

Fourth Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLUM, James | Fort Garry-Riverview | NDP |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob | Wolseley | NDP |
| BINDLE, Kelly | Thompson | PC |
| CLARKE, Eileen, Hon. | Agassiz | PC |
| COX, Cathy, Hon. | River East | PC |
| CULLEN, Cliff, Hon. | Spruce Woods | PC |
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| FONTAINE, Nahanni | St. Johns | NDP |
| FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon. | Morden-Winkler | PC |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Lib. |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon. | Steinbach | PC |
| GRAYDON, Clifford | Emerson | Ind. |
| GUILLEMARD, Sarah | Fort Richmond | PC |
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| LAGASSÉ, Bob | Dawson Trail | PC |
| LAGIMODIERE, Alan | Selkirk | PC |
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| WISHART, Ian | Portage la Prairie | PC |
| WOWCHUK, Rick | Swan River | PC |
| YAKIMOSKI, Blair | Transcona | PC |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 6—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2018

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 6, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2018, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: I am happy to rise today in the House to introduce Bill 6, the statutes correction and minor amendments act.

This bill is a long-standing tradition in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. Each year, SCAMAA shows our respect for the rule of law by correcting various typographical, numbering and minor drafting and translation errors identified by the hard-working legislative drafters in the Legislative Counsel division. This bill also contains minor amendments to a variety of acts.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to quick passage of this legislation by members of the House.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Bill 5—The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice, that Bill 5, The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: This bill will amend The Mental Health Act to enable the disclosure by the medical director of a psychiatric facility of information from a patient's clinical record maintained in the psychiatric facility if the medical director reasonably believes this will be

necessary to prevent or lessen a serious risk of harm to the mental or physical health of the patient or another person, and it will also amend The Personal Health Information Act to enable disclosure of personal health information by a trustee, as defined under the act, if the trustee reasonably believes the disclosure to be necessary to prevent or lessen a risk of serious harm to the health or safety of the individual or to the public or to public safety.

The amendments are to address concerns that the legislation has prevented health-care providers from notifying an individual's family members or support network of information that could have prevented tragedies, such as a person taking their own life after being discharged from a health-care facility, while still respecting the autonomy and privacy rights of the individual to the fullest extent possible.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Bill 210—The Insurance Amendment Act

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from River Heights, that Bill 210, The Insurance Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: This bill is designed to plug a potential loophole in the insurance law. There's been a significant change from a—from—in the Criminal Code regarding medical assistance in dying, and this bill is designed to ensure that anyone who uses medical assistance in dying is not in any way denied any benefits or their estates denied compensation, such as life insurance.

If they were to use MAID right now, it could be plausible that it could be considered as suicide, for example, and that is not the intent of the federal legislation, and I'm sure it's not the intent of the provincial legislation, but who knows what the intent of an insurance company is. So this just clears it up.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Bill 211—The Brookside Cemetery Recognition Act

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from Burrows—I—pardon—seconded by the member from River Heights, that Bill 211, The Brookside Cemetery Recognition Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: This is a bill, in part, in reaction to a piece of legislation that was passed by the federal government that I was a part of and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was a part of that recognized a national cemetery in Ottawa, which is very—it's well enough, but there are other very significant cemeteries across Canada perhaps of even greater historic importance.

This bill, which is now being introduced a third time, is to recognize, from a Manitoba perspective, that there are great Canadians buried all across the country just not in Ottawa. And I think this would also bring attention to the unbelievable life histories of the people buried in Brookside Cemetery, which is one of the oldest cemeteries in Canada, predates the city of Winnipeg and has many heroes who we know and who we don't know.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

Bill 216—The Conflict of Interest Act

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from River Heights, that Bill 216, The Conflict of Interest Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: This is the third time I have introduced this bill. When I introduced it the first time, I described the conflict of interest legislation in Manitoba as woefully inadequate, and since then, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has brought forward 83 recommendations to improve our legislation.

The government did promise, after a resolution, to do something about conflict of interest this fall. They haven't. I introduced this bill to help create a framework to deal with conflicts of interest in Manitoba when it comes to government MLAs. And again, nothing has been done. We have the worst legislation in the country, perhaps in the Western world and it needs to be dealt with, and the government refuses to do it, so we'll do it on this side of the House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Winnipeg Lost Dog Alert

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): Last month, after having found a lost dog on my way home from the Legislature, I was introduced to an amazing organization whose mission it is to assist in reuniting lost dogs with their owners.

The Winnipeg Lost Dog Alert, the WLDA, was founded in 2011 by a man who was searching for a lost dog and thought there had to be a better way to communicate and to organize the search for lost dogs, thus the creation of the WLDA Facebook page.

The Facebook page serves as a central place to post information on lost dogs in Winnipeg and surrounding areas, to co-ordinate the search for lost dogs, to provide updates on the status thereof and to connect owners with the person who finds their pet.

* (13:40)

The WLDA site has a dedicated team of followers who volunteer time and resources to give needed support to people who have lost their dog as well as to provide tips and ideas of what to do if they have lost or found a dog. These volunteers not only provide information but also provide boots-on-the-ground support in searches.

In my situation, it was an incredibly short time that the dog, Coco, I had found was reunited with his owner after posting information on the Facebook page. To see how the system works, please visit www.winnipeglostdogalert.com.

Today, I'm honoured to have as my guests in the gallery WLDA founder Greg Mitchell; events director William Trefry; administrators Janet Jones and Cheryl Coleman; as well as my brother-in-law Gord Gage, who assisted me that night by introducing me to the WLDA page.

And I'd also recognize—I'd like to recognize one other integral person who was unable to be here with us today, the WLDA president, Kim Zebiere.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members rise and join me in recognizing this incredible group of individuals who are so dedicated to assisting dog owners find their missing pets.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Indigenous Women Politicians

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Indigenous women are the most courageous and dedicated in our nations, communities, families and, indeed, all spheres of our peoples' lives.

It was only three years ago this House saw the election of the first-ever First Nation woman with the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin).

Since then three more First Nation women have claimed our seats in this Chamber with the election of the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen), the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and myself, the member for St. Johns.

Our elections are but one form of decolonizing acts of reclamation which reflect indigenous women's resistance, whether through elected leadership, grassroots movements, community organizing, social-service delivery or knowledge transfer.

More and more indigenous women see our narratives, struggles and strengths reflected in this very House, which typically is the preserve of only men.

So you can imagine our excitement at recent US midterm elections with the election of Sharice Davids and Deb Haaland—the first cohort of Native American women elected to Congress, and Ruth Buffalo, state representative for North Dakota.

