, and not meeting that, which means that they are falling into the existing safety nets. That's why we have long wait-lists on our safety nets. Part of that is what we need to deal with in terms of prompt payment.

It will also protect workers from being taken advantage of, from being exploited. In fact, Mr. Chair, it becomes now more important than ever because we experience a high unemployment rate which is higher than the rest of the country outside the Maritimes. What that will mean is that when people are put in situations like that, they are forced to take any opportunity or anything that is forced on them by the circumstances, and that will include working a longer time without being paid on time, and that will include them being paid under situations that are not acceptable. The proposed bill takes a good step towards addressing some of the prompt payment, but it is not fully addressing the need of prompt payment. There are some workers that are left out within this. Beyond workers being paid on time, they also need to be supported. They need to know that they have the support in place that will allow them to be paid on time.

Mr. Chair, I'll go back and speak to the situation that renters face. As I said, there are 360,000 renters, and 34 per cent of them only make \$45,000 a year. We have talked about the increasing cost of living. We've talked about inflation. We've talked about stagnating wages that have not increased. In fact, the weekly earnings for Alberta workers were just 2.3 per cent over the past five years, and it hasn't changed. It's the lowest in this province and significantly below the national average. What that means is that people don't have enough to meet their obligations. That is what we actually need to protect people more. We need to be very cognizant of that and make sure that payments are made.

The other area that we have to think about is that, as I said, those who cannot afford their shelters, those who cannot make their rents on time face that eviction situation, which actually increases the stress that people will have, which increases turning to the existing safety net. As I said, that's why we have a long wait-list on our social housing support. That's why we have not enough spaces to put people, and that's why we have a long wait-list. Those are some of the things, Mr. Chair, that need to be considered.

One more thing that I will add is that, as we have talked about in this House and as we have debated, the province has the lowest minimum wage, which is \$10 below the livable wage in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. So even those ones who are working, on top of those who have high unemployment rates, are not making enough to make ends meet.

Where that will take us is that we're putting people at risk. We're putting people at risk to lose their ability to put food on the table. We're

putting people at risk where they have to skip some meals to make sure that their kids can eat. We are putting people in a situation where they have to make sure that they can pay their shelter because if they don't, that delay will create a problem. So when we are opening and making an amendment, such an appeal, we need to be cognizant of that. We need to make sure that we create the safeguards that are necessary to be made so that those who are left out in this bill – and that includes those workers who work in P3s – are included in the consideration of prompt payment.

Therefore, Mr. Chair, I will say that this bill makes an attempt to address an existing problem, but it doesn't fully address the problem. There are some loopholes that will have consequences on many, and those consequences will actually be a burden on our systems because these people will either be turning to the existing safety net – that is already not enough to address the growing needs of Albertans. Therefore, I will say that there is a need for some improvements, and if the government wants to address prompt payment, it has to address it for all workers so that everybody should be paid in a timely manner.

With that, I will say, Mr. Chair, that that needs to be addressed in this bill. Thank you.

3:20

The Deputy Chair: Any others wishing to speak? The Member for Edmonton-City Centre has risen.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 30, the Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. Now, I want to speak specifically about the amendments in here to the Condominium Property Act. Representing the constituency I do, Edmonton-City Centre, there are more than a few condominium buildings and properties here in my constituency. I have myself been an owner of a condominium property. I had a condominium that I bought back in 2008 over in Queen Mary Park, moved over into a fourplex which has a similar structure of ownership in 2016.

Shortly after I moved into that building in 2008, I took the step of joining the condo board in my building. This is an experience I think that many Albertans have had, and some might call it a baptism by fire. Certainly, perhaps serving on a condo board is one of the chief things which deters people from further explorations into the world of political representation. But what I can say, you know, is that it is an essential part of ownership in a condominium building.

We have to have some form of governance. Certainly, we have systems that have been set up here in the province over the years, and there are the elections and there are all those pieces, so it is democratic. But the challenge, Mr. Chair, is that, you know, unlike ourselves, where we have some very robust systems in place to conduct our elections, to ensure that things are done properly, to provide resolution dispute – indeed, the fact that we are here in this Chamber today. Just look around at all of the supports, the services, the staff that are here to support us in doing our work as representatives.

When it comes to condominium boards, those individuals are volunteering their time and have a very limited level of support. They have their property management company, and those will be of, admittedly, varying qualities, some better than others in terms of the level of support they're able to provide and based on the budget that they're able to have in terms of the condo fees that are collected. It can be a very challenging thing to oversee, Mr. Chair, in a volunteer position for individuals who don't necessarily themselves have deep education in the legalities and all the different pieces of the condo act.

Again, the property management company is there to provide some of that support, but it is a big job, and it can be very significant because

in many of these cases, when you're talking about these larger buildings, you're dealing with hundreds of thousands, potentially millions of dollars of investment, not to mention the challenges that come, then, when repairs need to be made, the furnace or boiler needs to be replaced, the balconies, special assessments. Essentially, they are being asked to do the work we do without the support of a party, without the support of a lot of this infrastructure.

Mr. Chair, you know, we've all heard the tenor of the conversations when there's talk from a provincial government about raising taxes. Imagine what it's like for those folks on those condominium boards when they have to deal with the fact that pieces of their infrastructure are crumbling and there is no way to pay for it other than to levy a special assessment. It can be challenging. I know. I've been in those shoes, and I've sat in that chair.

From the other side, Mr. Chair, it can be challenging in a condominium building as an owner, when you have bought into that property, when you may not necessarily have a position on that board. It's possible that in the election of the people that are on the board you did not get the people elected to that board that you'd hoped. You can have varying levels of success in terms of the communication that's available, the quality of that representation, your relationship with the property management company. Of course, these are all individuals who are also just trying to go about their lives, who are working full-time jobs, have families, have all sorts of other responsibilities. Again, they themselves are likely not lawyers who are well versed in the ins and outs of the legalities of the condominium act.

There's a lot to negotiate in this, Mr. Chair, and there are a lot of opportunities for there to be conflicts, misunderstanding, miscommunication. Indeed, as we know, I think, in all systems of governance there is the opportunity for bad actors who make poor decisions that don't actually reflect what is in the best interests of the people that they are representing.

The challenge, then, Mr. Chair is: how do we resolve those situations? Well, for a lot of years Alberta has been a bit of an outlier in that generally the only recourse people have outside of reaching out to their board members, trying to use the systems that are in place, reaching out to the property management company – outside of that, if they came to an impasse, their only choice, the only decision they could make was to go to court.

Mr. Chair, that is an incredibly difficult, daunting, expensive thing. Imagine if you are the owner of a condominium. You're hit with a special assessment of tens of thousands of dollars. If you want to dispute that, if you have a concern with that or with anything, the only way to resolve that if you cannot do so through the proper channels is then to spend tens of thousands of dollars more to go through court. Or if you have been levied a fine and you have a dispute with that, again, there are no systems available.

