



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon. | Union Station | NDP |
| BALCAEN, Wayne | Brandon West | PC |
| BEREZA, Jeff | Portage la Prairie | PC |
| BLASHKO, Tyler | Lagimodière | NDP |
| BRAR, Diljeet | Burrows | NDP |
| BUSHIE, Ian, Hon. | Keewatinook | NDP |
| BYRAM, Jodie | Agassiz | PC |
| CABLE, Renée, Hon. | Southdale | NDP |
| CHEN, Jennifer | Fort Richmond | NDP |
| COMPTON, Carla | Tuxedo | NDP |
| COOK, Kathleen | Roblin | PC |
| CORBETT, Shannon | Transcona | NDP |
| CROSS, Billie | Seine River | NDP |
| DELA CRUZ, Jelynn | Radisson | NDP |
| DEVGAN, JD | McPhillips | NDP |
| EWASKO, Wayne | Lac du Bonnet | PC |
| FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon. | St. Johns | NDP |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin | Steinbach | PC |
| GUENTER, Josh | Borderland | PC |
| HIEBERT, Carrie | Morden-Winkler | PC |
| JOHNSON, Derek | Interlake-Gimli | PC |
| KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon. | Assiniboia | NDP |
| KHAN, Obby | Fort Whyte | PC |
| KINEW, Wab, Hon. | Fort Rouge | NDP |
| KING, Trevor | Lakeside | PC |
| KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon. | Dauphin | NDP |
| LAGASSÉ, Bob | Dawson Trail | Ind. |
| LAMOUREUX, Cindy | Tyndall Park | Lib. |
| LINDSEY, Tom, Hon. | Flin Flon | NDP |
| LOISELLE, Robert | St. Boniface | NDP |
| MALOWAY, Jim | Elmwood | NDP |
| MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon. | Notre Dame | NDP |
| MOROZ, Mike, Hon. | River Heights | NDP |
| MOSES, Jamie, Hon. | St. Vital | NDP |
| MOYES, Mike, Hon. | Riel | NDP |
| NARTH, Konrad | La Vérendrye | PC |
| NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon. | Wolseley | NDP |
| NESBITT, Greg | Riding Mountain | PC |
| OXENHAM, Logan | Kirkfield Park | NDP |
| PANKRATZ, David | Waverley | NDP |
| PERCHOTTE, Richard | Selkirk | PC |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle | Turtle Mountain | PC |
| REDHEAD, Eric | Thompson | NDP |
| ROBBINS, Colleen | Spruce Woods | PC |
| SALA, Adrien, Hon. | St. James | NDP |
| SANDHU, Mintu, Hon. | The Maples | NDP |
| SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon. | Rossmere | NDP |
| SCHOTT, Rachelle | Kildonan-River East | NDP |
| SCHULER, Ron | Springfield-Ritchot | PC |
| SIMARD, Glen, Hon. | Brandon East | NDP |
| SMITH, Bernadette, Hon. | Point Douglas | NDP |
| STONE, Lauren | Midland | PC |
| WASYLIW, Mark | Fort Garry | Ind. |
| WHARTON, Jeff | Red River North | PC |
| WIEBE, Matt, Hon. | Concordia | NDP |
| WOWCHUK, Rick | Swan River | PC |
| <i>Vacant</i> | The Pas-Kameesak | |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Justice Second Report

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its second—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on May 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Long-Bladed Weapon Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des armes à lame longue*
- **Bill (No. 9)** – *The Street Weapons Control Act / Loi sur la réglementation des armes de rue*
- **Bill (No. 34)** – *The Interprovincial Subpoena Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les subpoenas interprovinciaux*
- **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des commissions scolaires du Manitoba*
- **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Elections Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi électorale*
- **Bill (No. 42)** – *The Motor Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act / Loi modifiant diverses lois en matière de véhicules automobiles*
- **Bill (No. 44)** – *The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2026 / Loi corrective de 2026*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BALCAEN
- Mr. BLASHKO
- Mr. BRAR
- Mr. EWASKO
- Hon. Min. SCHMIDT
- Hon. Mr. WIEBE

Your Committee elected Mr. BLASHKO as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. BRAR as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following presentation on Bill (No. 8) – The Long-Bladed Weapon Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des armes à lame longue:

David Grant, Private citizen

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 9)** – *The Street Weapons Control Act / Loi sur la réglementation des armes de rue*:

David Grant, Private citizen

Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des commissions scolaires du Manitoba*:

Dan Ward, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents

Leah Klassen, Manitoba School Boards Association

David Grant, Private citizen

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 42)** – *The Motor Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act / Loi modifiant diverses lois en matière de véhicules automobiles*:

David Grant, Private citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 9)** – *The Street Weapons Control Act / Loi sur la réglementation des armes de rue*:

Denys Volkov, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Your Committee received the following six written submissions on **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des commissions scolaires du Manitoba*:

John Klassen, Garden Valley School Division Board of Trustees

Sandy Nemeth, Louis Riel School Division Board of Trustees

Sandra Davies, Evergreen School Division

Leslie Fernandes, Flin Flon School Division Board of Trustees

Tara Smith, St. James Assiniboia School Division Board of Trustees

Jennie Parsonage, Prairie Spirit School Division Board of Trustees

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 42)** – *The Motor Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act / Loi modifiant diverses lois en matière de véhicules automobiles*

Carson Callum, Manitoba Beef Producers

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Long-Bladed Weapon Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des armes à lame longue*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 9)** – *The Street Weapons Control Act / Loi sur la réglementation des armes de rue*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 34)** – *The Interprovincial Subpoena Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les subpoenas interprovinciaux*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des commissions scolaires du Manitoba*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 4 of the English version of the Bill be amended in the proposed clause 51.1(e) by striking out "the liaison" and substituting "a liaison".

- **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Elections Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi électorale*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 42)** – *The Motor Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act / Loi modifiant diverses lois en matière de véhicules automobiles*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 44)** – *The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2026 / Loi corrective de 2026*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Blashko: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Social
and Economic Development
Third Report**

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Clerk: Your Standing—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on May 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 26)** – *The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Eliminating Mandatory Overtime for Nurses) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (fin de l'imposition d'heures supplémentaires aux infirmiers)*
- **Bill (No. 27)** – *The Declaration of Principles for Patient Health Care Act and Amendments to The Health System Governance and Accountability Act / Loi sur la déclaration de principes sur les soins de santé offerts aux patients et modification de la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé*
- **Bill (No. 28)** – *The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Nurse-to-Patient Ratios) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (ratios infirmier-malade)*
- **Bill (No. 32)** – *The Improving Access to Breast Cancer Screening Act / Loi visant à améliorer l'accès au dépistage du cancer du sein*
- **Bill (No. 50)** – *The Pharmaceutical Amendment, Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Public Health Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pharmacies, la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées et la Loi sur la santé publique*

Committee Membership

- *Hon. Min. ASAGWARA*
- *Mrs. COOK*
- *MLA DELA CRUZ*
- *MLA DEVGAN*
- *Mr. PIWNIUK*
- *Hon. Mr. SIMARD*

Your Committee elected MLA DELA CRUZ as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected MLA DEVGAN as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- *Mr. WHARTON*

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 26)** – The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Eliminating Mandatory Overtime for Nurses) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (fin de l'imposition d'heures supplémentaires aux infirmiers):*

David Grant, Private Citizen

Joyce Kristjansson, Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba

Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

*Your Committee heard the following five presentations on **Bill (No. 27)** – The Declaration of Principles for Patient Health Care Act and Amendments to The Health System Governance and Accountability Act / Loi sur la déclaration de principes sur les soins de santé offerts aux patients et modification de la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé:*

David Grant, Private Citizen

Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Nichelle Desilets, Doctors Manitoba

George Fraser, Private Citizen

Joyce Kristjansson, Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba

Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 28)** – The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Nurse-to-Patient Ratios) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (ratios infirmier-malade):

David Grant, Private Citizen

Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Joyce Kristjansson, Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba

Your Committee heard the following four presentations on **Bill (No. 32)** – The Improving Access to Breast Cancer Screening Act / Loi visant à améliorer l'accès au dépistage du cancer du sein:

Jennie Dale, Dense Breasts Canada

Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Jennifer Borgfjord, Breast Screening Advocates Manitoba

David Grant, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 50)** – The Pharmaceutical Amendment, Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Public Health Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pharmacies, la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées et la Loi sur la santé publique:

David Grant, Private Citizen

Nichelle Desilets, Doctors Manitoba

George Fraser, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 26)** – The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Eliminating Mandatory Overtime for Nurses) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (fin de l'imposition d'heures supplémentaires aux infirmiers):

Jennifer Breton, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 27)** – The Declaration of Principles for Patient Health Care Act and Amendments to The Health System Governance and Accountability Act / Loi sur la déclaration de principes sur les soins de santé offerts aux patients et modification de la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé:

Jennifer Breton, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba

Your Committee received the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 28)** – The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Nurse-to-Patient Ratios) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (ratios infirmier-malade):

Sue Vovchuk, Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba

Jennifer Breton, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba

Your Committee received the following five written submissions on **Bill (No. 50)** – The Pharmaceutical Amendment, Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Public Health Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pharmacies, la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées et la Loi sur la santé publique:

Deb Elias, College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba

Laura Panteluk, College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba

Sophia Ali, Manitoba Alliance of Health Regulatory Colleges

Jennifer Breton, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba

Jeff Onyskiw, AbbVie Corporation

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 26)** – The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Eliminating Mandatory Overtime for Nurses) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (fin de l'imposition d'heures supplémentaires aux infirmiers)

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 27)** – The Declaration of Principles for Patient Health Care Act and Amendments to The Health System Governance and Accountability Act / Loi sur la déclaration de principes sur les soins de santé offerts aux patients et modification de la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 28)** – The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Nurse-to-Patient Ratios) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gouvernance et l'obligation redditionnelle au sein du système de santé (ratios infirmier-malade)

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 32)** – *The Improving Access to Breast Cancer Screening Act / Loi visant à améliorer l'accès au dépistage du cancer du sein*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 50)** – *The Pharmaceutical Amendment, Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Public Health Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pharmacies, la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées et la Loi sur la santé publique*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

MLA Dela Cruz: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for McPhillips (MLA Devgan), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Asian Heritage Month

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Today I rise to recognize and celebrate Asian Heritage Month in Manitoba.

I want to commend the member for Fort Richmond (MLA Chen) for her leadership in passing bill 212, The Asian Heritage Month Act, which was unanimously passed in this Chamber in 2024.

Enacting this bill was a defining step in formally recognizing the contributions, stories and lived experiences of Asian communities across Manitoba.

The designation of May as Asian Heritage Month by both the Government of Canada and Province of Manitoba is a testament to the importance of people of Asian descent in our country and in our province.

It serves as a special acknowledgment of the long history and significant contributions of Asian Canadians to the growth and development of our province and our nation.

Honourable Speaker, spanning over 30 countries of origin, the Asian diaspora in our province is among the most—one of the most diverse communities. This reminds us that although we have distinct back-

grounds and origins, we are both in common purpose by our shared hopes and dreams for our children and ourselves.

Despite experiencing discrimination on the local and national level for generations, Asian Manitobans have shared their rich heritage, invaluable skills and diversity of experiences to enhance our communities.

As artists and activists, educators and elected officials, social services workers and business owners, they have helped to grow our province and advance efforts to continue to make Manitoba a wonderful home for so many families.

This month, we honour the vital role Asian Manitobans have played in our history and recognize the pivotal successes they continue to achieve, both here at home and on the global stage.

Honourable Speaker, throughout May and beyond, I hope we can all stand together to protect the future for all Manitobans. Let us remain committed to breaking down barriers and ensuring every generation has the opportunity to thrive, no matter their background or identity.

I encourage all Manitobans to engage in the various programs and activities available during the month of May to learn about and engage with the many diverse Asian communities who call this province home.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I rise today to recognize Asian Heritage Month and to celebrate the many contributions of Asian Canadians to our province and our country.