As indigenous women politicians we bring not only our individual selves to seats of power, but shoulder hundreds of years oppression, revealed in epidemic levels of violence perpetrated against our bodies, seen in the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

But we also bring with us the resilience and strength of all of our ancestors who came before us, guiding our work and all those who will precede us.

So to our sister congresswomen and state representatives, know that your election wins are our election wins, standing together in history and solidarity, and as you begin your new journeys, our hearts were filled with pride as you—as we send you our love and strength.

Congratulations.

Melvin Klassen

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to celebrate the achievements

of Melvin Klassen, a resident of Altona community, and serving others is something that is very important to Mr. Klassen, who's dedicated many years of his life to public service.

Melvin Klassen and his wife Margaret were school instructors and he held administrative positions in Altona area for 30 years before retiring in 1996.

Melvin has served a credit union for many years, both locally and provincially, as a vice-president of Credit Union Central of Manitoba. He was also appointed to the credit union–Deposit Guarantee Corporation Board of Directors by the provincial government in 2001.

He was elected to the position of Central District Urban Director of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities Board of Directors in November of 2006.

Melvin Klassen also spent two decades serving in the political arena. First elected to the Altona Town Council in 1998, Melvin has served as a mayor since 2002.

In 2006 municipal election he was re-elected by acclamation. In 2010 he was elected, and in 2014 he was once again re-elected by acclamation, retiring in the fall of 2018.

During his time as mayor, Melvin was instrumental in organizing Altona's minor baseball program, along with their senior slo-pitch program. Access Field in Altona officially opened in 2015, with grandstand seats and infield lights allowing for evening ball games.

A great addition to the community under Melvin's tenure was the mayor—included the Gallery in the Park, an outdoor sculpture garden, which has positioned Altona as a designation for tourists and art enthusiasts alike and will leave a lasting legacy of appreciation of art and culture in southern Manitoba.

Working together with the RM of Rhineland and sharing services with them has been a good partnership. The \$12-million lagoon project has been a big achievement—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to complete his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Graydon: He is proud of the council's ability to work with federal and provincial governments to get things done.

Other accomplishments include: upgraded playground in the park, trail system, construction and hard surfacing in many Altona streets.

Melvin and Margaret have been married for 52 years. They raised three children in Altona, now enjoy spending time with their grandchildren.

I'd like to congratulate Melvin on his many accolades and thank him for his selflessness that he has demonstrated in serving the public. His first accolade—final accolade was being presented at—an Honourary Life Membership for his work with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities.

Thank you.

Calvin Christian School

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): In the months leading up to the previous election I spent my evenings knocking on doors, but my daytimes were often spent substitute teaching in area schools.

One such school was Calvin Christian School, and so I was delighted today when I saw students from that school visiting the Legislature. My guests for this PMS couldn't make it, so I thought I'd do a quick swap and give a shout-out to my friends from Calvin Christian School.

I had the privilege of teaching them on numerous occasions. We developed quite a rapport. They're a wonderful group of students. They were professional; they were polite; they were a pleasure to teach. I wouldn't be surprised, Madam Speaker, if one day, one or two of them end up on the floor of this Chamber or possibly in Ottawa or maybe city hall.

Madam Speaker, Calvin Christian's been around for over 50 years serving the northeast corner of Winnipeg. It's one of about 50 MFIS schools, and many members of this Chamber will recall that last week the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools came to this Legislature to talk about their own 50-member organization serving over 14,000 students.

Madam Speaker, it's a great honour to have friends with us here today and I invite all members to join me in welcoming them to the Manitoba Legislature.

Corydon Community Centre Walking Group

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, since 2007 the Central Corydon Community Centre

Walking Group has met every Monday and Thursday to walk at one of Winnipeg's scenic sites, including Kildonan Park, Assiniboine Park, Churchill Drive, Henteleff Park, Silver Avenue walk, Fort Whyte Centre, Bunn's Creek, Assiniboine Forest and the south Seine River. The last walk, yesterday, had 29 people.

Starting at 9:30, this amazing group walks year-round, whether the sun is shining or the rain or snow are falling. Members go at their own speed, from fast to not so fast, walking for about an hour and then afterward socializing with a hot or a cold drink.

Come out and join the group. Over the years more than 150 different people have come.

As Chuck says, like the air we breathe, it's free. I encourage other MLAs to start groups in their area.

The Central Corydon Community Centre Walking Group began after I met Chuck Cruden at an event in the Crescentwood community club. With the leadership of Chuck Cruden and Bob Kury, past president of the River Heights Community Centre, who was also present, the River Heights Community Centre walking group was born. After the amalgamation of three community centres it became the Central Corydon Community Centre Walking Group. The community centre continues to be a strong supporter.

Now in its 12th year, there have been changes over time. One of their favourite spots was The Forks. Sadly, with increased parking costs and other changes they no longer go to The Forks as it's not as welcoming as it used to be.

Information and walking schedules are available at the Central Corydon Community Centre—phone: 204-488-7000—or on their website at www.corydoncc.com.

I recognize today Chuck Cruden and other walkers who are here in the gallery. I request leave to have all the names of those present recorded in Hansard.

* (13:50)

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to include the names of the guests in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Corydon Community Centre Walking Group members: Fay Croal, Stan Croal, Chuck Cruden, Eileen Cruden, Milt From, Miriam Greene, Iris Reimer, Victoria Shaw, Shirley Ann Simkulak, Jim Stibbard.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Calvin Christian collegiate, 33 grade 11 students under the direction of Kat Skalny and Alicia Thiessen, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski).

On behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Cost of Living in Manitoba Affordability Concerns

Mr. Wab Kineu (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, things are getting more and more difficult for people in the province of Manitoba under this government: costs are rising, bills continue to go up, but there's less and less support from this government.

MPI rates are going up 1.8 per cent next year. This will mean that MPI rates will have increased by over 8 per cent under this Premier, Madam Speaker, and this is only what the PUB permitted. MPI actually wanted to increase rates be even more—the third year in a row rates have increased.

Now, the Premier should be keeping rates affordable for families and businesses; he's failing. One of the first acts of this Premier was to rip up legislation that guaranteed that Manitobans would have the lowest cost bundle of vehicle insurance, home heating and electricity rates in Canada.

MPI is profitable and should be keeping rates affordable.

Why is this Premier making life harder for everyday families?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I simply can't accept the preamble from the member who leads a party which never missed an opportunity to take money off the kitchen tables of Manitobans, which raised the fees for every Manitoban who wished to license a car. So this lack of concern historically among the previous government's members is not a good indication of their sincerity in respect of making life more affordable for Manitobans.