If I get a traffic fine, I have the opportunity. I can go to court and I can plead my case. There's a traffic court. Hey, I can just go and see a justice of the peace and not even have to go through the whole court process to discuss and talk about that traffic ticket, raise my concerns, perhaps reduce the fine or get it taken away. If I receive a fine from my condominium corporation up until now and I dispute that fine, I can write to the board, I can write to the property management company. But if I want to dispute it beyond that, if they are not amenable to hearing what I have to say, my only choice then is to spend thousands more dollars to actually go to court.

This is not practical, Mr. Chair. It's not good for our court system to have to handle those kinds of minor affairs if they could be resolved in a different way. We already know that our court systems are significantly backlogged. They're under a good deal of pressure. It's not good for the individual, it's not good for the court system, so we needed an alternative.

Years back we had a bill that sort of came in that was amending the condominium act, that was hanging around when we came into government. We inherited it, we worked through it, and we put it through. I know that at that time one of the things that folks had already heard – in the consultations done by the previous Progressive Conservative government, folks had said: we need an alternative. There was a lot of talk about having a condominium tribunal, not dissimilar to what we have for, you know, tenants and landlords, the residential tenancy and landlords body that we have to help settle disputes outside of the court system. It's a reasonable thing, and it was a good idea.

I remember that those amendments were made. There was a timeline I recall being laid out. Later in that timeline was the idea that there would be steps taken towards creating a condominium tribunal, providing a lower cost, easier to access system before the courts, where folks go to resolve these issues, get a decision, clear the air. I can tell you, Mr. Chair, that at that time, when that came forward, I heard from a lot of my constituents who were very excited by that prospect.

It's interesting, Mr. Chair. One of the things that we do get in my office is correspondence from folks who are in exactly this situation, who are on the board and have concerns or issues with another board member or with another owner in the building. They are trying to figure out how to resolve things from there or from an owner in a building who is going the other way. They have concerns with things that are happening in their building, with special assessments or other issues, and they're asking me as an MLA to help. It's unfortunate that I have to explain to them that I can't get involved in those kinds of disputes. I can show them sort of how the legislation works, what the alternatives are. I can help try to connect them to resources and supports in the community, perhaps a community legal centre if that might work for them. But what we have here – once folks I've been talking with heard there was the possibility of a of a condominium tribunal system, they were incredibly excited for that opportunity.

It's taken us a little while to get here, Mr. Chair. I can tell you that I was just going through my inbox and searching back, you know, through 2020, 2021, folks reaching out in concern and telling them, you know, that while there has been work and consultation done around bringing forward a condominium tribunal, we're not sure where it's at yet. We're waiting to see where the direction is. So I am very, very happy, and I thank the minister of service Alberta for taking this action now to move us forward to get this into place. This is a good and positive step for Albertans.

3:30

With this bill the Condominium Property Act is going to be amended. We're going to establish that quasi-judicial condo dispute resolution tribunal. They'll be able to hear cases. They'll be able to adjudicate and mediate some of these common legal conflicts, some of these compliance issues. It's going to help streamline a lot of these disputes. It's going to be incredibly helpful, Mr. Chair, to lower the temperatures.

There's nothing worse, Mr. Chair, than having a fight like this happening in a building where you've all got to live together. It can be incredibly acrimonious. And when you add into that that the only option then is to take that to court – and who knows how long that's going to drag out and that's going to go on – this could have a major impact on the quality of life for a lot of people. So streamlining this process, offering a place where we can bring the temperature down, where the stakes are a little lower, that's going to make a big difference for tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of Albertans who live in condominium buildings.

Now, the government has earmarked an approximate \$8 million to set up this tribunal system. I'll be honest, Mr. Chair; I can't speak

to whether that is an adequate sum. It sounds like a good amount to get things started. I would have to take a little closer look at the numbers and get a sense of sort of how, you know, with the residential sort of tribunals and stuff, how those operate, that sort of thing. But \$8 million does strike me as likely a reasonable amount to get the system set up, running, and put the folks in place.

That is the other question with this, Mr. Chair. We want to ensure that this tribunal is going to have the capacity to genuinely make an impact, to relieve the court system and be able to take on the burden of what's there. I can recognize that it's probably going to take a little bit of time for this to ramp up, for it to kind of get the system humming. But I think of situations like in the province of Ontario right now, you know, where they are having real problems with their residential landlord resolution system, where it's taking months and months and months just to get a case in, to get it heard, to get it considered. So when folks have tenants who have not been paying rent for a considerable length of time, and then the indefinite delays and pace, it can take a very, very long time to resolve a situation.

So I'm certainly hoping that we're going to be considering that and that the minister is considering that as we move forward to ensure that we have an appropriate level of funding that we will be able to handle the capacity of claims. Because I can imagine, Mr. Chair, that once this gets stood up and running, it's going to be inundated. We have no shortage of condominiums, and, hey, we're all humans, so there's no shortage of conflict in those condominiums. I certainly want to ensure that we are providing a good level of capacity for that intake, that initial push to be able to take that in and, of course, thinking about what's going to be a reasonable level of operating funds to be able to keep that moving over time.

There are a few other pieces in here. Some changes to the regulations for chargebacks, to allow chargebacks to be treated as contributions to condo fees, that'll help protect condominium communities' financial stability and is also going to help ensure that corporations charge the actual costs or the insurance deductible, whichever is lower. That's important, Mr. Chair. We should be ensuring that we are not overcharging owners, individuals.

Again, I really appreciate that the minister has reached the point where we are able to move forward with establishing this body. As I said, this is going to make a material difference for people in my constituency. It will make a material difference for the staff in my office. Now we're going to be able to offer people an actual concrete solution that's going to mean a lot for them as well. It's a positive step forward, and, you know, Mr. Chair, I don't mind recognizing when this government does something right. When it comes to the tribunal, I will say that this is something they are doing right.

I'll have much more to say later on about all the things that they are not getting right, but for the moment we'll give them the win, and we'll say this is a good piece of legislation. I look forward to supporting it, and I look forward to learning a bit more about how the system is going to function, the process, be funded to ensure that we are going to have the best system we can have to take this burden off owners, off corporations, and off our court systems.

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

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Any others wishing to speak? The Member for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Ip: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill 30, the Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. This legislation, as proposed by government, addresses

significant challenges faced by Albertans particularly in the areas of prompt payment for construction projects, especially in conflict resolution for condominium property owners and residents. As my colleagues have mentioned, it's a bill that really brings welcome changes although, as with any measure, there's certainly room for improvement. One thing that I would note is that it is long overdue and leaves critical gaps unaddressed. I, too, would like to commend the government on the positive aspects of this bill while taking this opportunity to offer some constructive critiques and recommendations for future action.

Mr. Chair, I'll begin on the subject of prompt payment. Let me begin by discussing the amendments to the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act, which will bring long-needed reforms to Alberta's construction industry. I think we would all agree in this House that the construction sector is the backbone of our province's economy along with other sectors, but it's certainly an essential foundational sector, employing thousands of workers who rely on fair and timely payment to support their families. Unfortunately, when it comes to payments, and for far too long in the construction industry, delayed payments have been a persistent issue. It's been a bit of a Wild West, so to speak, with ensuring that workers are paid on time and that they are protected from the financial instability that is often caused by delayed payments. It's been a persistent issue for contractors, in particular subcontractors and seasonal workers, who, in fact, are some of our most vulnerable workers in the sector.