Asian Manitobans have played a vital role in building Manitoba into the strong, diverse and vibrant province it is here today. From early pioneers to community leaders, entrepreneurs and professionals, and contributions—their contributions have helped shape our economy, strengthen our communities and enrich our cultural fabric.

Across Manitoba, we are proud to be home to thriving Filipino, Punjabi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arab and many other Asian communities. Each brings with it a rich heritage of culture, language and tradition grounded in values such as hard work, respect, perseverance and a strong sense of family and community.

Manitoba's diversity is one of its greatest strengths. When people from different backgrounds come

together with a shared commitment to opportunity, responsibility and community, we all benefit.

This month is also a time to reflect and to stand in solidarity for tragic events like the heartbreaking incident that unfolded last year at the Lupa Lupa [*phonetic*] Filipino event in Vancouver. It is important that we come together, not as separate communities, but as Manitobans and as Canadians united in compassion and support.

Today, we remain committed to fostering communities where everyone feels safe, respected and valued. Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity for all Manitobans to learn, to celebrate cultural traditions and to recognize the individuals and families who continue to contribute to so much of our province.

By embracing respect, understanding and sharing responsibility, we can all continue to build a Manitoba that is welcoming, inclusive and full of opportunity.

Thank you.

* (13:40)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Manju Lodha

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the remarkable life and enduring legacy of Mrs. Manju Lodha, a woman whose contributions as an author, artist, educator and activist have profoundly shaped peace, diversity and the empowerment of women across our province.

Since immigrating to Canada from India in 1972, Manju has dedicated herself to building bridges between communities. Her lengthy career as an educator allowed her to shape young minds with values of inclusion and mutual respect. As a celebrated author, her books, such as *Stories of feelings of you and me* and *Prejudice, pain and peace*, explore the immigrant experience with deep empathy, offering a poignant look at the realities of finding a new home while honouring one's heritage.

For 15 years, she has also been a cornerstone of the Hindu Society of Manitoba, serving as the volunteer co-ordinator for the Sharing Circle of Wellness. What started as a small yoga program has evolved into a vital weekly gathering for over 60 people of diverse backgrounds, with essential presentations on mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Manju is driven by the conviction that art and literature can promote global harmony. Her dedication to service has earned her many notable honours, such

as the distinguished service award from Asian Women of Winnipeg and the Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Advancement of Interreligious Understanding.

What stands out even more than her accolades is Manju's ability to inspire others to find their own voices. Through her community-organizing books, 125 poems and *A World of Faith & Spirituality*, she reminds us that diversity is our greatest strength. Her life is a testament to the profound impact one individual can have through a lifetime of quiet, purposeful service.

Honourable Speaker, I thank many members of her community for joining us here today, and I ask that all members of this House join me in recognizing Manju Lodha for her extraordinary contributions and for her unwavering commitment to a more inclusive Manitoba.

Jitendra Dhruve, Ray Dirks, Sumita Disaras, Ajam Gupta, Charulata Gupta, Kiran Rahi Gupta, Yograhi Gupta, Surekha Joshi, Ganpat Lodha, Jugnu Lodha, Manju Lodha, Madhuri Sareen Suri, Antonio "Tony" Tavarek.

Kimberly McPherson-Klimchuk

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I rise today to recognize an outstanding young Manitoban whose achievements reflect the absolute best of our province.

Kimberly McPherson-Klimchuk, who joins us today, is a grade 12 student at Fisher Branch Collegiate. She has been awarded the prestigious BMO Indigenous Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship through the University of Manitoba. Valued at \$16,000 for over four years, this national scholarship recognizes exceptional leadership, academic excellence and meaningful community involvement.

Kimberly's accomplishments are nothing short of remarkable. She maintains an academic average of above 90 per cent, serves as student council president and has led initiatives such as food hamper drives and school fundraisers. She also has dedicated her time as a coach and referee for youth sports, while excelling in a—as a multi-sport athlete and co-captain of both her volleyball and basketball teams.

A proud member of Peguis First Nation, Kimberly credits her cultural connection and community values for shaping her commitment to leadership and service. Her goal of becoming a registered nurse is inspired by a deep desire for care of others and to give back to her community.

Notably, Kimberly is the first female student from the Lakeshore School Division to receive this honour,

and only the second recipient overall; an achievement that speaks volumes about her dedication and character. Her success is also a testament to the strength of rural Manitoba schools, where students continue to demonstrate they can compete and excel at the highest levels.

Honourable Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Kimberly, along with her mother Cathy Klimchuk, and wish her continued success in her bright future.

Thank you.

Young Nails & Day Spa

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Today, I rise to recognize Young Nails & Day Spa, a true Southdale staple that's right next door to my constituency office.

Behind this incredible business are Thanh Trieu Chau and her daughter Nina Pham, whose journey is one of resilience, determination and hard work.

When Nina was just 18 years old, they made the decision to come to Canada following the terrible tragedy of the Vietnam War. They sold their home to fund their fresh start, and before their arrival, they learned English and trained in nail services with the goal of opening their own salon. Within their first year of living in Canada, they earned their driver's licences, and soon after opened their first salon on Corydon. Within three years, they became Canadian citizens.

In 2015, Nina and Thanh took over Young Nails & Day Spa, where they have now been serving the Southdale community for over a decade. Together, they run the business alongside the small, dedicated team, with Nina managing client services and Thanh overseeing operations.

But their journey hasn't been without some challenges. Like many small businesses, they faced uncertainty during the pandemic, closing their doors for months while still carrying the weight of expenses. When they reopened, the community showed up in full force. That support continues today, as they look ahead to renovations and expanding their space to welcome even more clients.

And after all these years, what always stands out is their commitment to creating a place where clients feel like family. I'm always glad to walk through their doors because I know I'll be welcomed and cared for.

And people often think of successful business owners as men, but Thanh and Nina are proving that's

not the case at all. They've paved their own way as two immigrant women, without the support of any man, and that's a big deal.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking Nina and Thanh, who are at the salon today, for their incredible contributions to Southdale and for the care they bring to their work each and every day.

Cam o'n, *[Thank you,]* Honourable Speaker. Thank you.

Mathew Gustafson

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Today we recognize a leader whose impact on the Brandon School Division has been steady, thoughtful and deeply human.

For more than 20 years, Mathew Gustafson—or as many of us know him, Matt—has devoted himself to public education in Brandon as a teacher, a principal, a senior administrator, and since 2021, as superintendent and CEO.

I'm pleased to welcome Matt and his guests joining us in the gallery here today.

I first met Matt long before I entered this Legislature, when I was serving in policing and he was leading schools. Even then, the qualities people speak of today were unmistakable: a steadfast rock of competency, always prepared, always professional, always ready with the answers we needed. His dedication to students, parents and staff has defined every role he has held.

Throughout his career, Matt's commitment to student safety has been unwavering, a commitment we shared when he and his staff regularly engaged in joint public safety training with myself and members of the Brandon Police Service.

Matt has always put others first. He once said he didn't need to be remembered, only that students had good memories of their time in school. That humility is why we honour him today.

Last August, Matt announced his retirement, and in true Matt fashion, he set it for 2026 to give the board ample time to plan. While he stays involved in education and community, he's joked that his agricultural degree may finally come in handy, helping his brother-in-law run the combine.

Matt, you once said you felt blessed to work alongside such caring staff. Today, we want you to know that that feeling is mutual. Thank you for your service, your compassion and your unwavering commitment to the students and families of Brandon.

Please join me in congratulating Mathew Gustafson, a true leader and a remarkable person.

And, Honourable Speaker, I ask that the names of my guests be entered into Hansard.

Wyatt Baloun, Elizabeth Greig, Lauren Gustafson, Mathew Gustafson, Marilyn Gustafson, Scott Hawryluk.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to oral questions, there are some guests in the gallery I'd like to introduce.

We have seated in the public gallery from St. John's High School 25 students under the direction of Linsey Piel-Glade. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine).

* (13:50)

And we welcome you all here today.

I would further draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Marilyn Zachariah, Adam Zachariah-Harb, Rhyann Zachariah-Harb, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy).

And on behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Mathew Gustafson, Marilyn Gustafson, Lauren Gustafson, Elizabeth Greig, Wyatt Baloun, Scott Hawryluk, who are guests of the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen).

And on behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Affordability Measures for Manitobans Basic Personal Tax Exemption Increase Request

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): This Premier has failed to provide real 'affordability' measures for Manitobans, so we are going to give him another opportunity today. He has still not introduced his budget implementation bill because he once again missed the deadline due to more incompetence by his Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine).

He now demands this entire House—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —agree to quick passage without even seeing this bill.

But, on this side of the House, we've made it very clear that we will bring this bill to a vote this spring session if the Premier commits to making real, measurable, significant improvements to affordability for Manitobans.

Our team has called on this Premier to increase the basic personal exemption to \$30,000. He won't do it, so we'll compromise with him.

Will he increase it to \$21,000 today by giving Manitobans \$1,000 more in their pockets today, yes or no?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, tomorrow Manitobans are going to see a wonderful piece of legislation introduced here in this esteemed Chamber. This year's budget implementation bill is going to take all the tax off of groceries—all the tax off of one of those bills that's been nagging and tormenting Manitobans who are just trying to get by.

Speaking to people in every corner of the province, I can tell you that cutting grocery costs is a top priority. Everyone, it would seem, except for the members opposite, who, in a very ill-advised stunt earlier today, threatened to block this bill to cut your grocery prices. I've got no problem calling somebody's bluff.

And I would say to the members opposite, don't tempt me with a good time. I love question period. And if you don't pass this bill next week, then we're coming back in June. And if you don't pass it in June, we're coming back in July. And we're coming back—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time is expired.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: Let's get a few things clear for the record. Taking your PST off of a bag of chips or a can of pop does not help Manitobans.

Now, let's get another thing clear here. The NDP threatened once again to sit in the summer. You know when the last time the Legislature sat in the summer, was when the NDP raised your taxes again. Under the Greg Selinger government was the last time sat, was when the NDP raised the PST; now they're threatening to raise taxes on you again.

We are offering the Premier a chance to lower taxes for Manitobans, to increase the basic personal

exemption to \$21,000, to give Manitobans \$1,000 back in their bank accounts.

And what does this Premier do? He threatens to sit all summer to raise your taxes? Go for it. Call our—call us. We will sit here all summer. We will work for Manitobans.

Will you do the right thing and support our call for you to increase the basic personal exemption today?

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, it's right there in this year's budget for anyone out there to take a look at on the tax measures page. Taxes are going down in this year's budget by tens of millions of dollars.

Now, in particular, this year's budget bill is going to take all the tax off of groceries. The member opposite said that that's not going to help, but I beg to differ. For the busy parent who, in between getting kids to soccer or to baseball, has to go to the Safeway store, get a rotisserie chicken, get a prepared salad, get a case of drinks and come back to feed the kids, this is real tax relief.

The members opposite—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —can spend the summer explaining to Manitobans why they don't want you to save money on groceries. We're going to keep fighting for you to have a more affordable cost of living.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would remind the Leader of the Official Opposition to always direct his comments, questions through the Chair.

Mr. Khan: More empty threats by this Premier. The Premier knows that he can pass his PST exemption on junk food without sitting for the summer. He knows he can do that on July 1, just like he knows he can remove the gas tax entirely for Manitobans, making life more affordable, just like he knows he can make life more affordable by supporting our basic exemption, of increasing that to \$21,000.

The Premier knows he can do this, yet he refuses to do it. He refuses to make your life more affordable. On our side of the House, we want to put it up to \$1,000 back in your pockets by helping Manitobans.

Will the Premier do the right thing today and support our call to raise the basic personal exemption to \$21,000?

Mr. Kinew: You can't believe anything the member opposite says. You've proved that.

We are going to table a legal opinion here, which says that we do, in fact, need this legislation to pass before July 1 if we want the tax on groceries to come off before July 1.