What is the actions we have taken, Madam Speaker, to eliminate bracket creep, for example, so

that inflation wouldn't erode the purchasing power of seniors in our province who are—many of whom must live on a fixed income. These are the kinds of actions that demonstrate the sincerity of our effort.

I would let the NDP's record speak for itself, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kineu: They've done nothing, Madam Speaker.

MPI rates are going up, and the increase in hydro rates apparently wasn't enough for this Premier last year. That rate increase wasn't steep enough for this Premier. That's why he—after his first board walked out on him and told him that he wasn't doing the job of premier, that the new board that he brought in—after a couple of tries, mind you—the new board that he brought in decided, at his order, at his discretion, to raise hydro rates again, resulting in ever-increasing bills for the average family here in Manitoba.

Now, the previous mandate of Hydro was to keep bills affordable and to do it in an environmentally conscious way. But, of course, under this Premier, they changed the terms of reference. They changed the mission for Hydro so it's no longer about affordability; it's no longer about the environment. Now we get these big increases on hydro bills.

Why is the Premier telling Manitoba Hydro they should no longer keep bills affordable for families?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate any question from a member of the New Democratic Party on the topic of affordability for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, the previous administration promised Manitobans—they walked to their—the doors of Manitoba homes, they knocked on the doors and they actually looked people right in the eye and said, we promise that we won't raise your taxes, and then they raised the taxes on beer and benefits, cars and cottages, haircuts, home insurance; and then they went further the year after and actually raised the PST after promising they wouldn't do that either. So that record is not an enviable one.

Under our government Manitobans have seen some of the largest increases in take-home pay in the country over other provinces, some of the best reductions—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: And I know they don't like it, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: –and they can laugh all they want. But Manitobans are laughing with glee, joy and satisfaction at the progress this government is making.

The fact is our wait times are dropping; other provinces' wait times are going up. Our ambulance fees are dropping–

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, costs in this province keep going up, and all the Premier does is stand next to the big corporations and cheerlead them on, saying, keep hiking those bills.

We know that cost of food and groceries is going to increase by some \$400 this year. We know that MPI bills and hydro bills are increasing under this Premier's watch, and that's even after this Premier made moves like increasing tuition and cancelling a tax rebate for graduates who stay in the province after post-secondary education–and even that–after he cancelled the tax rebate for seniors, Madam Speaker.

This Premier, he won't even commit to taking action to make cellphone bills cheaper for Manitobans. It seems like a total no-brainer. There's a lot of money for the average family, but the Premier has decided maybe those families don't need it–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Will the Premier stop making life less affordable for families and we–will he commit to making it more affordable for everybody in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Appreciate the member referring in his preamble to no-brainer; that was a no-brainer question, Madam Speaker.

Because the fact is the NDP have raided the pocketbooks of Manitobans for years. Now they want to support a national carbon tax on every home in the country and Manitobans–according to the NDP–should pay more to start up the car. They should pay more to heat their home. They should pay more in taxes because that's what the NDP want, but that's not, Madam Speaker, what we want because we know that's not what Manitobans want.

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

Emergency Room Services Request to Stop Closures

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, we say Manitobans should pay less for their cellphone bills, they should pay less for the MPI bills and they should pay less for their hydro bills. The only thing we want to see more of is more emergency rooms in places like northeast Winnipeg.

Now, again, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) missed an opportunity to stand in the House today and condemn this Premier's failing plan to close emergency rooms in northeast Winnipeg. Everybody knows that since this Premier–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: –started to close emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg that wait times are on the increase. They're up 21 per cent since this Premier started to close–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: –emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker: I'm directing the table to stop the clock.

There is a lot of heckling going on and there are students in the gallery and there are people watching, and I'm having increasing difficulty hearing the member ask his question.

So I would ask for members' co-operation, please, especially when we have students here and we have an ability to show how democracy actually takes place in action. Let's show them that it is done in a respectful manner.

Mr. Kinew: So as I was saying, since October 2017, when they started closing emergency rooms, to October 2018 of this year, wait times are up 21 per cent.

When will the Premier come to his senses and back off of this misguided plan to close emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The Canadian institute of health information will remain a better source of accurate data than the member opposite. The Canadian institute of health information reported last week that one province was reducing wait times: Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, while those wait times were lengthening under the previous government to record lengths they did nothing about it.

We inherited a system that was broken; we're endeavouring to fix it; and it's time for the member to start cheering for Manitobans instead of himself.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, the Premier ought to share with the House what the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority says has happened to wait times since he started to close emergency rooms. Of course, he'll be forced to concede that wait times have gone up 21 per cent. That's according to the WRHA, Madam Speaker. Those are the facts.

Now, the Premier refuses to listen to anybody when it comes to health care, and that's why the people of Grandview, Manitoba, have had to go outside of the province to hire their own out-of-province external consultant. They say it's the only kind of language and the only evidence that this Premier understands or will listen to.

* (14:00)

We know that 18 rural ambulance stations are slated to be closed and that the evidence within the department does not match up with the announcement that has been made.

Why is the government ignoring the evidence? Why did the people of Grandview have to go out of province to hire their own consultants and why doesn't the Premier listen to the people of Manitoba when it comes to health care?

Mr. Pallister: Pretty obvious the member wants Manitobans to have longer wait times so he can score some political points, Madam Speaker. The problem is the real data doesn't fit with his thesis. Manitobans are benefiting from—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —lower, shorter wait times. Manitobans are benefiting from lower ambulance fees. Manitobans are benefiting from shorter wait times for MRIs, from shorter wait times for PCHs. Manitobans are benefiting from a \$5.3-million additional initiative to shorten wait times for hips and knees, as well.

Manitobans are benefiting from these changes, Madam Speaker. They know that. Manitobans are aware of the benefits and they're aware of the courage

this government's demonstrated in addressing the problem the previous government ignored.

Madam Speaker: Oh, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary. My apologies.

Mr. Kinew: Thank you, kindly, Madam Speaker.

It's a sad day when a community like Grandview is forced to spend their own time and money and to go out of province to hire their own consultant to bring forward evidence that this Premier may listen to in the future.

Again, that's not listening. It's not listening to the voices of the people of Grandview, of the people across Westman and the Parkland region who are saying that they don't want these ambulance stations to close.

But, again, it shows that this Premier only listens to those high-priced consultants like KPMG or like Deloitte. We know that those are the types of companies that he's turning to when it comes to this review of CancerCare, and we've been hearing over and over again from the people of northeast Winnipeg that they're not being listened to when it comes to the closure of the Concordia ER. They want that plan scrapped.