I know Bill 30 aims to address these issues by ensuring prompt payment for public contracts, including those with the Crown. Under the proposed amendments payments from Crown entities to contractors must be made within 28 days, with contractors paying subcontractors within 35 days and subcontractors paying sub subcontractors within 42 days. This tiered approach does create a clear framework that ensures accountability across the construction payment chain. And while these payments are positive, I have to ask really quite a simple question: why did it take this government so long to act?

Prompt payment is not a new issue. Other jurisdictions such as Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick have already implemented similar measures. Even the federal government has acted, introducing prompt payment legislation that applies to federal contracts. Alberta, meanwhile, has lagged behind, leaving contractors and workers vulnerable to unfair practices for far too long. It's a fair question, Mr. Chair. Albertans expect this government, any government, certainly Alberta's government, to act promptly and to act in their interests.

Mr. Chair, on this side of the House we have a strong record of advocating for prompt payment. In fact, in 2016, while in government, the then NDP government introduced prompt payment clauses into government contracts and even set up a 1-800 hotline for subcontractors to report unpaid wages. I'm proud to say that on this side of the House we campaigned on this issue again in 2019 because we understand that workers deserve to be paid on time, paid decently for their labour. And while I'm glad to see this government finally taking action, the delay has been costly for so many Alberta families and businesses.

Moreover, I think there are questions that remain unanswered. Why do payment timelines differ between tiers? For example, if the Crown has 28 days to pay contractors, why do subcontractors have to wait an additional seven days for payment and sub subcontractors have to wait another seven days on top of that? In Ontario contractors and subcontractors operate on much tighter timelines, with payments required within seven days of receiving funds. I think these inconsistencies, when compared to other jurisdictions, merit further scrutiny, and I hope the government will clarify its rationale in the other processes of this debate.

3:40

I want to now turn our attention to the amendments in the Condominium Property Act. First of all, I do want to commend the government for addressing a long-standing gap in Alberta's housing framework. Condominium living is becoming increasingly popular in our province. It's one of the most affordable kinds of housing that many folks can get into as an owner. As the Member for Edmonton-South West I can say that there are many, hundreds if not thousands of condos, condo buildings in Edmonton-South West, lots of young families and lots of young Albertans or Albertans of all ages choosing to buy condominiums, so this is an issue I've certainly heard first-hand.

There have been constituents who have come forward complaining about the often lengthy and very costly process to resolve a dispute with their condominium board as an owner. I have to say that this particular legislation and the changes proposed, particularly with the tribunal system that is brought forward, are welcome, but what I would say . . .

An Hon. Member: I knew there was going to be there a "but."

Mr. Ip: There is always a "but."

But, again, I think the question that bears asking is: why did it take this government five years of consultation to finally take action, to finally bring this legislation to fruition?

Let me talk about why a tribunal system is so incredibly important. Conflicts between condominium residents, property owners, and boards often have – as many of those in this House who have been corresponding with similar constituents will know, it's very difficult and very challenging to resolve, and residents are often left with no recourse other than costly and time-consuming legal action.

As my colleague has already mentioned, that is an inefficient process not only for condominium owners as well as board corporations but also for our court system because it unfairly clogs up our legal system that can, frankly, be left to address other issues. So the establishment of a tribunal system is a step in the right direction. This quasi-judicial body has the potential to provide a fair, accessible, and cost-effective mechanism for resolving disputes ranging from compliance issues to disagreements over fees or common area responsibilities.

Other provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia have already implemented similar systems with great success, offering Albertans a model perhaps to consider and to follow. One thing that is unclear in this legislation is whether we are able to avoid some of the challenges that we have seen in British Columbia and Ontario pertaining to delays. Because of the sheer volume of cases in places like British Columbia and Ontario it can take months or sometimes years to resolve an issue with a condo board, and I think it is incredibly important that as we consider and debate this legislation, we are able to ensure that those who bring a complaint forward to the tribunal system are able to get it resolved in a timely way.

You know, as I mentioned, the devil is often in the details, and there are issues to be worked out. It is certainly not perfect, but I think the concept of a tribunal system if implemented correctly will not only reduce the financial and emotional burdens of legal proceedings but also foster greater accountability amongst condominium boards, property managers. Issues, perhaps, such as noisy neighbours, unauthorized smoking, or other kinds of things that do not require full legal action but still demand serious attention may at some point in the future be appropriate matters to bring before the tribunal. Certainly, recognizing that the tribunal and its implementation will require a tiered approach and speaking to stakeholders, including industry professionals in the condominium

industry, I understand that they are recommending a slow and steady but progressive approach in developing the tribunal system, which I certainly advocate for as one of their representatives. But the concept of a tribunal system is a sound one and will allow residents to address concerns efficiently and equitably.

I'm also pleased to see that this bill includes provisions to protect condominium buyers from unexpected costs related to structural defects in new buildings. We have all heard the famous phrase "leaky condos," and certainly any time that there is a construction boom in this province or in any jurisdiction in Canada where there is the building of many, many types of housing in a short period of time, inevitably there will be some challenges, and we have heard – certainly, in my experience constituents have come forward, buying a condominium and the condominium corporation now realizing that it was built defectively. Other than legal recourse, which is costly, certainly, to resolve, in terms of legislation it isn't always clear what sorts of protections are afforded to condominium corporations and owners, so this is a welcome provision.

I believe that technical audits will ensure that developers meet high standards of construction and will safeguard purchasers as well as the corporations from potential and future financial hardship, and this does align Alberta with other provinces that have already implemented similar protections.

I do want to take a moment, Mr. Chair, to talk about life leases and some broader housing issues because, again, with this government I do think that there are often missed opportunities. It's as though this government doesn't fully sort of think through all of their pieces of legislation and isn't always as thorough as they could be.

While I support the positive changes introduced in this bill, I also feel like there is a missed opportunity when it comes to life leases. We did see a specific life lease legislation earlier in the spring. Unfortunately, as I spoke to at that time, there were missed opportunities there to address some of the challenges for seniors and others who are living in a life lease situation. This legislation perhaps could have resolved some of the gaps that the legislation in the spring did not address, and I'm disappointed that the government didn't take an opportunity to perhaps add additional provisions to ensure that life leases and their protections can be further augmented.

I also want to mention, Mr. Chair, that this bill does little to address Alberta's broader housing crisis. While the tribunal system and the technical audits will certainly be positive, they do not address the skyrocketing costs of housing and rent that are pricing so many Albertans out of their homes, and housing affordability remains one of the most pressing issues in our province. I'm very proud that my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood had previously introduced a bill to ensure that rents are capped. Again, I think this could have been an opportunity to ensure that there are some protections for renters as well, which we do not see. I think what Albertans are expecting is this government to take bold action, to take bold action on housing to ensure that all of us, every Albertan, have access to safe and affordable housing.