We're trying to save you money when you go to the grocery store. The PCs want to follow their leader off of a cliff and spend the summer explaining why they want you to pay more when you go to the grocery store.

Before they have their next caucus meeting, I invite each member to read the legal opinion and then let us know. Do you want to sit all summer defending higher grocery prices or do you want to fold now, which we all know that you're going to do in the end, and get on board with our plan to save Manitobans money?

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mr. Khan: The NDP junk tax of 7 cents off a can of pop or a bag of chips is not making life more affordable for Manitobans.

The poverty line is around \$25,000, yet this Premier refuses to provide meaningful relief to Manitobans earning that amount of money. Only this Premier would be so excited to take taxes off a bag of chips or junk food, Honourable Speaker.

Manitobans need help today.

Will the Premier support our call to increase Manitobans' basic personal exemption to \$21,000, helping Manitobans that need it the most, that are living below the poverty line, to keep up to \$1,000 in their bank accounts?

Premier can do the right thing. He can support that today. Will he put his arrogance aside? Will he put his ego aside and do the right thing for Manitobans, or will he continue to smile in the camera with his narcissism?

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, he's going to have a whole summer worth of sitting days to call me names, and that's fine because I'mma be here each and every day fighting to lower your grocery costs.

So, again, for this piece of paper that the members opposite are now reviewing, you will see that, in fact, the Legislative Counsel of our province is say we have to pass this bill before Canada Day in order for all of the taxes to come off of your groceries. So they can

come in here—none of them lawyers—and try to argue with legal counsel, but we're focused on the facts, and we're focused on saving you money.

We want to take the tax off of all food and drinks: rotisserie chickens, salads, sugar-free drinks, nuts, all sorts of things that are healthy, and we want to make it more affordable. They want to go nuts and fend the summer fighting about more expensive groceries. Let's do it.

* (14:00)

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, \$25,000 is the poverty line in Manitoba. This Premier refuses to help those Manitobans that need help the most.

On our side of the House, we've simply called for the basic personal exemption to be increased from \$15,000 to \$21,000, meaning that if you earn \$21,000, you live below the poverty line, you are not going to pay any provincial sales tax. That means you will save \$1,000 a year.

The Premier, with his junk food tax, is offering to save you \$100. We are offering to save you \$1,000, to the Manitobans that need it most.

Will the Premier put his ego aside and support a common sense plan to help Manitobans who need it the most, yes or no?

Mr. Kinew: Earlier this week, I told our caucus to get ready for election—for an election if the PCs so much hint at delaying BITSA.

Now, earlier today, we saw them beg to be put out of their misery. And now that I see how enthusiastic the soon-to-be-retired members are about heading for the doors, I think maybe the better course of action is to grind them down over the summer, grind them down over the fall, grind them down into next year. Let's see how many more PC MLAs resign, quit and leave caucus.

For now, our message is simple: cheaper groceries. For them, good luck explaining to your teammates why you're here in July fighting for more expensive groceries. We're the team that's making life more affordable.

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: I guess the Premier hasn't changed; more empty threats by this Premier.

The Premier knows he can pass his PST junk tax without a vote. He knows he can do it on July 1 if he really wants to. He is throwing empty threats at Manitobans, at this Legislature, to try to intimidate you into believing what he's saying.

Well, the facts are no one believes this Premier. The facts are they know that saving 2 cents on a litre of milk is not helping them and saving 7 cents on a can of pop is not helping them.

What will help those Manitobans living below the poverty line, 21–\$25,000 a year, is an increase of their basic personal exemption. The Premier can do that today. We are offering to work with this government to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

Will he take that offer or is his ego just too big?
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, one of the reasons that we are taking the tax off of all groceries in Manitoba is because Harvest Manitoba and other groups fighting poverty asked for us to take this measure. We're doing this to give help to those who need it most, including your family. Ask yourself if you wouldn't like to pay lower costs when you go to the grocery store. If you say yes, I want lower costs, then you're on our side.

The members opposite have a legal opinion in front of them informing them that they will pass BITSA before June comes around so that we can save you money by Canada Day.

I look forward to the press conference when they announce that they are folding yet again.

Affordability Measures for Manitobans Basic Personal Tax Exemption Increase Request

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Manitobans are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, with more than 50 per cent of Manitobans reporting that they are within \$200 of insolvency. Instead of providing meaningful, long-term tax relief, this NDP government is offering pennies while cancelling indexation and refusing to increase the basic personal amount.

Manitobans can ask themselves, would they rather be saving \$1,000 under our PC plan to increase the basic personal exemption to \$21,000, or \$100 under this NDP's plan?

So will the Premier admit that Manitobans finally deserve to have more money in their pockets and

reverse their decision and increase the basic personal exemption to \$21,000, which they can do today?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, the members opposite can't seem to decide what they want to do. Yesterday it was one number. Today it's a new number.

Here's what we know: we know that our team is making life more affordable for Manitobans. We brought in gas tax cuts. We've lowered your education property tax bill. We froze your hydro rates. We brought in a middle-class tax cut across the board. Manitobans are doing better.

And now, of course, we want to reduce and eliminate PST off all food in grocery stores. There's one group of people in Manitoba who don't seem to want to support that, Honourable Speaker: it's the members opposite. Will they get on board? Will they support making life more affordable? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: Manitobans can save \$100 under this NDP plan or \$1,000 under the PC plan.

We have proposed increasing to \$30,000, but will the NDP, at the very least, commit to increase the basic personal exemption to \$21,000, which they can do before they introduce BITSA today, yes or no?

Will they provide that relief, that necessary relief, that struggling Manitobans need and deserve?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, again, the members opposite clearly cannot pick a lane. They don't know what they're doing, and we could see why we were left with a \$2-billion deficit hole under the members opposite as a parting gift to Manitobans.

Again, what are we doing? We're making life more affordable across the board. Renters, homeowners, we're reducing costs everywhere. And while we do it, we're also being fiscally sustainable in ensuring that we bring forward a fiscally responsible path. We can do both things.

Members opposite, they're going to leave us with another massive deficit. Or what are they going to cut? We have no idea what it is they want to do. We do know that, on this side of the House, we're going to keep doing the work each and every day to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: A PC government will increase and double the basic personal exemption to \$30,000. What we are looking for today is for the NDP to meet us a third of the way and put us in line with Saskatchewan and Alberta by increasing it today to \$21,000.

Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet. They cannot afford healthy food. They cannot afford to put gas in their cars to get to work and to school and to put their kids in sports. This provides real relief: \$1,000 today in Manitobans' pockets could help those struggling Manitobans.

The NDP has the ability to do this today, or will they let Manitobans continue struggling under their measly less-than-\$100 plan?

MLA Sala: I'll translate what the member opposite said. They're going to bring forward more cuts to health care, more cuts to education, more cuts to child care, more cuts to municipalities. That's what they're going to do. That's their record. We know they not only are eager to bring out the chainsaws again to every single area of government service delivery, but we also know they cannot manage their way out of a paper bag when it comes to fiscal management: \$2-billion hole. That's what they left us.

What is this team doing? The lowest deficit in all of Canada while we lower your costs. This team's getting it done.

Provincial Road 227 Upgrades Request for Accelerated Paving Schedule

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): On Provincial Road 227 in the RM of Woodlands, the upgrades to the bridge structures are complete. Yet paving has not been finished and the department is still pointing to the end of July before opening. With the heavy traffic volumes and the pressures of the agricultural season, residents are asking a simple question: The structures are done; why can't this timeline be accelerated?

The RM has stepped up to grade and gravel the detour roads and has asked the Province for support, with no response.

Will the minister explain why this work cannot be expedited and commit to moving up the completion date?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Well, I genuinely thank that member for the question, because it's the first question that the opposition has asked about roads since before the Throne Speech last fall.

So I have a message for rural Manitoba—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Naylor: My message for rural Manitoba: I have spent time in your communities. I'm coming to spend more time in your communities.

But you know who's not bringing your concerns into this House? It's the members of the opposition. They aren't asking questions about the roads that they allowed to fall into 'disrepair'. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

* (14:10)

MLA Naylor: They cut the budget for Transportation year after year after year.

We are investing, we're building up Manitoba, and I can't wait to tell you more in the second question.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Lakeside, on a supplementary question.

Mr. King: Detoured traffic from PR 227 has been running through municipal roads not built for this kind of volume, since October. And now, during a busy agricultural season with increased heavy equipment on the move, residents are dealing with dust, safety risks and constant traffic. With bridge structures complete, there is a clear opportunity to reduce these impacts sooner.

What immediate steps is the minister taking to accelerate paving, ease traffic pressures and address the growing safety concerns in these communities?

MLA Naylor: Safety is the No. 1 priority of our department, and when it comes to specific projects, specific casework, I invite the member to direct his questions to my office. And also, for any municipality members—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Naylor: —who are concerned, I'm happy to meet with them.

But I'm going to take this opportunity since, again, I haven't been asked a question about transportation since last fall. It's my chance to table the Multi-Year Infrastructure Investment Strategy from the end of last year that tells all municipalities about over a thousand projects that are going on right now across the province, including in that member's community.

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, that project is already a year behind, according to their calendar. The RM of Woodlands has formally raised these issues, noting that they've already graded and graveled municipal roads due to the PR 227 detour and asking the Province for support. Again, no response. They received no meaning or over-meaningful response while the project timeline remains unchanged despite the structures being complete.

Why is the government not adjusting timelines in light of these impacts? And will the minister commit today to both responding to the RM and expediting this project to relieve the burden on residents, local infrastructure and the RM's budget?

MLA Naylor: That particular project is in the plan for this year. The work is being done. We are in communication directly with the RM.

You know what else is in the plan for this year: \$3.8 billion of government infrastructure investments. And that's highways, bridges, schools and so much more that we're investing in across the province.

We're investing an additional \$10 million in the critical highways infrastructure budget this year beyond last year. I haven't even had a chance to talk about this because they don't actually care; the opposition doesn't actually care about rural infrastructure. They never ask—

The Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Safety Concerns at Powers Street Apartment Impact on Home-Care Services

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): A recent news report highlighted a deeply troubling situation at a Winnipeg apartment building on Powers Street, where chaos, crime and safety concerns have become so severe that home-care workers are no longer able to safely enter the building.

As a result, the residents, people who rely on basic supports have—like medication, hygiene and daily care, are now being forced to leave their own homes and go across the street to receive essential services. This is not just the housing issue; it's a failure that is directly impacting health-care delivery for some of the most vulnerable Manitobans.

Can the minister explain what she is doing to address these safety concerns so seniors are not scared in their own homes?

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Acting Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I'm pleased to get up and answer this question.

Yesterday, the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness met together with the leadership from N'Dinawemak, Winnipeg housing and rehabilitation corporation, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Manitoba Housing, the Ministry of Justice, to find a solution on how to address the problems at 145 Powers that we're seeing.

And I'm really pleased to report to the House that, as of 1:30 p.m. today, home-care services will resume back at 145 Powers. And that is a testament to the good work of our government working with all of the partners to make sure that everybody has a safe place to live.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

Manitoba Housing—Senior Safety Concerns Request for Government Action to Address

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): This situation raises serious questions about how the housing decisions are being made. Incidents like this are not isolated to Winnipeg. They're happening across this province and—including Spruce Woods. Seniors and those who live in Manitoba Housing used to be able to count on safety and security. Today, they cannot.

Will the minister commit today to restoring age-appropriate and safe housing in Spruce Woods and across Manitoba?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Acting Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): Once again, I want to just put on the record that our government believes that everybody has the right to be safe in their home. I would ask the member for Spruce Woods—again, I know that she's just new to the Chamber—but I would ask her to look around her caucus and ask the folks that were at the Cabinet table: Why?