So will the Premier listen to the people of northeast Winnipeg on the cancellation of the Concordia ER? Will he listen to the people of Grandview when it comes to rolling back the plan to close their ambulance station, and will he listen to the people of Manitoba who say they don't want any more cuts to health care?

Mr. Pallister: It's a myth, Madam Speaker, and \$700 million proves it: \$700 million of additional investment this year alone in health care is the furthest thing from a cut. That's \$700 million more than the NDP ever invested in health care. We're investing in solving the problems they created. We'll continue to do so.

The member talks about listening to experts and, Madam Speaker, they commissioned the ambulance study which they then ignored. We're acting on the advice that was given to them which they did not have the courage to implement.

They commissioned the Peachey report. They didn't act on it. They didn't do anything to make the system better, and now the member tries to score political points saying it's as bad as it was when the NDP were in.

Well, it isn't, Madam Speaker. We're fixing it.

**Winnipeg Police Board
Civilian Oversight**

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): We've raised serious concerns regarding civilian oversight of police forces in Winnipeg. The minister is unwilling to provide clear answers regarding what actions, if any, he will take to ensure that the IIU can do its job. We're concerned civilian oversight of police forces is diminishing.

We've also raised concerns when the Winnipeg Police Board abandoned its use of force policy. At the time the chairperson cited jurisdictional disagreement with the Winnipeg police force and the Manitoba Police Commission.

Will the minister intervene to ensure that the Winnipeg Police Board has the authority to establish and maintain a use of policy—use of force policy?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We've been very clear since the Throne Speech that we're going to review The Police Services Act. This will be a very comprehensive review. The terms of reference for that review are being drafted as we speak, and we look forward to engaging Manitobans on that very comprehensive review of police services across Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Fontaine: Mary Jane Brownscombe will be leaving the Winnipeg Police Board at the end of December. She echoed our concern. The police board should be able to establish and maintain a use of force policy for Winnipeg's police force, and she voted against removing this policy.

Just like the IIU, it appears jurisdictional concerns are crowding out the powers of civilian oversight. The minister should see these disputes as an opportunity to clarify the role of civilian oversight and ensure that it has the authority needed to do its job.

Will he do so today?

Mr. Cullen: We certainly have confidence in the police officers, the police forces across Manitoba, to do their job in dealing with the public. We certainly have confidence in the Independent Investigation Unit. It is an independent investigation unit, and we have full confidence in the operations of that unit.

Madam Speaker, we have made the commitment. We are going to do a review of police services.

Manitobans will have the opportunity to engage in that process. We know the NDP are upset because they didn't get the legislation correct. We have taken up the task. We will get that legislation correct.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Fontaine: The Winnipeg Police Board has abandoned its use of force policy. The IIU is in dispute with police forces over its powers.

The minister has an opportunity to address the decline in civilian oversight occurring over the last six months under his watch. He can make it clear his intention is to ensure strong civilian oversight over our police forces and that he will use his powers to ensure that this happens. The minister either wants effective civilian oversight or he doesn't.

So will he tell us which side is he on today?

Mr. Cullen: Clearly, we as a government want an effective investigation process. We know Manitobans want an effective review process, an investigative process. We know the NDP did not create that framework. That's why we made the commitment to engage with Manitobans. We will engage with police forces across the province to come up with proper solutions to legislation, and we will develop a proper framework for that in the very near future.

**B & L Foster Care Agency
Number of Children in Care**

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Families deserve answers about their children when they are in care. They need to know their children are safe and protected.

Yesterday the minister said 95 per cent of children in B & L's care had been spoken to. That means the minister knows how many kids are in their care but is refusing to tell the public this information. The minister is hiding facts from the public, like when she first learned of the abuse of B & L.

Will—we will continue to ask: How many of our children are currently in B & L's care and when did she first learn of the abuse there?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): I believe we've answered these questions many, many times in the House, and I think what is very important for Manitobans and for the member opposite to understand is that we will always put the safety of our children in care first and the safety of children in Manitoba first.

That's why when we first learned of the allegations we took actions immediately, Madam Speaker, upon that. We put a review in place, and I'm pleased to report today that 100 per cent of those children have been visited as of noon today.

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

No New Placements Request

Ms. Lathlin: The minister stopped new placements while she conducts a so-called review of this agency, but the minister hasn't said what will happen once the remaining 5 per cent of these kids are contacted.

Staff at this agency are quoted saying that the agency dragged its heels big time and sat back and allowed abuse to happen. That's an admission from the directors of the agency itself.

This minister needs to tell the House if she will ever place a new child in that agency's care.

Will the minister commit that there will be no more new replacements at B & L agency?

Mrs. Stefanson: In fact, we made that commitment the moment that we announced the review, Madam Speaker, so we have made that commitment.

And just to correct the record from the member's comments, it's been 100 per cent of those children that we have ensured are in—are safe in Manitoba. And I think—I just want to take this opportunity to thank the authorities, to thank the agencies, to thank all those social workers out there that are doing such an incredible job to ensure the safety of children in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas, on a final supplementary.

Awareness of Abuse Allegations

Ms. Lathlin: The only reason the public knows of the abuse these children suffered is because of the media. It looks like the agency and the government simply ignored these issues, but it's never right to ignore the safety of kids, and families want to know their kids will be safe when they're in care.

* (14:10)

Will the minister have the courage to tell this House when she first knew of these allegations? Did

she learn about them through the media, or did she know before and did not do anything?

Mrs. Stefanson: I've said time and time again, Madam Speaker, that as soon as we were aware of the allegations, we took action to ensure the safety of all of those children and—B & L care.

Of course, we did not ignore this issue. We took action immediately upon learning of those allegations, and I'm just very, very thankful for all of those people that are involved: the authorities, the agencies, the social workers that have ensured and—met with those children one-on-one to ensure their safety, and that is the most important thing in this entire issue.

HIV Prevention Medication Pharmacare Coverage Request

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Yesterday the government quietly released its report on statistics on HIV in Manitoba from 2017. The number of new cases is lower for a reason that is not very reassuring: that people in the past who were being tested were sometimes being counted twice. On page 7 of that report, which I table, the authors note that Manitoba Health's data is not as complete as the September Manitoba HIV Program update, which I also table.

That September document shows that 18 per cent of new infections are due to injection drug use. Two of the known risks of meth use are psychosis and sexual aggression, which both lead to increases in the spread of STIs and blood-borne illnesses. In Manitoba syphilis rates have increased by 400 per cent, driven by meth, and doctors are warning that HIV could go up as well. There are HIV medications that can prevent the disease from spreading, but Manitoba is the only province in western Canada that doesn't cover it free of charge.