3:50

Let me just end perhaps with a discussion around the broader context of this bill. It's important, I believe, Mr. Chair, to situate this bill with the broader context of this government's record on workers and housing. While there are good things about this bill – and I'll say first that I intend to support it – and while the prompt payment provisions are a step in the right direction, they do not erase the harm caused by this government's attacks on workers' rights. Over the past several years we have seen the UCP slash overtime and holiday pay, restrict workers' ability to organize, undermine workplace safety standards, and these actions have made life harder for working families across Alberta.

Similarly, while the amendments to the Condominium Property Act address certain challenges, they do not address the root causes of Alberta's housing affordability crisis. Under this government our province has experienced some of the highest increases in housing and rental costs in the country. It bears repeating that families are struggling to make ends meet and young Albertans are finding it increasingly difficult to enter the housing market. So while this bill is helpful in some respects, there are missed opportunities. There are missed opportunities to address some of the long-standing, systemic issues related to housing.

Mr. Chair, as we debate this bill, I urge this government to consider additional measures that would support Alberta workers and residents. That includes expanding housing protections. I'd like to see this government develop comprehensive strategies to address housing affordability, including increased investment in affordable housing.

I could go on, Mr. Chair, but I will conclude my remarks for Bill 30. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As you well know, I went on at length on this particular bill during second reading, but I just felt it absolutely necessary to stress just a couple of points regarding Bill 30.

Number one, we have to consider the context in which this bill is being presented, because I would like the members on the other side of the House to understand that this particular bill was absolutely necessary. Here in the province of Alberta for decades – for decades – several industries were relying on the rule of law and contracts in order to make sure that payments were made on time. It was actually stipulated in the contract.

For example, when you have a general contractor working with a subcontractor, it'll actually say in the contract when payment has to be made to the subcontractor – sometimes this was 60 days; sometimes it was 80 days; sometimes it was 95 days – depending on what both parties would agree to. You would think that, based on the rule of law, people would just fulfill their contracts. Mr. Chair, this is a perfect example of how legislation and regulation are absolutely necessary when the rule of law fails people in this province.

Now, specifically, we're talking about contractors, and I would like the members on the other side of the House to realize and actually take it in that, you know, not all legislation and regulation is actually red tape. There are actual pieces of legislation and regulation that are there to make sure that the bad actors comply, because they're not complying to the rule of law as it exists up until that moment. And again, Mr. Chair, I just want to stress how that for decades this was going on in the province of Alberta and that subcontractors specifically requested that this legislation be brought in to the province of Alberta. As has been stated by my colleagues on this side of the House, other jurisdictions across this great nation brought it in years ago. Alberta was an outlier and was just depending on rule of law and for people to actually fulfill their contracts, but we see that that wasn't enough. It wasn't enough. So for that reason, legislation had to be made.

On that note, I would like the minister to take that into consideration because within this bill: public-private partnerships. This bill does not apply to P3s and so, yet again, we're going to have a situation where there are contractors, subcontractors depending on the rule of law and depending on that the contract that they signed actually has value, yet we could be going through similar experiences as we have been going through for the decades before, where subcontractors aren't getting paid on time.

So those are the things that I would like the members on the other side of the House to, number one, acknowledge. That's why this piece of legislation was so important, and we could use something similar when it comes to P3s, moving into the future. With that, I'll leave my statements at that, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Are there any others? The Deputy Government House Leader has risen.

Mr. Williams: Thank you. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's been a productive debate, and I appreciate contributions from all sides. I move that we rise and report progress on bills 24 and 30.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has under consideration certain bills. The committee reports progress on the following bills: Bill 24, Bill 30. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Acting Speaker: So ordered.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 29 Fairness and Safety in Sport Act

[Adjourned debate November 6: Mr. Williams]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Mental Health and Addiction has 14 minutes left if he wishes to use it.

Any others wishing to speak to Bill 29? The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has risen. [some applause]

Ms Pancholi: Thank you. That's kind.

Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak in this House, as is my privilege to do so. It is not, however, a pleasure to speak to Bill 29, the Fairness and Safety in Sport Act.

Let's begin by saying, Mr. Speaker, that this is my first opportunity to speak to this bill. Let me just begin by saying that it is very clear that this government continues to govern by conspiracy theory and not by facts, evidence, or the issues that Albertans truly care about. This is a bill that is purporting to develop or enforce fairness and safety in sports. However, it does precisely the opposite.

4:00

I want to be clear that the members across the way – the government members, the ministers, the Premier – I assume all of them hear from Albertans the same way that all of us do. When Albertans talk about what their priorities are, health care and affordability are the two largest issues along with, of course, having a sustainable economy with good-paying jobs, and they care about education. But this is not a priority for Albertans. It was a priority for the Premier to achieve the results she was seeking in her leadership review, and she achieved that by getting the support of 4,200 members of her party. However, there are almost

5 million people who live in this province, and this is not their priority. Their priorities are clearly not reflected in the agenda of this government.

We have seen over and over again by the bills that have been introduced by this government and particularly the fact that a quarter of their legislative agenda this fall is focused on issues that either are not dominant for most Albertans but is also based on conspiracy theory that is meant to divide people and, most frighteningly, is actually designed to harm a very vulnerable population.

I want to take this moment, as I did when I spoke to bills 26 and 27, to acknowledge that there are trans Albertans and their family members and their loved ones and their friends and their colleagues who are watching right now and who feel vulnerable and who feel attacked by a government who is focused on making life more difficult for them and placing them in more vulnerable situations. I want them to know that, once again, the Official Opposition and all of the MLAs on this side will continue to advocate for their safety and their inclusion and for all their opportunities for success. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are focused on.

As I mentioned, this is not a real issue. We know that because the Minister of Tourism and Sport, who introduced this bill, even said so. He could not produce any data to explain why this bill is being brought forward. He couldn't outline any number of transgender, apparently transgender athletes that are in women's sports. There was no researched need or evidenced need that brought this forward. This is based on satisfying conspiracy theorists within the governing party's base, and they've done that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's go over what this bill does. Ironically, although the minister and the government and the Premier will talk about what this bill does, very little of it is actually contained in this bill itself. The bill primarily requires school boards, universities and postsecondary institutions, and provincial sports organizations to maintain policies around fairness and safety, but really specifically they're focused on eligibility. Surprisingly, although we know that the minister has talked about this bill being about, you know, establishing "biological-female-only divisions" and that sex registration at birth would determine competitive eligibility, none of these terms are actually used within the bill. Where it's really going to happen, Mr. Speaker – we know it's going to happen – is in the regulations. That's very clear.

Let's also be clear that the reason why it's happening in the regulations and not here in the Legislative Assembly is because they want to do this in the cover of darkness. Regulations don't come before this House. They don't get the transparency of all the readings and the potential amendments and the debate and the questions that happen in this space. Those are going to be hidden in regulations that can be signed off by an order in council. But we know, because the minister has said what's going to be in there, it is to establish "biological-female-only divisions."