Just ask them, like, why did they sell off 2,100 social housing units when they were in government? Just ask her colleagues that were so inept when they were at—in that Cabinet why they bothered to sell off social housing units. We're fixing up their mess. It's going to take us a while, but our minister already has brought into the system 2,100 Manitoba—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Robbins: Well, 55+ housing across Manitoba is nothing short of a disaster. After months of warnings about safety, hearing concerns from residents and watching the situation escalate, Manitobans are asking a simple question: Why is this government allowing things to get this bad?

Will the minister take responsibility for the conditions that are making Manitoba unsafe and commit to restoring safety for our seniors today?

MLA Fontaine: I want to just take a moment to say miigwech to the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, and actually the leadership of our entire government and caucus, in respect of our priority to ensure that Manitobans have a safe place to live, that they have adequate housing; that we are the only government, because when they were in government—their failed, you know, seven and a half years of a failed government—they didn't care that people were unsheltered, they didn't care that people were unsafe.

It is our government under the leadership of our minister and our Premier (Mr. Kinew) that is doing that good work to ensure that folks have safe housing, adequate housing. It's going to take us a while to fix up their horrible, horrible, callous mess, but we're getting it done.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Stop the clock.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: There's some guests in the gallery that have to leave right away. We have seated in the public gallery, from École Charleswood, 27 grade 6 students under the direction of Danielle Péloguin [*phonetic*]. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook), and we welcome you here today.

Drinking Water Safety Requirements Consultation with Rural Residents

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, we held back Bill 21, and that was to give this minister time to actually consult with the rural Manitobans who will be directly impacted by his government's overreach.

But instead of listening, the minister is already issuing chlorination orders to Hutterite colonies—including my communities in the constituency of La Vérendrye—of Pineland and Crystal Spring. In 28 years, the Pineland colony has never failed a water test. Their water comes from one of the cleanest

aquifers in Canada, yet this minister still wants to force costly chlorination requirements.

Why is this minister targeting rural communities with more regulation, red tape, instead of working together with the people who have protected their water source for decades?

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, on the subject of water, the PC Party is playing politics, delaying Bill 21, The Drinking Water Safety Amendment Act, designating it as one of their five bills. It's absolutely shameful, it is.

* (14:20)

And you'd think, after the tragedy of Walkerton, where people died and people got sick, that members opposite would be more responsible instead of putting disinformation in the public sphere.

We care about the safety of Manitobans, the safety of drinking water. I would encourage the PC caucus to do exactly that.

The Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, I'll tell you what Manitobans are seeing with Bill 21. It's not a science-based approach. It's a steady expansion of government control over how people live in rural Manitoba. Communities that have responsibly managed safe water systems for generations are now being told that government knows better, regardless of testing results, local realities or costs.

Many rural Manitobans are asking a simple question: If the government is willing to interfere this aggressively with safe, locally managed wells today, what are they willing to control tomorrow?

Will the minister finally admit that Bill 21 isn't about water safety, and it's about expanding government—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —control over rural Manitoba?

MLA Moyes: Honourable Speaker, first of all, we gave a bill briefing to the member opposite, and we answered all of his questions. And, in fact, Bill 21 has nothing to do with what he is referencing.

But let me—I would like to table for the House a picture of the member for La Vérendrye, as well as the member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza), who've been running around our province since last year like

the Keystone Cops and trying to instruct other folks and rile up the community to drink out of pail fill that are not meant for that. And in fact, E. coli was found in that just after. I table for the House the picture of them doing that.

I would ask the member to be more responsible—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Moyes: —and stop politicizing drinking water.

Pantages Playhouse Theatre Restoration Announcement

The Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk).

The honourable member for Seine River.

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): After years of neglect that left downtown Winnipeg struggling, our government is making targeted investments to bring more Manitobans downtown, support local artists and strengthen our communities.

Can the Minister for Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism share with the House our exciting new investment that strengthens economic and cultural growth and builds a stronger downtown for everyone?

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I'd like to thank my colleague for the question.

I was so proud to announce a \$15-million investment to restore the historic Pantages Playhouse Theatre, one of the most iconic buildings in the Exchange District. After years of being overlooked, we are bringing it back to life as a true destination for arts and culture.

Protecting this historic landmark will create jobs and opportunities for local artists, educators and community groups. This is going to be a good thing for Winnipeg, and it's going to be a good thing for Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Nueltin Lake Provincial Park Caribou Herd Killing—Update on Investigation

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): A year ago, I stood in this House and asked the Minister of Natural Resources about the slaughter of a caribou herd in Nueltin Lake Provincial Park. The minister was silent, and he refused to denounce the senseless slaughter.

Now, a year later, can the minister stand up and confirm that those perpetrators were brought to justice?

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): Again, the member talks about a year ago. He's only had the one question in his desk for the last year, so that's why he gets up and asks the same thing over and over.

At the end of the day, for responsible hunting here in Manitoba, when we have that senseless slaughter of big game, that is something that we denounce each and every day. I know that member opposite tries his best to create division across the province when it comes time to big game hunting. We are doing that collaboratively.

So conservation has been investigating, in conjunction with the RCMP, in conjunction with local leadership, because that's what we do. The investigation is still ongoing.

I know as much as that member wants interference in what they do, we want to be able to have this process play out, and we have that engagement with conservation, with RCMP, with local leadership, with local hunters to be able to bring those perpetrators to justice.

Mr. Wowchuk: Even the Premier (Mr. Kinew) stated, and I quote: Anybody who participated in this has no respect for animals, has no right to be able to hunt in this province and will be pursued and held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. End quote.

Well, it's been a year: What's the full extent of the NDP law?

Mr. Bushie: Again, Honourable Speaker, it's about getting it right and doing it thoroughly. So, that's what the conservation office needs, in conjunction with the RCMP and with local people in the community as well, too, being able to truly get to all the facts to be able to bring these perpetrators to justice.

So, that's what our concerns are. If that member is so concerned about hunting, maybe he should be concerned about hunting for a new job, because he's clearly not very good at this one.

Lake Winnipegosis Commercial Fishing Quotas

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Well, it isn't surprising this minister is refusing to act on conservation.

As minister, he allowed overextending commercial fishing quotas on Lake Winnipegosis by 17 per cent this past year, which is equal to 108,000 pounds.

When the minister deviates from the department's annual plan, he risks endangering future fish stocks.

Will the minister listen to his own department for once and endorse sustainability today?

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): Of course, we listen to the experts in our department. And you know what there is? There's more experts in our department, more than were ever under those PCs.

For example, they cut, and the vacancy rate was astronomical under what they did. So we're having that conversation of sustainable development across hunting, across fishing, and we're going to listen to those experts. I know they want to go out and consult out and have all the consultants come in and do the job for them because they don't trust people. They don't trust internal.

For us, what do we do? [*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bushie: We trust people. We have great experts in the civil service, and we're building on them each and every day. That member is doing his best attempt to try and create division, and he's failing at that miserably.

Grace Hospital—ER Wait Times and Staff Safety Request for Government to Address

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The people of west Winnipeg are gravely concerned about what's going on at the Grace Hospital under this NDP government. The Grace has the highest wait times in the city. Median wait times there are now at 6.3 hours, and posted wait times at the Grace are routinely in the range of 12 to 15 hours.

Just recently, an 87-year-old woman with dementia and a brain bleed spent over five days in the hallway of the Grace ER. And staff at the Grace are suffering, too, with three health-care workers reporting sexual assaults and threats just last week.

I asked the minister this question on Monday and they refused to answer it: What is going on at the Grace, and when will anyone in this NDP government make the Grace Hospital a priority?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, our government has works—from the very beginning to support folks at the Grace Hospital. It was interesting when I had my first visit there that they said they hadn't had a visit from a Health Minister in many,

many years—over two terms of the previous PC government, including when the member opposite was advising the former government on health care. The Health Minister of the PC day didn't bother to go and meet those folks on the front lines.

We've been there for listening tour stops to announce huge investments and more capacity at that site, and we continue to work with them every step of the way as we fix the damage that was done to the Grace Hospital by the former failed PCs.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: This minister will only stand in their place and make personal attacks, when 'winstead' they should be telling the people of west Winnipeg what they are doing to relieve pressure on the Grace ER, lower wait times and improve safety for staff.

I've spoken to long-time nurses at the Grace who are leaving rather than continue working in these conditions, and I've spoken with constituents who fear for their loved ones and who are scared to go to the Grace because they are scared they will not get the care they need in time.

With wait times across the city having doubled under their watch, what will this minister do to fix the mess they've made at the Grace ER?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, the member opposite sits in a caucus with people who were around the Cabinet table when they closed our biggest emergency rooms in Winnipeg, which drove thousands of patients to go to the Grace as their only option in that part of Winnipeg.

* (14:30)

What have we done to fix the damage they did to health care? Well, we have an extended-hours primary-care clinic right at the Grace Hospital. We stood up, for the first time ever, a family medicine, 30-bed unit at Grace Hospital. We supported that hospital in adding 42 per cent more staff to the front lines of their hospital.

We continue to work with the leadership and the front lines, and I want to thank the nurses and health-care providers at the Grace Hospital for working with our government.

Chronic Absenteeism from School Academic Performance and Student Retention

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Chronic absenteeism is a key early risk factor for school dropout and academic difficulties. Education system in Manitoba

is struggling. The last PISA testing result found that Manitoba had the second lowest reading scores, the third lowest science and math scores in Canada. Not only that, in the past 10 years, Manitoba scores have been getting worse, and I'll table the result. Children who don't attend school fall farther behind and have an even harder time catching up. They make up some of the 16 per cent of Manitoba students who never finish school.

Despite Manitoba children ranking at the bottom of the education tables in Canada, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) refuses to address school absenteeism.

Why is this Premier leaving so many of Manitoba youth behind?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Honourable Speaker, I cannot let the member for Fort Garry get up and talk about Manitoba's incredible public education system like that without painting—without leaving this Chamber with the reality of what's going on in public education here today.

And you only have to look at Budget 2026 to see the picture. Imagine a world where families live together in social and of deeply affordable housing. Imagine a Manitoba where they save money, PST, at the grocery store. Imagine a world where kids in Manitoba take the bus to school for free. And when they get there, they have breakfast. And then they come back for lunch, thanks to our late colleague, Nello Altomare. They stay over recess.

They work with the more than 800 teachers that we have added into our system, thanks to our great—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

And just while I have everyone's attention, I must caution the Minister for Environment and Climate Change that—be more careful with the words you choose, because the word disinformation has certain implications that someone is lying, so I'd ask the minister to withdraw that.

The honourable—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

I did ask the honourable minister to withdraw that word.

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): I withdraw.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The time for oral questions has expired.

Grievances?

House Business

The Speaker: So, just before we move on, I have received a letter from the House leaders advising of their agreement that the Committee of Supply will sit on Friday, May 8, 2026. Accordingly, the House will recess at 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2026 with the understanding that the three sections of the Committee of Supply will resume on Friday morning at 10 a.m.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: Now, time for petitions.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investments made under the previous PC government—PC provincial government—as part of the clinical and preventative service plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and a computer-generated radio waves to create digital images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnoses and treatment monitoring.

Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Saint [*phonetic*] Sud Health Authority. Currently, there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans cross the province.

Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous people in Canada are disproportionately—Indigenous people in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care.

Sorry. Apologize, Speaker. All right, where was I—start again? Yes, I don't know.

Indigenous people in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to service and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located around—no, located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Sara Martens, Marion Dienfaux [*phonetic*] and Mark Diboil [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

* * *

An Honourable Member: House business.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Lagimodière, on House business.

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Honourable Speaker, I ask for leave to include a list of my guest names after my member statement in Hansard.

The Speaker: Is there leave to include the member's list of names after his statement in Hansard? [*Agreed*]

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

* (14:40)

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat offenders—repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allows dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increase bail supervision and oppose release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This is signed by Cosa Zieglers [*phonetic*], Willy [*phonetic*] McKay and M.L. Holt and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

New Neepawa Health Centre

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

(2) The new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of the highway—of Yellowhead Highway, PTH 16. It will be nearly double the size of the existing hospital and will better serve patients from this broader, western Manitoba geographic area.