Will this government expand harm reduction across Manitoba and prevent the spread of HIV by making this life-saving drug available for free?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to answer the question.

To be clear, in Manitoba we're still reviewing the PReP coverage as a potential intervention to prevent HIV infection. But to be clear, as other jurisdictions do post-exposure prophylaxis, Manitoba is at the same place as other provinces providing these drugs.

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

HIV Prevention Testing Routine Health Checkups

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Just this week, the Public Health Agency of Canada said that one in Canadian—one in seven Canadians who have HIV don't know they have it. If people don't know they're infected, they obviously cannot take the steps they need to prevent HIV or keep themselves well. Here in Manitoba people are late getting diagnosed and late getting care.

The government's report said that while men are more likely to be infected than HIV with women, women are twice as likely to be tested, in part because women are routinely tested in Manitoba when they're pregnant. Experts have said we could treat more people and prevent further infection with routine HIV testing as part of health checkups.

Will this government commit to catch HIV infection early to prevent further infections and keep people healthier by making HIV testing a routine part of health checkups for Manitobans?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, it's an important issue. I'm glad that the member is raising the issue, and it's why we continue to study the issue of whether—at this point in time, that it's time to extend the current accommodation and coverage that we have for pre-exposure prophylaxis in this province, as other jurisdictions are also doing. That, of course, has to be based on research. That has to be based on evidence and data, and that is the work that is being undertaken.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Second Opposition, on a final supplementary.

HIV and STI Infection Rates Public Access to Information

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): We all know there's a meth epidemic in Manitoba, and in August, the WRHA reported that there's been an outbreak of syphilis with more cases than in the three previous years combined. They reported that 30 per cent of the people who were infected were crystal meth users.

None of this information is available on Manitoba Health's website, and the HIV report just released says Manitoba's, quote, surveillance data storage management and analyses are going through a transition period. End quote.

This transition is taking quite a while. The Manitoba Annual Summary of Communicable

Diseases has not been updated since 2015, nearly three years ago, and monthly reports have not been updated since June 2017. There's no way for the public to access this information.

Does the health—does the Minister of Health have access to this information and, if so, will he make it public today?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): The Province of Manitoba is committed to continuous ongoing efforts when it comes to preventing and minimizing the impacts of STBBIs, including HIV and AIDS, in Manitoba. There are efforts under way right now. Some of those have to do with provisions of starter medications for HIV post-exposure prophylaxis.

I can tell that member that only recently the Province has updated its approach to these kits and has included Truvada and generic equivalents as one of the medications in its starter kits.

The Province will continue to take action and we'll continue to study whether the—now is the time to make an additional step.

Emergency Room Services Request to Stop Closures

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) own wait times task force told the government not to proceed with further emergency room closures without significant increases in capacity in the rest of the system. The task force projects a 55 per cent increase in volume at St. Boniface Hospital if Concordia and Seven Oaks ERs close.

But this government has not listened to that and instead it's full speed ahead. We now know the most critically ill patients will be redirected away from Concordia starting next week.

Even as the Premier ignores patients, families and communities, will he at least listen to his own task force and shelve plans to close more emergency rooms?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): The member for Minto continues to try to spread fear among the people of Winnipeg.

Yesterday at the Provincial Clinical and Preventative Services Planning seminar, Rohan Hammett, who is a former deputy minister of health for New South Wales in Australia, presented, and he said this: that health systems must change, they must evolve; and he said that Manitoba is well prepared to

be able to transition to a stronger health-care system that will get better results for patients and provide more care.

This is the journey that we are on in Manitoba. That member is on a journey of casting out a vision of fear. We are one-on one for better care for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, if putting quotes from the government's own wait times task force on the record and if reporting on what the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is telling us is fear mongering, then, I guess, I'm guilty.

But you know, this minister—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —needs to understand—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —how concerned families in the north-east corner of Winnipeg are.

The wait times task force—again, commissioned by this government, providing advice to this government—says that even with planned renovations St. Boniface, and I quote, lacks the physical infrastructure and does not currently have in-patient capacity to safely accommodate these increased numbers—the words of their own report.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) listen and stop the closures at Concordia and Seven Oaks?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, let's all understand that for 17 years the NDP government failed to take the steps necessary to sustain our health-care system and keep it strong for the future. The wait times got worse. The money got spent, but it got thrown against a bad provision of service.

We refuse to take that same path. It's why we are making a comprehensive change to our health-care system designed to get better access to care; to get shorter wait times; to get more provision of service. We will keep going down this path because we know the evidence is now showing it's beginning to work.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, let's all understand that this government is putting cutting costs ahead of

patient safety in Winnipeg and in the province of Manitoba.

Now, the plan to close this emergency room has alarmed residents of northeast Winnipeg, and it's alarmed them greatly because they know in an emergency every second counts.

Now, we know there's studies. One in California, for example, it found after a string of emergency department closures, mortality rates increased for heart attack patients, for those suffering a stroke.

But, of course, for this government, despite their own evidence, their own reports, it's full speed ahead and they've announced they'll be redirecting the very sickest patients away from Concordia starting next week.

Will the Premier reconsider this misguided plan, which we know is failing, to close more Winnipeg emergency rooms?

Mr. Friesen: The member is referring to a change that would see ambulances direct higher acuity patients to HSC, St. Boniface and Grace between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. He is aware that even now there are those same protocols in place to always direct higher acuity patients to the appropriate care that they can receive. Those things are in place.

* (14:20)

He spreads fear. But let's understand that under these statements there is a premise of his, and it goes like this: don't change anything in the health-care system, ever. But we know where that led Manitoba.

We are committed to a plan that will get better care sooner for Manitobans and we will not apologize because the plan is demonstrating that it's starting to work.

Minor Drainage Projects New Regulations

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): After 17 years of NDP decay, our PC government is committed to reducing red tape and taking meaningful action to protect the environment. For years, landowners and municipalities told the NDP that the way they manage drainage was not working for municipalities or landowners, not to mention the environment. And for years, nothing was done.

Can the Minister of Sustainable Development please inform the House of our government's proposed new drainage regulations and what they mean for Manitobans?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'm pleased to take a question from my honourable colleague, and I'm also pleased to be delivering on a long-standing request from the AMM to improve the way we govern drainage in Manitoba.

We are now accepting public comments on a proposal that would provide a faster and simpler process for approving minor drainage projects. The new regulations will also deliver on a major part of our Climate and Green Plan by ensuring that there is no net loss of wetlands in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, our government is taking meaningful action to protect the environment while eliminating needless red tape for landowners and municipalities. Manitobans deserve better than what they got under the NDP, and that's exactly what we're delivering.