Now, I would think that if we're going to talk about fairness and safety in sport, there are so many other things that we can talk about that will actually have an impact on making sure there is fairness and safety in sport. One of those might be actually making sure that we're doing all we can to encourage more people to participate in sports, more young people in particular. We all recognize the value of sports and recreation for mental health, physical health. We know what it builds in terms of skills and opportunities. We know young people, if they excel in certain sports, get the opportunity to go to postsecondary. They may go on to compete, and of course, Mr. Speaker, just today we were very honoured and privileged to have in this Assembly members of Team Canada who represented our country in the Paris Olympics, extraordinary Canadians, extraordinary Albertans,

who we are all so deeply proud of. Well, they got there because they were able to participate in sports.

Let's be clear. Like, hey, I've got two kids who love to play sports. I'm not sure that either of my kids are ever going to become professional and competitive sports players, but they sure do love it. They get to spend time with, obviously, their friends and their peers. They're learning skills, not just physical skills but actually how to work as a team. They're learning leadership skills, all the things that we want kids to do.

If we're really truly talking about fairness and safety in sport, we should be talking about: how do we encourage more young people to do that? By the way, that also comes with the support for all the infrastructure that's required around sports. If we want more kids to participate in sports, we need to make sure that parents are able to afford those sports, that they're able to have the time to do that, and in a time when we're actually in an affordability crisis in this province, fewer and fewer parents are able to do that.

I'll be honest. Even in my family we had to make some difficult decisions about how many activities my kids can participate in because it is getting very expensive, and I know that I live in relative privilege. So, certainly, access to sports is really important. Making sure that we have infrastructure for sports is equally important, too, but by the way this is a government that has for five years been dramatically underfunding infrastructure, particularly at the municipal level, which goes to things like recreation centres, which goes to things like encouraging spaces for families and kids to participate in sports. Those are the things that should be happening. It's not what's happening here.

This bill is really going to allow the minister to now suddenly get reporting on and require these organizations and school boards and universities to have policies around eligibility. Now, as I said, Mr. Speaker, you're not going to see a lot of this stuff in the actual bill; it's all going to come out in the regulations. But, as the minister has said, this is about establishing "biological-female-only divisions."

Now, what's interesting about this bill – there are so many levels to it that are quite offensive, but one of the levels that is offensive is that obviously this is only designed to focus on trans girls and trans women. That's what the focus is. They don't seem to have a problem, of course, with trans men participating in sports because there's a sexist misperception there that they're not going to be challenging or be that competitive. It's only targeting trans women, so basically this is only addressing female-oriented sports.

Now, you know, I had an interesting situation, Mr. Speaker. I was looking through this bill and thinking about the regulations and knowing what the minister has said is coming, that it's going to be requiring, basically – whether at school board level, postsecondary, or these provincial sports organizations, there could be situations where girls or women who are participating in sport will be asked to prove their gender. Their "sex registration at birth," are the words that the minister used.

I had an interesting thought about: what does that exactly mean? I have a nine-year-old daughter. She's just played in a coed handball team. I realize – and I don't know yet – it's not in the act, but I understand this probably won't apply to her level of sport, you know, grade 3, grade 4 level of handball.

I do hope that one day – she's a pretty athletic kid – maybe in five years or so, when she's 14, she might want to in junior high or maybe going into high school play on her high school basketball team. She likes basketball. Or potentially a volleyball team; I have a feeling she'd be pretty good at volleyball, so maybe she's going to want to do that.

Well, the way this is set up is that if a complaint is made, it would be – by the way, it's complaint driven. Somebody could complain that my daughter either is playing too well, so they're questioning

whether or not she is a girl, or perhaps she doesn't look girlish enough. Somebody can make a challenge about my 14-year-old daughter and say: prove she's a girl.

Now, what's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the language the minister has used is: sex registration at birth. Now, that is a different thing than a birth certificate, right? Most parents have a birth certificate. Not all, because you do actually have to pay and fill out the forms and get that. But let's say that you have a birth certificate. Now, birth certificates – it's true – by law can be changed, right? You know, you can make some changes based on name changes, and, yes, if there has been a sex reassignment, there could be a gender change on a birth certificate. I think it's very specific that the minister has used the language of: sex registration at birth.

What that means is that they're not actually saying that – if a complaint is made about my daughter playing too well or looking not girlish enough, it won't be sufficient for me to just provide a birth certificate. I actually have to provide sex registration at birth. What is that, Mr. Speaker? I did a little digging. That's actually something that's held by vital statistics Alberta, right? It's actually documentation that they keep when a baby is born. They register that sex of that child at birth, and that is different than a birth certificate. I don't get that as a parent; that's kept by vital statistics.

4:10

So here's the scenario. Just work with me here through this, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about the offensiveness, first of all, of somebody making a complaint that my daughter may not look girlish enough or plays too competitively and they suspect maybe she might be a biological boy. My school board level is required to ask me as a parent for sex registration at birth. I don't have that. I have a birth certificate. And, by the way, according to this process they won't trust me as a parent to provide a birth certificate because I could have changed that birth certificate. I'm not even trusted as a parent to provide proof of the gender of my daughter. They're going to go to vital statistics.

Now, I don't know if the school board is going to go to it or they're going to make me go get it, if they're going to make me pay for it. But just think for a moment about that process of a school board having to tell a parent: not only has somebody complained about your child not looking like the right gender, maybe playing too competitively, but we don't even trust you, parent, to provide proof of what her gender is. So they don't trust me as a parent. More importantly, what message does that send to my daughter about sport? What message does that send to the school board and the teachers who have to go, "I'm so sorry; you're going to have to prove your gender"? That is so fundamentally humiliating, and it is so disrespectful and so undermines the dignity of both that child as well as myself as a parent.

But that's what this government is setting up to do. They're setting up a system where we're going to be suspicious of children and we're going to discourage them from participating in sport. I cannot imagine how any of that is the priority of any government, let alone a government who's governing during a time when the health care system is in crisis, when schools are jam-packed to the brim and kids have more complex needs than ever before and they do not have the support they need, and where the cost of living continues to go up in a disproportionate fashion in Alberta than it is in any other part of the country. This is what this government is setting up to do, and frankly it is despicable, and it is disgusting.

It is also not only sending a terrible message to young people and to trans people, by the way, that they should be treated with suspicion but also not fundamentally based in any data whatsoever. There is zero data to support that transgender athletes are disproportionately taking advantage or are overly competitive, that somehow, you know,

it's unfair for their participation in sports. It's such a small number of people, but also there's no data to support this.

Then apart from that, we also have all the organizations in our province that do professional sports, who were not consulted, who said – this is from the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference. Quote: "This is not something that anyone identified as an urgent matter, that required immediate attention or any attention at all, to be frank. We know that there's a problem of other athletes in other jurisdictions now being able to come and compete here in Alberta. It affects our ability to host tournaments, to be competitive at the postsecondary level. If we create coed divisions or we create biological-female-only divisions, our athletes will not be able to compete in the same way with associations and athletes from other parts of the country. It's going to undermine our very competitive sports system here, and we should be proud of our sports system here."