(3) CT scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed, three-dimensional models of structures inside the body. They perform critical diagnostic procedures that support the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster and with sharper and clearer images.

(4) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks, and there are over 14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic imaging procedure.

(5) The new CT scanner will reduce these wait times as it would decrease the need for patients to travel long distances, sometimes involving overnight stays, to access the care they need.

(6) The new scanner will reduce pressure on emergency response services, who would no longer have to transport these patients, opening up appointments in other communities and allowing more people to get the care they need sooner.

(7) A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take place in the community, reducing wait times for patients in surrounding areas and reducing the burden of travel to other facilities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of a CT scanner machine in the Neepawa Health Centre in Neepawa, Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Doug Welbourne, Lucille Johnson, Brian Ford and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Phoenix School

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Phoenix School, a kindergarten to grade 5 school located in Headingley, has experienced consistent enrolment growth over the last several years. Enrolment is expected to reach 275 students in the next two years.

Because the school is now over capacity, the school division has had to install portable classrooms on site as of fall 2024.

For several consecutive years, the top capital priority of the St. James-Assiniboia School Division has been the renovation and expansion of Phoenix School.

In 2022, the Phoenix School expansion and renovation project was approved to proceed to the design phase. The project included, among other amenities, a new gymnasium, two new classrooms, a multi-purpose room and room for 74 child-care spaces.

In June 2024, the school division received notice from the provincial government that the project has been deferred. There is no guarantee if, or when, the project will move forward.

There are currently hundreds of children on a wait-list for child care in Headingley. The daycare operator in Phoenix School has been told that they will continue to have space within the school for the 2024-2025 school year only, that further expansion of child-care space within the school is not possible and that space may be reduced moving forward due to the shortage of classrooms. If new space is not constructed as planned, many families may be left without child care.

It is critical that the expansion and renovation of Phoenix School proceed as planned in order to support the needs of students, teachers and families in the growing community of Headingley.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to proceed with the planned renovation and expansion of Phoenix School without further delay.

And this petition is signed by Verna Bratton, Paul Lavallee, Mark Tustin and many, many other Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

* (14:50)

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This petition is signed by Jaimes Enchio [*phonetic*], J.B. Dreilich, J. Horrock and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, these—the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The intersection of Provincial Trunk Highway 75 and Provincial Road 305 at Ste. Agathe, has become increasingly dangerous for motorists and pedestrians.

(2) Over the past seven years there have been at least 20 accidents at this location, resulting in injuries and fatalities; and

(3) This intersection is heavily used by community members, commuters and commercial traffic, making safety improvements critical.

(4) Immediate action is needed to mitigate accidents and prevent further loss of life.

(5) An in-service road safety review was completed in 2022, which included recommended improvements but no action plan.

(6) Immediate action and implementation on the maintenance issues and short-term strategies identified in the 2022 study are needed.

(7) Development of an action plan with timelines for medium-term strategies identified in the 2022 study is required.

(8) Installation of traffic lights or a traffic-controlled signal system will make the intersection safer.

(9) Additional strategies, such as reduced speed limits approaching the intersection and the addition of rumble strips to alert drivers of the upcoming intersection, will save lives.

(10) Construction of dedicated turning lanes to reduce collision risk and other traffic calming designs will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities at the intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to undertake safety improvements at the intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305 at Ste. Agathe; and

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize measures that will reduce accidents and fatalities, including, but not limited to, those outlined in the 2022 in-service road safety review.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Breast Screening

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to the evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

(2) Based off of 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

(3) After 'non-melanoma' skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes for patients, with better odds for survival in less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive the screening.

(5) Lowering breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

This petition has been signed by Dwight Heeson [*phonetic*], Peter Froese and Helen Neufeld and many, many other Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Business

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Small businesses are vital in supporting their local economy and the provincial government has a responsibility to act and support them.

(2) The recent increase in vigilantism should—shows that Manitobans do not trust this provincial government to fulfill its responsibility.

(3) More than half—54 per cent—of small businesses in Manitoba are impacted by crime. Property damage, theft, littering and public intoxication are often some—are some of the crimes that affect most businesses, according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. There has been a 44 per cent increase in shoplifting incidences over the last year.

(4) In order to combat this rise of crime, small businesses try, unaided, to implement various out-of-pocket security measures and safety training for their staff and they face increasing costs when they incur property damage or theft.

(5) Vandalism, break-ins and other senseless acts cannot be accepted as a cost of doing business for businesses throughout Manitoba, and the provincial government must do more to ease the burdens small businesses are carrying with its catch-and-release justice system.

* (15:00)

(6) Failing to support small businesses is failing the Manitoba economy, failing Manitoba families and failing Manitobans' dreams.

(7) The security rate—rebate program in place for homeowners and small businesses does not cover the real costs impacting businesses, such as vandalism, property damage and repairs.

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support Manitoba small businesses through specific funding to reimburse expenses and insurance deductibles that they incur as a result of crime.

This petition was signed by Reed Sutherland, Gerald Sawatsky, Luke Lovenjak and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

Manitoba is one of the only jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadian home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them with much-needed relief.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition was signed by Louise Parr, Darrell Mannette, Della *[phonetic]* Daniels and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Road 210

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 210, PR 210, is a 117.3 kilometre–72.8 mile–highway in the Eastman region of Manitoba that connects towns and communities of Woodridge, Marchand, La Broquerie, Ste. Anne, Landmark, Linden, Île des Chênes and St. Adolphe.

(2) A significant portion of PR 210 also runs through the constituency of La Vérendrye.

(3) PR 210 is a significant commuting route for Eastman families and is also notably used by those in the agriculture, tourism, trade and commerce industries.

(4) The condition of PR 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

(5) The planned pavement upgrade was promised more than 20 years ago when it was constructed with a flat surface suitable for pavement but has yet to be completed.

(6) The condition of PR 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 is in such bad shape that firefighters, police and paramedic services are severely delayed when responding to emergencies.

(7) The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure as well as the Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize the reconstruction of Provincial Road 210.

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Road 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 in its reconstruction plans.

This petition has been signed by David Beaudry, Kevin Unger, Peter Johnson and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

* (15:10)

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

And this petition has been signed by Josh Gurke, Nick Scharner [*phonetic*] and Gordon Gallinger and many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Upgrading Provincial Trunk Highway 45 will accelerate economic development, as it will enhance connectivity, facilitate efficient transportation and promote economic growth in the region.

(2) Economic development will be further enhanced, as improved road infrastructure attracts businesses, encourages investment and creates job opportunities.

(3) Roads meeting the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, RTAC, standards improve both safety and efficiency, as they can handle heavier loads, reducing the number of trips required for goods transportation.

(4) Safer roads further benefit both commuters and commercial vehicles, minimizing accidents and damage.

(5) Upgrading to RTAC standards ensures resilience to challenges caused by climate change, such as thawing and flooding, which negatively impact road conditions.

(6) Efficient transportation networks contribute to Manitoba's economic competitiveness, as upgraded roads support interprovincial and international goods movement, benefiting both trade and commerce.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to take the necessary steps to upgrade Provincial Trunk Highway 45 from Russell to Provincial Trunk Highway 10 to meet RTAC standards.

This petition has been signed by Melissa Wilson, Anna Oliver, Jim Kennedy and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made by—under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction of a new Portage regional health facility is well under way and is completed. The facility and the surrounding community would greatly benefit from the added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically an additional of an MRI machine.

(2) The MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that is used to—as a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed imaging—images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in that RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance uses. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around the Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples of Canada 'disporportonly' face barriers in access of services and medical care. An MRI machine located at the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located is closely is proximity to the Portage regional health facility is Southport airport. An aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months, probably higher now. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This has been signed by Noreen Oswald, Sharon Noland and Evelyn Boak and many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 34, PTH 34, is a two-lane provincial primary highway that runs from the US border where it meets with ND 20 to PTH 16 at the town of Gladstone.

(2) PTH 34 runs north-south in the south-central region of the province. It is the main highway for the towns of Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Holland, serving as a main corridor for the semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school bus routes.

(3) A new bridge is currently being constructed over the Assiniboine River at PTH 34, north of Holland, in the RM of Victoria. The bridge serves as an important north-south link over the Assiniboine River between the Trans-Canada Highway and PTH 2.

The deterioration of—(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks considering farmers often need to use the highway to transport heavy equipment.

(5) Construction of a new bridge in accordance current design codes and RTAC standard, located on PTH 34 crossing the Assiniboine River, will support trade and commerce and improve public safety in the area, and also accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (15:20)

To urge the provincial government to address the conditions of Provincial Trunk Highway 34, making the necessary upgrades to RTAC standard and to resurface the road once the new bridge has been clean-completed.

This petition has been signed by Doug Wilson, Kim Anderson, Susan Peterson and many, many more Manitobans.

Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The intersection of Provincial Trunk Highway 75, PTH 75, and Provincial Road 305, PR 305, at Ste. Agathe has become increasingly dangerous for motorists and pedestrians.

(2) Over the past seven years there have been at least 20 accidents at this location resulting in injuries and fatalities.

(3) This intersection is heavily used by community members, commuters and the commercial traffic, making safety improvements critical.

(4) Immediate action is needed to mitigate accidents and prevent further loss of life.

(5) An in-service road safety review was completed in 2022, which included recommended improvements but no action plan.

(6) Immediate action and implementation on the maintenance issues and short-term strategies identified in the 2022 study are needed.

(7) Development of an action plan with timelines from the medium-term strategies identified in the 2022 study is required.

(8) Installation of traffic signals or a controlled signal system will make the intersection safer.

(9) Additional strategies, such as reduced speed limits approaching the intersection and the addition of rumble strips to alert drivers of the upcoming intersection, will save lives.

(10) Construction of dedicated turning lanes to reduce collision risk and other traffic calming designs will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities at the intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to undertake safety improvements at the intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305 at Ste. Agathe.

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize measures that will reduce accidents and fatalities, including but not limited to those outlined in the 2022 in-service road safety review.

This is signed by Woojin Park, J. Garaldi [*phonetic*], Kelsey Forest and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage la Prairie health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) The MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and a computer-generated radio wave to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher services and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay, Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services.

This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support an investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This petition is signed by Norma Einarson, Susan [*phonetic*] Moran–Susanne Moran, David Moran and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Placement Vetting for Elderly Persons Housing

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba Housing will be placing homeless people and people with multi-layered mental illnesses and addictions into what has always been known as seniors housing.

(2) Manitoba Housing is placing people in elderly persons housing, EPH, buildings without vetting them.

(3) There is no minimum age limit stated on the Manitoba Housing information page for our elderly persons housing buildings.

(4) The tenant service co-ordinator and/or building manager of EPH buildings should be given the right to deny applicants based on their first-hand knowledge of the applicants being homeless, having multi-layered mental illnesses and/or addictions, or any other reason that they are aware of that could cause potential harm to residents.

(5) Proper vetting should include a criminal record check, a vulnerable persons record check and the consent of the tenant service co-ordinator and/or building manager of EPH building.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to use seniors housing for what it was intended: the seniors.

(2) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to require a minimum age of 55 years for residents in all elderly persons housing buildings.

(3) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to engage in proper vetting of all applicants—or applications of people desire to live in EPH buildings.

This petition has been signed by Avis Bateman, Sharon Woolgar, Tom Archuk and many, many other fine Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further petitions, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Government House Leader): Can you please call the start of third reading of bills 10, 14, 20, 39 and 46.

The Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to concurrence and third reading of bills 10, 14, 20, 39 and 46.

* (15:30)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 10—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy)

The Deputy Speaker: And we will start with Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), that Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé d'attachement en cas d'adoption ou de recours à la gestation pour autrui), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Thank you.

Motion presented.

MLA Marcelino: I'm pleased to rise for the third reading of Bill 10. I am very happy to see this important piece of legislation move through the approval process, and for the record, only positive, supportive comments about this bill were made and presented by the public in committee.