Lead Contamination in Soil Health Effects on Children

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, successive NDP and PC governments have known for decades of dangerous levels of lead in neighbourhoods across Winnipeg, including St. Boniface, Point Douglas and Weston.

We know where the contamination is. We know there can be serious health impacts from lead as well as other metals. The Minister of Sustainable Development has dropped the ball on this issue. It now falls to the Minister of Health.

We know there's been lead contamination. The question is whether this government has asked for any assessment of the health of children and youth in the contaminated areas.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like to correct the member's preamble where he stated that the Minister of Health is taking action now on matters of health. And, well, that's exactly what he is doing.

We are putting back public health—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —in terms of the Health Minister is now responsible for matters of public health.

My department is responsible for matters of environment, and we work together as a team. That is exactly the way it should be. The NDP reversed direction. They pulled public health away from the environmental process so that the environmentalists were offering public health. It never should have been

that way, and we're setting it right. We're working as a team and getting action for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the Manitoba Liberal caucus submitted a request to determine if areas of St. Boniface impacted by contamination were showing different levels of illness. Children and youth living in postal zones around the St. Boniface contaminated area show higher levels of prescriptions for drugs related to mental health than in the rest of Winnipeg and in Manitoba. I table that report.

These findings are of concern. They could indicate that children and youth in that area may be more likely to have ADHD, which can be treated with such medications.

Will the minister and his department investigate these findings and study whether the health of children and youth in St. Boniface, Point Douglas and Weston and other neighbourhoods have been 'adly'—adversely affected by years of government inaction?

Ms. Squires: Speaking of years of inaction by the government, that was under the NDP. They hid the report. In 2007, they had a report. In fact, they had a draft press release.

In fact, they had that press release ready to go, and their minister said, no, we don't want to put this out; it might affect the election that we're going into. So they buried the results. From 2011 all the way until 2017, that information was concealed.

Our government is taking action—I'd also like to table the results from the most recent analysis that my department undertook—and that is exactly what we're going to do. We're going to continue to work on this issue so that we can ensure Manitobans have a safe, clean environment for all.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on a final supplementary.

Request to Release Reports

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, we've heard from people in affected neighbourhoods. They don't want finger 'pounting'. They want action to make them safe—safe, and to clean up. We can't continue to have a culture of inaction when tests showing lead contamination were known and withheld from the public. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: There needs to be a full investigation of why the information remained hidden for so long. This is a matter of serious public concern, and the answers are available but out of reach because they're available only in the advice to ministers and Cabinet confidences.

Will the Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) give consent to release the relevant documents from Cabinet confidence so a proper investigation can happen?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): So let's be clear: the member doesn't want finger pointing, but he wants a full investigation and points the finger at the previous government, Madam Speaker, and the current government.

This is the typical Liberal approach: blame everybody and don't take responsibility. Madam Speaker, this government takes responsibility.

The reality is soil tests were conducted 10 years ago. The reality is the results were covered up by the previous administration. The reality is the results were released; they were made public. The reality is retesting was ordered by the minister. The reality is the minister went the extra mile to get the information to the people of the area.

The fact is the people of Wolseley, Logan, Minto, St. B and Point Douglas were not protected by the previous government, but they are by this one.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with oral questions, we have a couple more guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

Seated in the public gallery we have Max Friesen and Lindsay Friesen, the father and brother of the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen), and we'd like to welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

Northern Walleye Inc. Licence Renewal Inquiry

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): We'll try this again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. On Friday, the fish dealer licence for a company called Northern Walleye expired. This is the company that outraged commercial fishers across the province because they walked off

with over \$1 million of fish and did not pay the fishers for it.

Commercial fishers are equally outraged at this government because fishers were supposed to be paid within a week of delivering their catch, and, instead, the government removed that law from the books altogether.

So let's start at the first step, which would obviously be to ask this minister: Did Northern Walleye apply for their fish dealer licence to be renewed, and has she granted that request?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Again, I have to reject the entire preamble from this member. It was completely erroneous.

And in terms of the licence that he purports to have expired on Friday, I'd like to inform him that it was suspended months ago, and it will remain suspended until minimum of May of 2020.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on a supplementary question. *[interjection]*

Order.

Internal Investigation

Mr. Altemeyer: As recently as last week, Madam Speaker, this minister and her department refused to provide any information about her so-called government's investigation. I table a article written in The Express Weekly News where they were given ample opportunity to identify what, if any, steps they were taking, and they flat out refused to do so.

I would also like to ask the minister, if she did find anything troubling during this so-called—and, until today, unknown—results of her internal investigation, did she take the step of passing along that information to the RCMP in a formal referral?

Ms. Squires: Our government is always standing up for all the fisheries in the province of Manitoba and the quality of Lake Winnipeg. In fact, last week, I had a very robust conversation with the Lake Winnipeg co-management board on issues of sustainability, something that that previous government never addressed. They never addressed the sustainability of the lake.

When zebra mussels were infesting Lake Winnipeg, their minister, Gord Mackintosh, shrugged his shoulders and says, oh well, we have 100,000 other lakes in this province to care about. Well, this government will never turn its back on Lake Winnipeg

fishers or the in—the health of the fishery. We are continuing to work and stand up for fishers in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, you know, when you ask a question about fishers—hard-working Manitobans—getting paid for a hard day's work and the minister can't answer the question, that's something that all of us need to be very concerned about.

* (14:30)

I'm not surprised the minister's refusing to answer that question, because, thanks to a FIPPA, we actually don't need her answers in question period—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: We can find out the truth.

I'm wondering if she might be able to recall who it was that wrote, way back in March of this year—March 11th, to be precise—quote: Just reading the Express Weekly and it states the Winnipegosis RCMP has dropped its investigation as we were the lead investigator and no need for duplication.

Well, that would have been the minister who wrote that, and yet last week she sent a reporter on a wild goose chase to go talk to the RCMP, who she knows—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Squires: Well, again, I reject the premise of this member's argument, and I appreciate that he does his opposition research in two-week-old news articles.

But the reality is our government continues to stand up for the fishers in Manitoba. We conducted a full investigation and we are moving forward with fishery—enhanced fishery for all Manitobans.

Work Readiness Certificate for Youth New Online Course Announcement

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Yesterday, our government along with SAFE Work Manitoba announced a new Young Worker Readiness Certificate course.

Could the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade please share with the House how this new course will help keep our youth aware of the rights and responsibilities in the workforce?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I thank the member for Fort

Richmond for that great question because yesterday we did unveil our youth worker readiness certificate course.