By the way, these are concerns that have been raised by a number of athletic organizations, who said: we don't need this. By the way, hats off to many of the – like, I know Mount Royal's athletic program and others have said: you know, we actually pride ourselves on having an inclusive athletics program. Thank you for them to stand up for their athletes and to make sport an inclusive place. That's how we attract the best, and that's how we actually develop the best athletes, by being inclusive and by encouraging safety and fairness in sport, which is not at all what this bill does.

Mr. Speaker, once again, in this space we're wasting time on this government's conspiracy theories when we should be spending time on the issues that make a difference to Albertans, and once again the government has introduced a bill that does nothing like that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Members, I encourage you – if you are wanting to speak to one another in the Chamber, please keep it down to a minimum, and if you need to go into more discussion, there are lounges available for you to go to.

I will recognize the Member from Lacombe-Ponoka next, to be followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Irene Parlby, one of my favourites and one of the Famous Five, was an extraordinary woman. She was the first Alberta woman to be appointed a cabinet minister and only the second in Canada. What has made her extraordinary is her insight and her courage. You see, Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada, in their interpretation of the British North America Act, ruled in 1928, when Mrs. Parlby was 60 years old, that women were not persons. It wasn't until 1927 that the majority of Canadian women could actually vote in federal elections. This was a victory and meant women could also run for office, and this was first realized in 1921 when Agnes Macphail became the first Canadian woman elected to the House of Commons. As much as this was a win, women were still excluded from the Senate as they were deemed nonpersons.

It didn't take long for Emily Murphy, Canada's first female judge, to take action. She invited four other women to her home right here in Edmonton, and together they sent a letter of petition to the Governor General of Canada to challenge the interpretation of the word "persons" in the BNA Act. The issue was directed to the Supreme Court of Canada to consider this question: does the word "persons" in section 24 of the British North America Act, 1867, include female persons?

Unfortunately, all five justices ruled unanimously on April 24, 1928, that women were not persons under section 24 of the BNA Act. This was obviously very disappointing but not the end of this story. The Famous Five knew they could appeal to the Judicial

Committee of the Privy Council in London, England, and they did just that. The Privy Council, after much deliberation, reversed the ruling of the Supreme Court, and on October 18, 1929, women were deemed to be persons and eligible to become members of the Senate of Canada.

Lord Sankey himself delivered the decision to the Privy Council and remarked: “The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who . . . ask why the word ‘person’ should include females, the obvious answer is, why should it not?” That was almost 100 years ago that these brave and tireless women persevered simply to be acknowledged as a person.

Today there’s a different battle for women’s rights, and it’s the right to be protected in sport. Women have historically been active in their own category, and there is evidence of women being involved in sporting activities throughout all of history. Even in the modern Olympics women have been involved since 1900. In recent years the right for women to be protected in a women’s-only category has been threatened and even taken away. Almost daily there are new reports of women being forced to compete against men with multiple negative consequences.

In 2023 Payton McNabb, a high school volleyball player from North Carolina, was hit with a spiked ball from a transgender woman and sustained significant injuries that still plague her today. She is now speaking out. You see, Mr. Speaker, the male punch is over 160 per cent stronger than the female punch. This is relevant not just for boxing but also related activities, like volleyball.

Riley Gaines is another of the most high-profile female athletes who we know whose right to fair competition was taken away. A 12-time all-American swimmer, Riley was at the top of her game and ranked second in the country when she came up against a transgender swimmer at the NCAA division 1 women’s swimming championships. This individual, Lia Thomas, had competed in the men’s division through postsecondary years and partway through these years transitioned and began to compete against women. Oddly, at that championship race Riley and Lia tied. This is an extremely rare anomaly in a sport that is timed to the hundredth of a second. Sadly, that trophy was given to Lia with no reasonable explanation. Today Riley is also campaigning full-time for women’s rights to fair sport and for biological women to compete exclusively with biological women.

Finally, my friend April Hutchinson also has a story to tell. April is a record-holding powerlifter, Canadian women’s champion, and a three-time member of our Team Canada. When a transgender woman entered her sport, April was banned for two years for speaking out in an attempt to protect women and fairness in her sport, a sport that saved her life. You see, Mr. Speaker, April has experienced significant trauma in her life, and that trauma led her to doubt her identity, to question her femininity, and eventually enter into very self-destructive behaviours that threatened her very life. Turning to alcohol, April found she felt better temporarily, so she drank more, until many years later she discovered she had to have alcohol just to function.

4:20

Thankfully, April went into rehab. She stopped drinking and began powerlifting and found a new purpose in life. When she was suspended from her sport, a sport that saved her life, April was shocked. It was inconceivable to her that she should be forced to compete against an individual who had a natural and biological advantage over her that she nor any woman could ever compete with. This is significant. For April it means she has been invalidated and robbed, and those are her words.

These are just three stories of life-changing events in three women’s lives, but it’s just so much bigger than just these three stories. I

personally have a friend, Peighton, who joined us here today in the gallery. She’s a very talented basketball player on scholarship at one of our postsecondary schools here in Alberta, who walked away from her scholarship and program after receiving a serious concussion from a transgender individual on the basketball court. This is why individuals like Peighton and others are supporting this legislation.

A report compiled by Reem Alsalem, a UN special rapporteur on violence against women and girls, was brought before the UN General Assembly this very fall. The report exposed how nearly 900 medals have been lost by more than 600 female athletes in 29 different sports.

Critics could respond to this as just merely anecdotal, so let’s go a little deeper. Hilton and Lundberg, in their paper entitled *Transgender Women in the Female Category of Sport*, begin by stating the obvious, that males do have a distinct advantage over females in competitive sport. Males typically have a 10 to 50 per cent advantage in performance gap over females, depending on the sport. In activities related to muscle mass and explosive strength, like powerlifting, that performance gap is even more pronounced.

In regard to transgender women the criteria established by the International Olympic Committee, the IOC, in relation to testosterone suppression was examined. Studies show that even when testosterone is suppressed, the performance gap or muscular advantage enjoyed by transgender women is only minimally reduced. Additionally, Karolinska Institutet published the results of researcher Tommy Lundberg examining changes in muscle mass and strength in transgender individuals. The study goes back five years, to 2019. What Lundberg discovered was that the transgender women did not lose strength at all, despite inhibited testosterone production. In addition, the effect on muscle mass of the transgender women was less pronounced than many people previously thought, losing only 5 per cent of their muscle volume over the thigh muscles. The studies coming out now – and there are many – are showing that in sport biological men, even if they have transitioned and are suppressing testosterone, still have a significant and measurable advantage over biological women.

Mr. Speaker, individuals like Irene Parlby, one of the Famous Five, whose picture we see in this very building, are still talked about today, held in high esteem because they were courageous. They knew the truth about women’s rights, and they acted on it. It is a tremendous and humble privilege to stand on the shoulders of those like Irene Parlby, a former MLA in the area where I now get to serve. Times may change, society may change, but women’s rights do not change.