This bill adds a 16-week unpaid protected leave for workers who are welcoming a child through adoption or surrogacy. Families will now be able to combine this new leave with existing parental leave provisions, giving them access to the same amount of protected time away from work as families who currently combine maternity and parental leave.

This is a meaningful and practical change to ensure that all parents, no matter how they form their families, can focus on caring for and bonding with their new child, without worrying about what will happen to their job. It will also allow Manitoban workers to access the new federal EI benefit for attachment leave once it comes into effect later this year.

There are many ways that families in Manitoba are created, and adoption and surrogacy deserve the same support as other pathways to parenthood. This bill promotes positive outcomes for adopted children and children welcomed by surrogacy by acknowledging their families' unique circumstances and allowing working parents and caregivers the time needed to bond in those critical early weeks.

By supporting Manitobans during one of the most important times of their lives—an essential period for healthy child development, secure attachment and strong family relationships—this bill reinforces our government's commitment to supporting working families and ensuring that every child in Manitoba gets the best possible start.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Labour Management Review Committee for their joint recommendation. I would also like to thank the Child and Youth Permanency Council of Canada and Interwoven Connections for their advocacy on the importance of attachment leave.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Happy to say that we support Bill 10, and, again, I want to thank the minister across the way for the bill briefing, and appreciated, as well, hearing comments from Manitobans at committee regarding Bill 10.

And so we are here in third reading debate, and I just want to put a few words on the record with regard to Bill 10, which amends the Manitoba Employment Standards Code. And as the minister said, under this legislation, an employee may take up to 16 weeks of unpaid leave if a child is placed or arrives into the employee's care through adoption or surrogacy. This leave is called attachment leave and is in the same vein as maternity or parental leave.

This—the leave could begin as early as six weeks prior to the placement, but cannot extend past 16 weeks after the date of placement. This type of leave is available to employees who have been employed by that employer for seven consecutive months or more, and the employee must give written notice at least four weeks prior to the start date of the leave. If they wish to return to work before the full leave period is up, they must give two weeks' notice in writing.

So—and as I understand it as well, this bill blends with a federal benefit that is available. But I did just want to talk about modern attachment theory briefly, which is based on three principles, the first being that human beings have an intrinsic need for one-to-one bonding. And then the second principle is that the regulation of emotion and fear contributes to vitality. And the third principle is that attachment fosters adaptiveness and growth.

In short, attachment is the bond that forms between a child and a parent or caregiver and from which the child derives a sense of security and identity. This bonding can begin in the womb, but it is particularly acute between the ages of six months and two years.

In adoptive children, particularly those who have been part of the foster-care system, attachment and thus a sense of security and identity is a challenge. Almost all adopted children and those in foster care will deal with a wide range of issues related to attachment in their lifetimes. Even children adopted from birth and who are part of a secure and loving family will experience these issues from time to time. Attachment issues in adopted children will often present as insecurity, a feeling like they don't belong or having to fight for their place, even things like hiding food or fearing scarcity and anger and fear as a result of feeling a lack of a sense of belonging.

And that's why helping a child with attachment issues is a combination of providing stability and security, consistency and boundaries and is so important, supporting their health and well-being, showing love and interest in a child. And it's important that

adoptive parents are emotionally and practically prepared for the struggles of caring for a child with attachment issues.

So with that, honourable Speaker, I look forward to supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further debate, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, the employment standards amendment act, attachment leave for adoption and surrogacy.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?
[Agreed]

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 14—The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act

The Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, the public interest disclosure act—amendment act.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister for Labour and Immigration, that Bill 14, The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divulgations faites dans l'intérêt public (protection des divulgateurs d'actes répréhensibles), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: I'm very pleased to rise once again to speak to Bill 14 here at third reading.

Bill 14 strengthens the integrity of Manitoba's public service by enhancing whistle-blower protections, ensuring that individuals who come forward with concerns about serious wrongdoing are treated fairly and with respect.

Our government undertook a comprehensive review of The Public Interest Disclosure Act, led by a third party expert. That review examined the 2018 amendments and assessed whether the framework was actually delivering the protections it was intended to provide. It included a cross-jurisdictional analysis, comparing Manitoba's approach to what other provinces had already put in place.

The review was clear. For years, under the previous government, the framework fell behind. Gaps remained and certain protections had not kept pace with modern workplace realities. I tabled that independent review in December 2024, and it provided clear, expert recommendations to better protect whistle-blowers. Bill 14 reflects our decision to act on that advice.

* (15:40)

This bill strengthens how disclosures involving senior officials are handled, ensuring conflicts of interest are avoided and that disclosures are managed independently where they should be. It makes it clear that no agreement, no NDA or confidentiality clause, can ever be used to silence someone from making a protected disclosure. It expands protections against reprisal, recognizing the real power imbalances that exist when employees speak up. We're shifting the burden of proof to ensure employees are not left to shoulder the burden when they come forward with legitimate concerns. It also reinforces the role of the Ombudsman so concerns can be addressed impartially and in a timely way. Bill 14 strengthens public reporting so we can better understand how the system is working across government.

Honourable Speaker, this bill moves Manitoba forward with modern, meaningful protections that reflect best practices and real lived experience. Our government is building a public service where doing the right thing is supported by clear rules and strong protections. Bill 14 reflects what experts told us, what employees told us and what Manitobans expect: a public service that is ethical, professional and worthy of their trust.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to present this bill for the House's reconsider—or, consideration.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no—the honourable member for Midland.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I thank you for the opportunity to rise today to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 14, The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act.

As we know, accountability and transparency in government should be a priority for all members of this House, and Manitobans and our public service expect that public institutions operate with integrity,

and they expect that when something goes wrong, there is a clear, safe and effective process in place for concerns to be 'araised' and addressed.

A strong whistle-blower protection framework is a key and important part of that system to maintain that integrity and that trust 'amom' public-sector employees. So legislation like this is intended to provide public servants with a mechanism to disclose wrongdoing, to ensure those disclosures are properly reviewed and to protect individuals from reprisal when they come forward. So when we debate legislation of this nature, it's important that we recognize both the intent and the impact of what is being proposed.

This legislation—the Ombudsman reviews whistle-blower protection on a regular basis, and so these recommendations are part of that review.

In the past, as legislation has been strengthened, including protection from reprisal for employees who make disclosures in good faith, clear disclosure process allowing concerns to be raised with a supervisor, designated officer, or directly with the Ombudsman and a defined scope that applies to government departments, Crown corporations and other public bodies. And, over time, experience with the legislation has highlighted areas where improvements were needed, particularly with respect to clarity, consistency and confidence in the system.

This is why, under the previous PC government in 2018, we brought forward amendments to strengthen that act, and those amendments were predominantly to modernize the legislation and respond to lessons learned over more than a decade. And at that time, those expanded protections included additional public-sector entities, such as school divisions, local government districts, which ensured broad coverage across the public sector.

And these changes played an important role in strengthening Manitoba's whistle-blower protection framework and reinforcing public confidence in the system. And that requirement reflects a very important principle: that legislation must evolve based on experience.

And so this demonstrates the important of consistent review of the act, ensure that it's not static, but instead, assessed regularly to determine whether it is functioning as intended and where various improvements could be needed.

So the review that the Ombudsman conducted identified a number of areas where the act could be

strengthened, such as improving the clarity around what constitutes a wrongdoing, enhancing communication with individuals involved in disclosures and ensuring greater consistency and timelines in how cases are handled. And these recommendations are thoughtful and reflect real-world experience with the legislation.

So, on this side of the House, we support acting on the recommendations of the Ombudsman and the findings of the five-year review to further strengthen that act.

So, with that said, deputy honourable Speaker, I thank you for the time to rise and put a few words on the record on this legislation.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further debate, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?
[Agreed]

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 20—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

The Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I move, seconded by the Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure, that Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: I'm pleased to rise today to speak at third reading of Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

Across Canada and around the world, governments are dealing with the same challenge. Cryptocurrency mining and similar high-demand operations use enormous amounts of electricity and place real pressure on electricity grids. If that demand isn't managed, costs rise and Manitobans pay the price.

After seven and a half years of hydro rate increases under the members opposite, this government is taking a different approach: one focused on affordability and reliability for ratepayers. And Bill 20 is part of that approach.

These amendments enable Manitoba Hydro to establish a curtailable power of supply program for existing cryptocurrency operations, allowing Hydro to turn down their energy consumption during periods of peak demand, system constraints or emergencies.

Crypto companies can continue to operate, but in a way that reflects the costs they create and the pressures that they place on the system. These operations use large amounts of electricity while creating limited long-term economic value in the province. With roughly 80 megawatts of Manitoba's power currently dedicated to crypto operations, this bill ensures, in periods of peak demand, that those watts are going to families, hospitals and Manitoba businesses first. As well, by reducing system demand, the program will help avoid rushing into expensive new generation or grid updates that would drive up rates.

Our government is putting Manitobans first. With Bill 20, we're protecting affordability, keeping the lights on and making sure Manitoba families are not paying more because of a small number of high-demand users.

For those reasons, I encourage all members of this House to support Bill 20 here at third reading.

Thank you so much, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I rise today to speak to Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

So, this bill enables Manitoba Hydro to establish a curtailable power program for customers engaged in cryptocurrency operations. So what this means is that, under this program, a customer's supply of power may be temporarily reduced for the purposes of the program.

And, Deputy honourable Speaker, I do want to say—and the minister was at committee when local business owners and local Manitobans presented to him—it was unfortunate to hear that, upon the introduction and second reading of this bill, the minister did not consult with anyone within the cryptocurrency industry here in Manitoba. And what we heard from those businesses and those local Manitobans is they want to be part of the solution.

Many of them already operate curtailable programs in other jurisdictions. They want to assist the minister and Manitoba Hydro in what curtailment could mean for not only their business, but also ratepayers and local residents around Manitoba when it comes to capacity. They are here, they're ready to be at the table and the minister has not reached out to them. He has not consulted with them. He has introduced legislation that could have major impacts on their businesses, and they want to be part of the solution. We heard this from every single presenter at committee.

* (15:50)

And what this minister and this NDP government failed to do was they failed to consult. These are local businesses and local Manitobans who want to be part of the solution. Many of them indicated that they do agree with curtailment and that they can help support that when Manitoba Hydro's capacity needs need to be changed during peak demands. They have the ability to curtail on notice.

But what we heard from the presenters is that they didn't hear—have any consultation with this NDP government. Their Manitoba Hydro contacts had no idea that this government was bringing a program like this forward. So even the minister's own Manitoba Hydro corporation—that falls under his mandate—did not know that this program was being proposed.

So, we're not standing up and saying that we disagree with this curtailment program. What is unfortunate is the minister did not consult with the very businesses that this program is going to impact. And those businesses want to be part of a solution. And, as of today, I talked to some of those business owners; they still have not heard from the minister, despite reaching out.

And that's a loss. That is a loss for this NDP government. Because when you are proposing a program for curtailment that could impact a power user like cryptocurrency operations, he could use their advice on how that curtailment could work. There could be negative impacts to the grid. There could be negative impacts to Manitoba Hydro's revenue because those users pay a significant amount of revenue already to Manitoba Hydro. So what could that mean for ratepayers around the grid?

They want to be part of that solution. They did not stand in committee and say that they disagreed entirely with this bill; they wanted to be consulted and they wanted to be part of the solution.

As we know, crypto mining has been a challenge for many provinces across Canada. That is why a moratorium for new crypto mining already exists. But what this minister is doing is he's targeting local businesses that have already set up and invested tens of millions of dollars within this province. They've invested tens of millions of dollars with Manitoba Hydro before they've even been able to turn their lights on—and their continuous investment into this province. And he's brought forward two bills that significantly impact their operations without the proper consultation to do so.