This is an online course for young people aged 13 and up where they take an online course learning about safety at the workplace, responsibilities of the workplace, rights in the workplace, and then when—upon completion of the course, the students write a test and get a certificate which they then give to their prospective employer, and this ensures that both workers and employers know that our young people are working in a safe environment and know—and both know their rights and responsibilities.

This is a great course for young people, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of methamphetamine and opioids—opiates—two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April of 2015 and April of 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using methamphetamine and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free naloxone.

This petition has been signed by Mark Anderson, Jamie Rose, April McDonald and many other Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

Background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of 'methamphetamine' and opiates, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need; and

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using 'methamphetamine' and opiates, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba; and

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addiction, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy and direct access to free naloxone.

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Vivian Kenderdine, Peggy Meek, Bernie Meek and many other Manitobans.

Vimy Arena

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed by the provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial sites such as the St. Boniface Industrial Park, the 20,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital or old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

* (14:40)

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if the land was owned by the City of Winnipeg. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence, and ignores better uses for the land which would be consistent with a residential area.

(4) Though there are standards that one would expect for a treatment centre, the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the land acquisition for this Manitoba Housing project for use as an drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by the provincial government changes the fundamental nature of the community, including park and recreation uses, concerns of the residents of St. James and others—public safety, property value and the people of St. James way of life are not properly being addressed.

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo and River Heights, have not been considered for this Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and the operation of a drug treatment centre fall outside the statutory mandate of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The provincial government does not have a co-ordinated plan for addiction treatment in Manitoba as it currently underplan—underfunds treatment centres which are running far under capacity and potential.

(9) The community has been misled regarding the true intention of the Manitoba Housing—of Manitoba Housing as lands be transferred for a 50-bed facility even though the project is clearly outside Manitoba Housing responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction treatment facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purpose of park land and recreational activities for public use, including being an important component of the Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and the Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation of PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Ave. location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to be continued designated for parks and recreation activity in neighbourhoods and community.

This has been signed by many Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary health care they need.

(3) The budget of the Northern Regional Health Authority has been slashed by over \$6 million which has negatively affected doctor retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited services in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: –with no discussion regarding when they will be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and the surrounding area will have to travel at least an hour and a half to The Pas, creating unnecessary risk for mothers and babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed upon them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from this provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the northern patient transport program.

(9) Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because this provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health-care services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reinstate obstetric delivery services at Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regional basis.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, been signed by Jennifer Beck, Shawn Anderson, Ben Siemens and many other Manitobans.

Preventative Health Services Plan

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

Preventative health services are essential to creating a healthy community.

Preventive care to optimize health and decrease sickness is as important as treatment after a disease or sickness has been identified.

Increasing evidence now supports well-designed investments in prevention to improve health and decrease health-care costs, starting in the first year. In the long term, effective preventive measures can

continue to improve population health while reducing downstream costs.

The lack of a focused and comprehensive provincial approach to prevention under the previous NDP provincial government and under the present provincial government has resulted in steadily increasing rates of diabetes, HIV and methamphetamine addictions province-wide.

The cutbacks by the present provincial government, including the underspending in primary care by 65 per cent in 2016-2017 and by 70 per cent in 2017-2018, the closure of the Corydon Primary Care Clinic and the elimination of 50 per cent of the clinical staff at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Compass youth program in Portage la Prairie, have all reduced the capacity to deliver preventive health initiatives.

The lack of a provincial plan to address poverty, homelessness and the methamphetamine crisis in Manitoba is hampering efforts to keep people well.

When prevention services are only a small part of a clinical services plan, acute-care services invariably monopolize attention, money and other resources.

The need to dedicate and focus resources used in prevention requires a comprehensive standalone preventive health services plan.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (14:50)

To urge the provincial government to immediately develop and release a preventative-health-services plan which would provide the necessary direction and resources to improve the health and well-being of Manitobans.

Signed by Rachel Smith, Evelyn Forget, Richard Lobdell and many others.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): This afternoon, could you please call for second reading debate: Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members); and once that is passed, could you please call Bill 4, the public sector construction projects (tenders) act; when that is passed, could you please call

Bill 3, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Social Responsibility Fee); and when that is passed, would you please call Bill 7, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions).

Following that, we'd entertain a 5 o'clock call.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 2 this afternoon; and once that is passed it will be followed by debate on Bill 4; and once that is passed it will be followed by debate on Bill 3; and following that it would be the—what would follow would be debate on Bill 7.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)

Madam Speaker: So, therefore, calling the first one, Bill 2, second reading of Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members).

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), that Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members), now be read for a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table her message.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister for Municipal Relations, seconded by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure, that Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Wharton: It's truly a pleasure to rise today and give second reading to Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker, all elected officials are expected to govern in the best interest of their communities. Citizens expect their municipal governments to fulfill their duties and responsibilities with honesty and integrity. Provincially, we have shown leadership in extending protections to the civil service with the no-wrong-door approach after disturbing reports of

sexual harassment during the tenure of the previous administration.

Just last week, we acted on a 2014 request by the City of Winnipeg to be included in provincial whistleblower protection legislation that was ignored by members opposite when they were in government, Madam Speaker. We went even further by allowing all municipalities across the province to opt in to the new framework.

I am pleased to continue our leadership to improve municipal governments through stronger codes of conduct for council members. Under The Municipal Act, all municipalities are required to adopt a code of conduct that establishes guidelines on acceptable behaviour for council members in dealing with each other, employees and citizens.

However, under the NDP, some municipal codes of conduct were unenforceable and ill-defined, Madam Speaker.

Last spring, we committed to work with municipalities and other stakeholders to review The Municipal Act and other relevant legislation to identify opportunities to strengthen a municipality's ability to enforce their codes of conduct.

Over the last several months we have been consulting with our municipal partners, Madam Speaker. We heard the need for stronger legislation around council code of conduct regarding the prevention, investigation and enforcement mechanisms available to municipalities in response to harassment and bullying in the workplace. We heard that municipalities would like to see the Province prescribe the content of their council codes of conduct, ensuring all members of council adhere to the same set of standards and values. But we also heard that maintaining council autonomy was important with respect to the process for dealing with complaints and authority to impose sanctions against another member for a breach of the code.

This bill balances these interests, Madam Speaker, providing council members with more robust legislated framework to support a respectful environment at the local level.

Amendments to The Municipal Act are intended to strengthen council's codes of conduct by requiring that the code be adopted by bylaw. This strengthens the provisions of the code, enhances accountability and transparency and strengthens the powers for council to enforce their code.