Today we debate this bill, and today my beautiful and courageous friend Peighton, who sat in this gallery, supports this bill, and my friend April, a woman who was saved by her sport and is now watching online as we speak, supports this bill. Today, as I stand on the shoulders of women’s rights activist Irene Parlby, I support this bill, and I encourage all my colleagues to do likewise for Peighton, for April, for our sisters and our daughters and all future generations of women.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure for me to rise and speak to Bill 29 and make three points. One is touching on this issue of science that the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka has discussed a little bit. I’d like to rebut some of her arguments. If I get to it, I would also like to highlight some unintended consequences from the government snitch line that the minister is setting up with this bill, and then I hope to end with some helpful suggestions for actually raising the profile of women’s sports and doing more to actually create fairness in sport here in the province of Alberta.

With respect to science we heard the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka as well as the minister for sport refer to this report by the special rapporteur to the United Nations on women and gender-based violence. There is a quote in there, that the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka said, about the hundreds of medals that have been stripped from women competing in dozens of sports, and if you look at the footnote for that in the report, that claim is made by an organization called the Womens Liberation Front, which according to their website also unapologetically supports abortion on demand. So I look forward to the members opposite also endorsing the other work that the Womens Liberation Front is proposing.

Regardless, Mr. Speaker... [interjections] I hear the minister of sports is obviously rushing off to draft the legislation that will guarantee abortion on demand for women in Alberta. I can tell you that many women will be excited to see that.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

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

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Schow: I appreciate the wit of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. It's often welcome in this Chamber and often not welcome in this Chamber. But I am not rushing anywhere, Mr. Speaker, to draft legislation for on-demand abortion. That would certainly be imputing false motives against me, a member of this Chamber. I would ask that that member apologize and withdraw. That's a ridiculous comment that he just said.

The Acting Speaker: I'll recognize the Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would note that at the moment that this occurred, there was a considerable amount of heckling coming from the government side. Certainly, there are better ways for government members to express their concerns if they have them and certainly better than, I'd say, raising what is not a point of order.

What I would say is that the member did not, to what I heard – and, again, I do not have the benefit of the Blues. I heard the

member making a joke. I think quite clearly it was humour, despite the fact that the Government House Leader, the minister, may not have appreciated that humour. He was not stating unequivocally that this was something that was occurring. [interjections] Now again the members are heckling while I think most members have remained relatively respectful during this debate.

Again, Mr. Speaker, from what I heard – and, again, I do not have the benefit of the Blues – I would not consider this a point of order. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Any others wishing to speak to the point of order?

We were doing so well. I will rule that this is not a point of order, but it was skating awfully close to the line. I recognize the concern that the Government House Leader has brought forward. We have to be very careful that we're not imputing false motives onto one another. I would caution the members, all members, to use their discretion and try and ensure that they're not causing problems with regard to disorderly conduct within this Chamber.

Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, continue.

Debate Continued

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm always happy to skate close to the line and prove my gender if anybody across the way is concerned about me skating in a league that I don't belong in.

But I wanted to get back to this claim that has been made in this special rapporteur's report about the hundreds of medals that have been lost by women athletes. That comes from an organization called the Womens Liberation Front, allegedly. There's no reference in the report to the actual document that was used to support that claim, nor can you find any such document if you go to the Womens Liberation Front's website, so we can only assume that this number is completely made up, because nobody presents any evidence that it actually is supported by any data.

The Acting Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(2) the Assembly stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 31st Legislature - 1st Session (2023-2024)

Activity to Thursday, November 21, 2024

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

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

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

Bill 1 — Alberta Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act, 2023 (Smith)

First Reading — 10 (*Oct. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 57-58 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft.*), 96-97 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 145-47 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 147-54 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c6]

Bill 2 — Alberta Pension Protection Act (Horner)

First Reading — 89-90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 154-55 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 274-85 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 336-43 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft.*), 394-400 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 424-30 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 522-30 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 552-59 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 565 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 583-90 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 cA-29.5]

Bill 3 — Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Amendment Act, 2023 (Williams)

First Reading — 22 (*Oct. 31, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 90-93 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft.*), 180-87 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 272-73 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 307-09 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 334-36 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c10]

Bill 4 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 55 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 159-63 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 155-56 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 187-90 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 309-13 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 336 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c13]

Bill 5* — Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023 (Horner)

First Reading — 55-56 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 156-57 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 190-97 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 265-72 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 403-09 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 430-35 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 456 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*), 519-22 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted*), 559-62, 563-64 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed with amendments on division*)

Third Reading — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted to Committee of the Whole*), 564-55 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 575-83 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2023 c12]

Bill 6 — Public Health Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)

First Reading — 90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 157-58 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 313-20 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 435-38 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 456-62 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 462 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c11]

Bill 7 — Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2023 (Sawhney)

First Reading — 111 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 158-59 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 273-74 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 400-03 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 423-24 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 514-15 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c7]

Bill 8 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)

First Reading — 209 (*Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 299-307 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 438-41 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 515-18 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 546-52 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 564 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 569-75 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c8]

Bill 9 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Schow)

First Reading — 478 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 513-14 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 546 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 590-92 (*Dec. 7, 2023 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c9]

Bill 10 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 673 (*Mar. 12, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 705-16 (*Mar. 14, 2024 aft.*), 868-73 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft.*), 904-05 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 899-901 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 970-75 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1003-05 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1005-09 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1040-43 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c4]

Bill 11 — Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)

First Reading — 685 (*Mar. 13, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 976-90 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1009-15 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1091-96 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1217-20 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1334-1341 (*May 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1448-55 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024, except section 1, which comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 c6]

Bill 12* — Consumer Protection (Life Leases) Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 727 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1015-22 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1043-46 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft.*), 1096-102 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1135-40 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1220 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1239-48 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1367-74 (*May 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024; SA 2024 c3]

Bill 13 — Real Property Governance Act (Guthrie)

First Reading — 779 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1102-09 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1132-35 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1161-63 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1220-28 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1341-43 (*May 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1395-1400 (*May 9, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024, with some sections deemed to have come into force on March 21, 2024; SA 2024 cR-5.3]

Bill 14 — Appropriation Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 791 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 855-63 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 887-93 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), 903 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 920-24 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c1]

Bill 15 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 841 (*Mar. 25, 2024 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 863-68 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 893-99 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), 901-04 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 924 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*), 920 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft.*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c2]

Bill 16 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 935-36 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1127-32 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1248-53 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft.*), 1279-82 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1456-60 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1490-92 (*May 15, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c7]

Bill 17 — Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act (Williams)

First Reading — 959 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1156-61 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft.*), 1272-79 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1361-67 (*May 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1464-66 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 cC-1.5]

Bill 18* — Provincial Priorities Act (Smith)