So we already do have a moratorium in place. The former PC government brought a moratorium. But what this minister is doing is that he's targeting existing businesses, businesses that set up in Manitoba under an entirely different set of rules. And, as I mentioned, they want to be part of the solution as to what a curtailment program could look like for the industry and how they can help Manitoba Hydro's capacity needs during those times of peak demand.

But this curtailment program goes to a much broader issue of Manitoba Hydro's energy needs altogether. And we've seen time and time again this minister and NDP government mismanage Manitoba Hydro entirely.

So there are some serious unanswered questions that this minister has yet to announce—or yet to respond to. How will growing demand be met? We're seeing data centres open up in other jurisdictions, billions of dollars of investment. What industries are going to be prioritized over others? And what is the long-term plan for our growing energy demand needs?

And these are questions that have not been answered by this NDP government. Instead of having a long-term vision for this province, this NDP government is bringing forth bills in a knee-jerk reaction that are targeting businesses that already operate and exist in Manitoba. And what's even more concerning is the other bill that this minister's brought forward, Bill 39, that increases the tax on these existing operations, which we'll get into later on in the third reading debate of that bill.

So what I just want to say is that this minister did not do his homework. He did not do due diligence of consulting with an existing industry in Manitoba. And that became very clear during committee when every single presenter indicated that they were not consulted by this minister.

And we are seeing this with many different pieces of legislation. We've seen that with the Manitoba jobs agreement, where we had the construction industry in Manitoba not consulted on major, major changes that are pushing out local construction industries from bidding on projects, that are pushing out 88 per cent of Manitoba construction workers from public projects. That industry wasn't consulted.

And this is just another example where this NDP government is responding in a knee-jerk way, with legislation, without consulting the very industries that this legislation is impacting.

So, with that said, honourable Speaker, thank you for the time and I look forward to speaking on the next bill.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further debate, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?
[Agreed]

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 39—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Amendment Act

The Deputy Speaker: We'll now move on to Bill 39, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Amendment Act.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I move, seconded by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, that Bill 39, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba et la Loi sur l'administration des impôts et des taxes et divers impôts et taxes, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: I'm so pleased to rise. I think some folks—[interjection]—feel free. I mean, I don't care.

Well, thanks, guys. I'm pleased to rise for a final time to speak to Bill 39. I want to start where we've been focused throughout this debate: on keeping hydro rates affordable and energy reliable for Manitobans. That's at—what's at the core of this legislation, and it's the reason we're bringing it forward.

We know that Manitoba Hydro is one of our province's greatest assets. It provides clean, affordable power to families and businesses right across Manitoba. But we also know that demand is growing, especially from large-scale, energy-intensive users like crypto operations, large data centres and other large power supply projects. When that demand grows, it creates real costs: costs to expand generation and to build out infrastructure and to maintain reliability across the system. Our job is to make sure those costs are managed responsibly and that they're shared fairly. That's what this bill is all about.

Bill 39 establishes a new framework that allows Manitoba Hydro to create separate customer classes and charge a levy on electricity supplied to certain high-demand, energy-intensive uses, specifically cryptocurrency operations and large-scale data centres. This program is expected to generate roughly \$20 million annually for Manitoba Hydro, revenue that will stay in Hydro's coffers to support much-needed new generation and grid upgrades while keeping rates affordable.

We remain at a very competitive place to invest, and that does not change with this bill. Even with the levy, Manitoba continues to have some of the lowest industrial electricity rates on the continent.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, what Manitobans can expect from this government is continued access to affordable, reliable energy for generations to come. We've put forward a plan for Manitoba Hydro. We're making the investments that are needed. And we're bringing forward practical measures, like Bill 39, to make sure Hydro remains strong and sustainable well into the future.

Thank you to all members who contributed to this discussion. Honourable Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to bring Bill 39 forward for consideration by this House.

The Speaker in the Chair

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): This bill that the NDP has brought forward is going to have significant financial implications to local Manitobans and Manitoba businesses.

What we heard during committee is that this bill is going to bankrupt some of these businesses that are operating in Manitoba and that have spent tens of millions of dollars setting up their businesses under very, very different rules.

* (16:00)

We heard from every single presenter at committee that this minister failed to consult with any of them. This minister failed to consult with an industry that he is going to put in financial ruin. The minister seems, with this piece of legislation, a knee-jerk reaction to either helping Manitoba Hydro's capacity, which can already be a solution through the curtailment program with support and working with the crypto mining industry, because they are willing to be at the table.

But, then, it also seems that he wants to help Manitoba Hydro's bottom line. We all know Manitoba Hydro is \$27 billion in debt thanks to NDP governments over the years.

So what did we hear from presenters? And this is what is so unfortunate and problematic, Honourable Speaker, with what this minister has brought forward. The minister has indicated that this would increase Manitoba Hydro revenues by \$20 million. That's what he has said on the record, and he's said it again today. Every single presenter at committee said, with this bill, this will shut down their crypto mining operations.

In fact, one individual said that this would be an estimated \$20 million per month in lost revenue for Manitoba Hydro; that was just from one presenter. We heard from another presenter that with this bill and their operations being shut down, that would be a \$45 million in lost revenue to Manitoba Hydro. These operations pay significant money into Manitoba Hydro. They've already offered to support curtailment when Manitoba needs peak demand.

But if the minister actually consulted with the industry, perhaps we would be seeing a very different bill today. Because if all these operations shut down as a result of the bill that he's brought forward, that is tens of millions of dollars of lost revenue to Manitoba Hydro. What's more heartbreaking is the minister did not even seem to care when these individuals stood up and said that this bill will put them in financial ruin.

In fact, one Manitoban—and we're talking about local Manitobans and local Manitoba businesses. If this bill is passed—this is what this individual said at committee on public record: Our business will be placed under severe financial pressure. We would be

forced to lay off 13 local employees. And I may personally face bankruptcy. Across the sites, we're already paying nearly \$1 million per month in electricity costs in addition to rent. Our employees earn between \$40,000 and \$150,000 annually, and these are meaningful jobs that support Manitoba families and communities.

This presenter also goes on to talk about the lost revenue for Manitoba Hydro, much broader consequences for the province. This could result in an estimated \$20 million per month in lost revenue for Manitoba Hydro. Had the minister actually consulted and took the time to consult with these local Manitobans and these local business owners, perhaps we would be seeing a very different bill. Because I'm not sure about him or his NDP government, but I don't like putting local Manitobans into bankruptcy. And that's what this minister is doing.

We heard from individuals who have set up these operations under very different rules in Manitoba, and they are facing financial ruin thanks to this minister and this NDP government. And, in fact, I'm shocked that he's sitting across laughing when these Manitobans are facing financial ruin. It was heartbreaking to listen to, Honourable Speaker.

I don't know how he can bring forward this legislation, recognizing that Manitobans will go bankrupt as a result of it. And had he actually taken the time to consult, actually taken the time to understand what a closure of these businesses would mean, if he cares so much about that \$20 million for Hydro, does he not care about the almost \$50 million in lost Hydro revenues if these businesses shut down? Does he not care that these families in Arborg, in Winnipeg, in southwest Manitoba, in Midland, are going to go bankrupt because of legislation that he's brought forward without consultation?

This is an industry that wanted to be consulted. They wanted to be at the table, and they wanted to be part of the solution. And this minister did not take them up on that offer. And, instead, when there was an option and an opportunity for these businesses to be part of the solution through curtailment programs—which they all said they agree with and they could be part of that solution—instead, what he did is brought a bill that will bankrupt them.

This is very disappointing that this NDP government has been so okay with bankrupting these local Manitobans, so callous with bankrupting these local Manitobans.

And it wasn't just me that heard from them at committee. The minister was there. He listened to their heartbreaking stories about what this bill and this increase of rate could do for their businesses, how it could mean shutting them down completely, how it could mean putting them further and further into debt. The minute the operations shut down, they won't be able to recoup any of that infrastructure that they've built up over time.

In fact, I was talking to one cryptocurrency mining operator who indicated that he has spent tens of millions of dollars setting up his operation and hasn't even turned the lights on yet—tens of millions of dollars just to get access to the Manitoba Hydro grid under very different rules. There is already a moratorium in place and, you know, we can have that discussion and that argument about new crypto coming and the strain it will put on Manitoba Hydro's capacity and ratepayers.

But we are talk about existing operations. That's what we're here to debate today. This minister and this NDP are bankrupting existing operations, and they're doing so without any consultation—not a single phone call, not a single email, nothing with the very industry, the very local Manitobans, people, individuals, families that have invested so significantly under a very different set of rules.

Honourable Speaker, this industry does want to be part of the solution, which I've said over and over again. It's unfortunate that the—this minister is bringing forth legislation that could outright destroy them and destroy their businesses. He clearly didn't take into account the lost revenue to Manitoba Hydro. He says it's going to bring in \$20 million, but not if they all shut down. Tens of millions of dollars—one presenter said it'd be \$45 million; another presenter indicated it'd be an estimated \$20 million per month in lost revenue for Manitoba Hydro if they shut down.

Suddenly, this minister's \$20 million in so-called revenue from these operations becomes a very, very different picture in lost revenue for Manitoba Hydro. And if he actually met with the industry to understand what those consequences would mean, then we might be discussing a very, very different bill today, or not this bill at all.

So, Honourable Speaker, it is disappointing that the minister is sitting across the way, laughing, speaking loudly as I'm talking about families that are going to go into financial ruin as a result of his lack of consultation, as a result of knee-jerk reactions.

And this isn't the first time this minister has brought forward legislation or this NDP has brought forward legislation without consulting with the industry. This has become a unfortunate precedent with this NDP government. And the result of this precedent that they are creating within their government and their time in office is Manitobans who are going to go bankrupt.

And the minister might be okay with ignoring their calls, but I'm sitting there and I'm listening to them. And I'm listening to individuals that are almost in tears because of the financial ruin that this minister is going to put them in and the financial strain that is going to be placed on their families.

The minister should have consulted with this industry to understand the very real impacts that his bill is going to have on them and the very real impacts that it will have on Manitoba Hydro when and if—and once these operations in Manitoba will shut down.

And I want to be very clear: The minister wants to stand up and talk about no new cryptocurrency operations coming in and the moratorium—and, yes, there is a moratorium in place—but we are talking about existing operations. They're willing to help with curtailment, but what they don't want from this NDP is to be put into financial ruin, them and their families.

* (16:10)

We heard from one presenter who is paying over \$600,000 in salaries in a given year, and yet this minister is claiming that's low economic value. This other presenter is going to have to lay off 13 local employees, and yet this minister is saying that they're providing low economic value to the province. They are paying \$20 million per month to Manitoba Hydro, yet this minister is saying that they're providing low economic value.

So, Honourable Speaker, with that said, I cannot express my disappointment with the lack of attention that this minister has paid to this industry in terms of consultation, that he hasn't returned their emails or their calls or even consulted with them on legislation that is going to put them and their families into financial bankruptcy.

I certainly would never bring forward a bill that puts Manitobans into financial bankruptcy like the one he's put forward today. And, quite frankly, I'm surprised that he seems so okay with putting local Manitobans and local Manitoba businesses into financial ruin.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): So I want to start off with a few quotes here. I quote: They're removing rate-setting oversight from the Public Utilities Board and giving their Cabinet complete control. This would allow this government to increase hydro rates without the Public Utilities Board oversight. This removes accountability and removes transparency.

So I hear members asking, who said that? Well, that's this Finance Minister, right out of Hansard.

Here's another one: This bill, and I quote again, allows the government to set hydro rates at the Cabinet table. This bill represents the total and complete politicization of hydro rate setting in this province. It weakens the role of the Public Utilities Board.

Who said that? *[interjection]* Even members across are asking. Well, once again, this current Finance Minister had said that.

I'll do another one. I quote: Manitobans know the truth. They know that on that side of the House, they stand for dismantling the PUB and jacking up rates. Rates should be frozen.

Who said that? Who said that? This current Finance Minister.

"They want to keep raising rates at the Cabinet table and circumvent the Public Utilities Board." Who said that? The MLA for Flin Flon. These are all right out of Hansard.