First Reading — 993 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1122-27 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1209-17 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1253-60 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft.*), 1329-34 (*May 7, 2024 aft.*), 1533-40 (*May 21, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1540-42 (*May 21, 2024 aft.*), 1569-77 (*May 22, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1664-68 (*May 28, 2024 aft.*), 1692-99 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 cP-35.5]

Bill 19 — Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Neudorf)

First Reading — 1177 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1344-48 (*May 7, 2024 aft.*), 1400-03 (*May 9, 2024 aft.*), 1455-56 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1460-64 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1492-96 (*May 15, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c8]

Bill 20* — Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (McIver)

First Reading — 1271 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1374-82 (*May 8, 2024 aft.*), 1562-69 (*May 22, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1591-94 (*May 23, 2024 aft.*), 1669-75 (*May 28, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1699-1700 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1712-13 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1729-35 (*May 29, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation, except ss 2(24) and (25), which come into force on January 1, 2025; SA 2024 c11]

Bill 21 — Emergency Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)

First Reading — 1394 (*May 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1508-19 (*May 16, 2024 aft.*), 1542-48 (*May 21, 2024 aft.*), 1634-41 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1649-50 (*May 27, 2024 eve.*), 1675-81 (*May 28, 2024 aft.*), 1683-84 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1700-01 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1704--11 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 30, 2024; SA 2024 c9]

Bill 22 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 1447 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1594-1600 (*May 23, 2024 aft.*), 1641-48 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1650 (*May 27, 2024 eve.*), 1684-90 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1700-01 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1713-15 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1735-41 (*May 29, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 c10]

Bill 24 — Alberta Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2024 (Amery)

First Reading — 1754-55 (*Oct. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1788-1805 (*Oct. 29, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1819-36 (*Oct. 30, 2024 aft.*), 2051-58 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., adjourned, amendments introduced*), 2082 (*Nov. 21, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 25 — Early Learning and Child Care Amendment Act, 2024 (Jones)

First Reading — 1818 (*Oct. 30, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1855-56 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft.*), 1907-12 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft.*), 2027-29 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 26 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2) (LaGrange)

First Reading — 1848 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 1900-07 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft.*), 1969-77 (*Nov. 7, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 27 — Education Amendment Act, 2024 (Nicolaides)

First Reading — 1848 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1912-20 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft.*), 2020-27 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 28 — Meat Inspection Amendment Act, 2024 (Sigurdson, RJ)

First Reading — 1818 (*Oct. 30, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1854-55 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft.*), 1966-69 (*Nov. 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2058-60 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2066-68 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 29 — Fairness and Safety in Sport Act (Schow)

First Reading — 1848-49 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1934-40 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft.*), 2088-92 (*Nov. 21, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 30 — Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 1868 (*Nov. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1946-53 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft.*), 2068-70 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2082-88 (*Nov. 21, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 31 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Amery)

First Reading — 1898 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2029-35 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 32 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2) (S) (Horner)

First Reading — 1868 (*Nov. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1940-46 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 33 — Protection of Privacy Act (Glubish)

First Reading — 1931 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2060-66 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 34 — Access to Information Act (Nally)

First Reading — 1931 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2035-38 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 35 — All-season Resorts Act (Schow)

First Reading — *(Nov. 7, 2024 aft., passed)*

Bill 36 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Schow)

First Reading — *(Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed)*

Bill 201 — Alberta Health Care Insurance (Access Fees) Amendment Act, 2023 (Brar)

First Reading — 90 *(Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 114-25 *(Nov. 6, 2023 aft.)*, 234-37 *(Nov. 20, 2023 aft., reasoned amendment agreed to on division; not proceeded with)*

Bill 202 — Education (Class Size and Composition) Amendment Act, 2023 (Chapman)

First Reading — 209 *(Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 237-46 *(Nov. 20, 2023 aft.)*, 358-64 *(Nov. 27, 2023 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with)*

Bill 203 — Foreign Credential Advisory Committee Act (Dyck)

First Reading — 111 *(Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 364-70 *(Nov. 27, 2023 aft.)*, 479-86 *(Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 730-43 *(Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed)*

Third Reading — 805-12 *(Mar. 25, 2024 aft., passed on division)*

Royal Assent — *(Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on June 28, 2024; SA 2024 cF-16.5]

Bill 204 — Municipal Government (National Urban Parks) Amendment Act, 2023 (Lunty)

First Reading — 332 *(Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 486-92 *(Dec. 4, 2023 aft.)*, 649-58 *(Mar. 11, 2024 aft., passed on division)*

Committee of the Whole — 812-17 *(Mar. 25, 2024 aft.)*, 938-48 *(Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed on division)*

Third Reading — 1059-66 *(Apr. 15, 2024 aft., passed on division)*

Royal Assent — *(May 16, 2024 aft.)* [Comes into force May 16, 2024; SA 2024 c5]

Bill 205 — Housing Statutes (Housing Security) Amendment Act, 2023 (Irwin)

First Reading — 510 *(Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 658-62 *(Mar. 11, 2024 aft.)*, 948-50 *(Apr. 8, 2024 aft.)*, 1066-71 *(Apr. 15, 2024 aft.)*, 1178-81 *(Apr. 22, 2024 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with)*

Bill 206 — Child and Youth Advocate (Parent and Guardian Advisor) Amendment Act, 2024 (Cyr)

First Reading — 917-18 *(Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 1181-90 *(Apr. 22, 2024 aft.)*, 1294-1300 *(May 6, 2024 aft., passed)*

Bill 207 — Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education (Valuing Skilled Workers) Amendment Act, 2024 (Hoyle)

First Reading — 1152-53 *(Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 1300-09 *(May 6, 2024 aft.)*, 1417-20 *(May 13, 2024 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with)*

Bill 208 — Psycho-Educational Assessment Access Act (Hayter)

First Reading — 1359 *(May 8, 2024 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 1420-29 *(May 13, 2024 aft., adjourned)*

Bill 209 — Reconciliation Implementation Act (Arcand-Paul)

First Reading — 1868-69 *(Nov. 4, 2024 aft., passed)*

Bill 211 — Arts and Creative Economy Advisory Council Act (Ceci)

First Reading — 1590 *(May 23, 2024 aft., passed)*

Bill 212 — Organ and Tissue Donor Information Agreement Act (Metz)

First Reading — 1663 *(May 28, 2024 aft., passed)*

Bill 214 — Eastern Slopes Protection Act (Notley)

First Reading — 1729 (*May 29, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — St. Joseph's College Amendment Act, 2023 (Sigurdson, L)

First Reading — 289 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*), 421 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with*)

Second Reading — 455 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 530 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c14]

Bill Pr2* — Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta Amendment Act, 2024 (Justin Wright)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

Second Reading — 1633 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1691 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1711 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 30, 2024]

Bill Pr3 — Providence Renewal Centre Amendment Act, 2024 (Calahoo Stonehouse)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

Second Reading — 1633 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1691 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1711 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 30, 2024]

Bill Pr4 — Rosebud School of the Arts Amendment Act, 2024 (Petrovic)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

Second Reading — 1633-34 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1691 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1711-12 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 30, 2024]

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