How about this one: Without any hearings, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) is ordering Manitoba Hydro to dramatically increase their rates. Who said that? The current Premier.

Here's another one: They're eliminating that function and moving rate setting from the independent review process of the Public Utilities Board to the Cabinet table. Current Finance Minister said that.

What's the definition of saying one thing and doing the other? Well, the definition right out of Webster's Dictionary is hypocrite. You look under hypocrite, you'll find a picture of that Finance Minister.

They're moving rate-setting power to the Cabinet table, stealing that away from the independent process. Who said that? This current Finance Minister.

"It takes all rate-setting power away from the Public Utilities Board and places that power into the hands of Cabinet." Who said that? This Finance Minister.

An Honourable Member: More, more.

Mr. Johnson: More? Okay, a couple more quotes. Then I'll get on with my remarks.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would just remind the honourable member that when he's quoting people, he should not be quoting the Speaker and should leave the Speaker out of all of his debates.

Mr. Johnson: So, I quote: They object to the Premier trying to upset the authority of the Public Usetilities *[phonetic]* Board and use his pen at the Cabinet table instead to set their rates. Who said that? This current Premier.

"They've pushed the Public Utilities Board to the side so they can raise rates at the Cabinet table." Who said that? This Finance Minister.

They ordered higher hydro rates without even having a public hearing, without even going to the Public Utilities Board. Who said that? This current Premier.

So if you look up the definition of hypocrite, that is exactly what being a hypocrite means.

This NDP bill, Bill 39, has quickly become a flashpoint for concerns among businesses that are operating in the province's growing digital asset and data infrastructure sectors. While the government has framed the legislation as a necessary step to manage energy demand and protect ratepayers, those directly affected will argue, rightfully so, it risks doing the opposite. It's undermining investment certainty by bypassing established regulatory frameworks and quite possibly exposing this government to significant legal challenges. They won't be laughing so much at that point.

At the heart of this issue is how Bill 39 appears to treat certain high-energy-use industries, particularly cryptocurrency related operations. Businesses contend that the bill effectively introduces what amounts to a targeted financial burden, whether characterized as a tax or a rate, without clearly aligning with the long-standing principles that govern Manitoba's electricity system. That distinction is not academic.

Manitoba's regulatory structure has historically relied on the Manitoba Public Utilities Board to ensure that rates are set and based on the transparent, evidence-based criteria such as cost, causation, system impact and revenue requirements.

You heard my colleague state that just a single business alone is going to reduce the revenue of Manitoba Hydro of—by \$20 million per month. At committee, critics argued that Bill 39 sidestepped the PUB process. By imposing measures outside of the PUB's oversight, the legislation risks creating a parallel framework that lacks the same level of scrutiny and procedural fairness. For effective businesses, this raises immediate concerns about predictability.

All businesses, I'm sure, appreciate the predictable costs that they have. This will take that and completely throw it out the window. Companies that have entered into general service, whether it's large or medium electric service agreements, did so with the expectation that rates and classifications would be determined through established regulatory channels. A sudden swift, particularly one that happens to—that appears to introduce a new financial obligation without a clear contractual mechanism opens the door to claims of breach and regulatory overreaches.

There are businesses—and this question was asked to the minister and he never answered it—businesses are currently in areas with absolutely no stress on the grid. Currently, the grid—and if it does have stress, they are willing to curtail their power during peak demand. But, currently, there is no stress on the grid, and they will have to pay this rate because the minister has paintbrushed the whole entire province with the same legislation. And when that company goes bankrupt, that will be revenue for Manitoba Hydro that is not there, even on a grid that has no stress on it.

So legal precedent may further complicate the Province's position. In 2020, a case involving Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board and the Manitoba Public Utilities Board, the court emphasized that the utilities mandate is the efficient, economical supply of electric power, not the pursuit of a broader social or economic policy objective.

* (16:20)

The ruling underscored that rate structures and customer classifications must remain grounded in utility principles rather than being used as tools for targeted policy outcomes. So opponents of Bill 39 argue that current proposal risks crossing that specific line and many others.

So, beyond legal arguments, there is a broader concern about process. Industry participants point out what they describe as a lack of meaningful consultations—and by a lack, that is not even a single phone

call from the minister or his staff to consult with these businesses—and the lack of meaningful consultation on new large-scale electricity connections for certain sectors. That is, they argue that neither operators nor key stakeholders within Manitoba Hydro's own business division were adequately engaged before or after the introduction of this legislation.

In a sector where capital investments are significant and long-term planning is essential, that absence of dialogue can have a chilling effect. The economic implications could be substantial. Manitoba has long promoted its clean, affordable hydroelectric power as a competitive advantage in attracting energy-intensive industries. If Bill 39 is perceived as introducing uncertainties or selectivity of targeting specific centres, it risks eroding that advantage. If a different industry comes in that is—uses a lot of energy, like finishing off some of our final products in the agriculture industry, a crush plant maybe, are they now going to be subject to different rates than everybody else?

So companies may reconsider their expansion plans or redirect investments to 'jurisdictions' with cleaner and more stable regulatory environments—*[interjection]*—excuse me. For some businesses, the stakes are already high enough to consider legal action. Discussions around maybe seeking an injunction to highlight the urgency and seriousness with this industry views—how they view the situation. Such a move would not be unprecedented, but it would signal that there is a deep breakdown in the confidence between government and stakeholders.

Ultimately, the debate over Bill 39 is not just about one industry or one policy tool; it's about the principles that underpin Manitoba's approach to energy regulation, economic development and the rule of law. A path forward will require more than legislative authority. It will require transparency, consultation and the willingness to align policy objectives with the frameworks that have historically ensured fairness and stability. Without that balance, the province risks not only legal challenges but also long-term damage to its reputation as a reliable place to invest and do business.

So we heard it here: hypocrites, no consultations, too levied—too lazy to do the heavy lifting, but nothing but a money grab from hard-working businesses. And as the minister sits across the aisle and laughs, this is the financial viability of our businesses right here in Manitoba, not south of the border; that's where our fights should be.

So it's not a single member, as you—those watching can see, not a single member from the NDP side has stood up to defend this bill.

With those comments, we will look for the vote.

The Speaker: No further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 39, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

The Speaker: All those in favour, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): On division, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The bill is accordingly passed, on division.

Bill 46—The Securities Amendment Act

The Speaker: We will now move on to Bill 46, concurrence and third reading of The Securities Amendment Act.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy), that Bill 46, The Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: I'm so pleased to rise for the third and final time on Bill 46.

Financial markets have become more complex. Investment products are more sophisticated. Digital

platforms now play a major role in how information and misinformation is shared. And with those changes come real risks.

For seven and a half years, the previous government failed to keep pace with these realities. Manitoba's securities framework was allowed to lag behind. Our government has stepped up. Last year, we brought in bill 37 to establish the Manitoba Financial Services Agency as an independent, arm's-length regulator, bringing us in line with the rest of Canada. That was a foundational step and a necessary one.

Bill 46 builds on that work. The amendments contained in this bill give the Manitoba Securities Commission clear authority to regulate financial benchmarks, catching Manitoba up to national regulatory standards and strengthening confidence in capital markets. They address risks arising in the digital environment by strengthening enforcement against false or misleading statements about securities made online.

Bill 46 makes it illegal to help others break securities laws by introducing clear prohibitions against aiding and abetting violations while also strengthening civil liability provisions to better protect investors. Honourable Speaker, these are practical, targeted changes giving our regulators the tools they need to act when risks are identified and to protect Manitobans from misconduct.

Our government is committed to doing—continuing this work and to updating Manitoba's financial regulatory framework as needed to maintain investor confidence and public trust. Years of inaction by the members opposite left gaps in oversight and put investors at greater risk.

Our government is doing the work to close those gaps. We are modernizing oversight, we are rebuilding trust, we're strengthening confidence in our capital markets and we're ensuring Manitobans can make investment decisions knowing there are strong rules in place to protect them.

Honourable Speaker, I'm very pleased to present this bill for the House's consideration.

Thank you.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I appreciate the opportunity and time today to just put a few words on the record on Bill 46, The Securities Amendment Act. As I've said during second reading, it's important to emphasize that protection of the public is of the utmost importance.

Manitoba, over the years, has gone through a series of modernization in recent times of the financial services sector. As we know, the financial services industry is a very highly regulated industry, both at the provincial level but also at the federal level, to ensure that financial services companies and agents are able to meet their financial obligations to their customers and clients.

So what this bill does is it's essentially making a series of overdue updates to Manitoba's securities framework to reflect how modern financial markets already operate.

And while investor protection measures are included, they largely codify expectations that are already standard practice rather than really introducing any new or meaningful safeguards.

* (16:30)

So, this legislation is really about catching up. It does reflect how financial markets already operate and aligns Manitoba with standards that other jurisdictions have already had in place. There is very little in this legislation that positions Manitoba as a leader, but rather is a series of overdue updates.

As mentioned earlier, the financial services industry has undergone significant transformation over the years, which is why this modernization and these updates are largely necessary. We've seen significant technological advancements, e-commerce has made its way into the industry—that has made insurance more competitive and is giving consumers and clients more choice than ever before.

Customers are demanding quick access to information. The click of a mouse or easy access from smartphones has left consumers with significantly more choice. And the industry itself has spoken about these challenges that consumers have faced over the years. And that's how they're impacting how they manage their own risk and protections.

We also know that artificial intelligence has recently entered the landscape with risk modelling and forecasting updates necessary. And as AI does continue to develop and expand, so will its capabilities and usage within the financial services industry.

But more—most important, Honourable Speaker, is the emphasis on the protection of the public as these types of technology continue to grow.

So, as mentioned, the financial services industry is highly regulated throughout this piece of legislation. We do have some questions regarding the significant expansion of regulation-making authority. And, as we've seen time and time again with legislation that this NDP has brought forward, they're leaving a significant amount of details up to regulation, not legislation, which we know legislation comes to the scrutiny of this House whereas regulation does not.

So, this does raise some legitimate questions on how these powers will be exercised, what safeguards are going to be in place and how Manitobans will know whether those decisions, through regulations, are being made fairly. As this bill relates to consumer protection, essentially, within the financial services industry, these are important questions that need to be asked, and when so much detail is left up to regulation, it raises real questions and concerns about this government's transparency and how those decisions will be made.

But I do want to emphasize, Honourable Speaker, as I've said today and as I said through second reading, that protection of the public is the most important and overriding goal of The Securities Amendment Act. Manitobans need to also better understand that if decisions are being made through binding processes, then what rates do they retain as it pertains to the courts, or recourse if something does go wrong.

But with that said, as mentioned earlier, this legislation just largely reflects continuing the process of modernization oversight over the financial services sector. This modernization started under the previous PCs, but the services—financial services industry continues to expand and it continues to change, and, as a result, legislative changes are necessary to keep up with that expanding and growing sector.

As—you know, I just want to reiterate that this is already a very highly regulated industry, both provincially and federally, and many of the things brought forward in this legislation today already refracts—reflects current or standard practices within the industry. But it does make a—legislative updates that are overdue. It is a bit of a catch-up bill, catching up to what other provincial jurisdictions and other jurisdictions across the world already have.

And while investor protection measures are included, they do just largely codify the expectations that the industry should already be meeting. The addition of benchmark regulation brings Manitoba in

line with broader regulatory trends. It is necessary, but, again, just reflects a catching up to existing standards rather than Manitoba really leading or innovating in any way within the financial services sector.

Again, protection of the public is of the utmost importance. I would urge the government to put more detail within their bill and legislation frameworks rather than leaving it up to regulation, which they are repeatedly doing more consistently and with more being left up to regulation, which doesn't come to the scrutiny of this Chamber and without the public consultation that it deserves.

With that being said, Honourable Speaker, I look forward to supporting this legislation.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Seeing no other speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 46, The Securities Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?
[Agreed]

The motion is accordingly passed.

That concludes the business of the House.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

The Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

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