The bill establishes baseline content of the code of conduct, including the minimum standards and values. This would standardize the code across municipalities, Madam Speaker, ensuring that all council members adhere to the same set of ethical standards and procedures for implementing their codes of conduct.

When the NDP required municipalities to have a code of conduct on the books in 2012, they neglected to make sure that all municipalities followed that directive. The result was a handful of councils with a code of conduct with no mechanism of the government to take corrective action when we came into office, Madam Speaker.

Further, there was no guidance provided to municipalities on what should or should not be included in the council code of conduct, resulting in unenforceable and inconsistent codes of conduct in many municipalities right across the province, Madam Speaker.

Our bill takes a different approach that focuses on education and prevention to ensure there is a consistent standard across the province that is relevant and enforceable.

The minister will have authority to make a number of regulations that would further enhance the council code of conduct. Sanctions and remedial measures available to councils will be expanded and clarified by regulation—this response to municipalities' requests for broader sanctions rather than censure, Madam Speaker.

By regulation, baseline standards and values that all council members must adhere to will be defined. The Department of Municipal Relations and the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat will continue our consultations with municipalities and other stakeholders to ensure that anti-harassment and sexual harassment standards and values are reflected in the regulations.

The minimum process for council to deal with code of conduct complaints will also be established by regulation. Madam Speaker, we will develop these regulations with municipalities to ensure the autonomy of council and capacity of municipalities is fully recognized.

As well, Madam Speaker, a regulation governing possible appeals when sanctions are imposed will be developed in the coming months. We heard, in our consultations, that access to an appeal mechanism was important for all municipalities.

Finally, all members of council will be required to undergo training within the first six months of being elected, Madam Speaker, or re-elected. The training course will be specified by the Province to ensure consistent content and minimal cost to municipalities. The course will cover matters like respectful behaviour, good conduct and ethics and code of conduct requirements in both official languages.

Many conflicts on council may have been prevented, Madam Speaker, through training on expected standards and values at the beginning of a council member's term. In our consultations an overwhelming majority are in favour of mandatory training. Any member who fails to undergo the training within the first six months will be suspended until they undergo the training.

The bill does not set out a transitional period of 180 days following royal assent for current councillors to complete their mandatory training.

With 48 per cent turnover, Madam Speaker, across municipal governments and a record number of women elected as heads of council and councillors, there is a real opportunity to affect change and shift the culture to stamp out harassment at the local level.

In closing, Madam Speaker, our government believes that everyone deserves a safe and respectful work environment. This bill is a result of extensive consultations with municipalities and other stakeholders to strengthen the protections for elected 'munisal'—municipal officials.

I want to thank all of those who took part in consultations, Madam Speaker, to develop this bill. I urge all members to join our caucus in voting in favour of Bill 2.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

* (15:00)

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): One of the items that we certainly noted while reading through the bill is that it does not appear that the City of Winnipeg or the City of Brandon are included, explicitly, in the scope of the legislation that we're debating here today.

I'm wondering if the minister can talk to us about whether and how the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon have codes of conduct for their own council, and if he could share some details about all of that.

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I thank the member for the question, and this bill, Madam Speaker, again, applies to municipalities outside of the city of Winnipeg under The Municipal Act. The City of Winnipeg—and the member would know—is governed by the Winnipeg charter.

And, actually, in correction to the member opposite's concern about Brandon, Madam Speaker, Brandon is under The Municipal Act and will be part of this bill.

Mr. Kinew: Guess we'll just take some swings at the Liberals for the next little while and—no, I'm just kidding, Madam Speaker.

I'm curious to know—this will bring into place policies. The minister talked about some training, you know, programs which will be delivered to municipalities. Of course, this will require various resources. It'll certainly require time on behalf of the council members, but also likely some funds in order to hire consultants or other people to deliver this sort of training.

So I'm wondering if the minister can tell the House: Which resources will the Province offer to help support training for members of councils and any sort of related demand on resources to ensure, if this bill becomes law, that it can be fully and properly implemented?

Mr. Wharton: Again, thank the member for the question. And certainly, during our consultations over the last several months with our municipal partners, and, of course, members of the administrative association of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, there was a lot of talk about the training and, certainly, how we could partner on that going forward.

And I can share with this House, of course, Madam Speaker, that the Department of Municipal Relations will be taking a very active role in ensuring, in collaboration with our municipal partners, that the

training, going forward, will be done collaboratively, and, of course, with the AMM fully involved and engaged.

Mr. Kinew: I'm wondering if the minister can tell the House: Will specific guidelines be mandated for how, you know, employers, the cities—municipalities, rather—are to respond to and prevent incidents of harassment and violence in the workplace?

We've heard that there's going to be the requirement for policy, but I'm, you know, curious: Once regulations are developed, what is the minister and what are the department's plans for the specificity? How prescriptive are they going to be about how these policies have to look, or is it just going to be a requirement and there'll be very much a wide latitude provided to the municipality?

So if he could talk a bit about the specificity, please.

Mr. Wharton: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. Thank you, and again, thank the member for that question. And, again, we're going to be working over the next several weeks and months with Association of Manitoba Municipalities to start to develop the regulations that are going to be necessary to address some of the concerns that potentially—that could come up, of course, and the member opposite alludes to.

And, you know, again, this is going to be done in full collaboration. We're not necessarily—well, the department would never be sitting there dictating the type of regulations, Madam Speaker. That's not the type of government that we are. We want to make sure that we fully engage our partners over the next several weeks and months to get those regulations right.

Mr. Kinew: I'm curious as to know whether there's a timeline for these regulations that will describe the requirements for these codes of conduct. It appears as though the bill comes into force some 180 days after it passes—assuming that it does pass, of course, Madam Speaker.

Wondering if the regulations will be done at that time? Is that the target here, or is there some other timeline at work?

Again, can the minister let the House know what the timeline is in terms of the development for the regulations governing these codes of conduct?

Mr. Wharton: I certainly appreciate, it sounds like the support of the members opposite on this very important piece of legislation, Bill 2. Of course, Madam Speaker, the regulations, as I mentioned earlier in one of my

other answers, will be developed in consultation and collaboration with our AMM partners and members of the Manitoba administrators' association as we go forward. And we're looking forward to accomplishing those regulations over the next several weeks and months. And, again, with the members opposite's support from the Liberals and the NDP, we look forward to royal assent in June of 2019.

Mr. Kinew: So the minister has made reference to consultations, he's talked about the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, and I think, you know, many of our colleagues here in the House we're happy to participate in AMM's convention here in Winnipeg recently.

But I'm curious if you can talk a bit about, you know, some of the details on who was consulted, and if you could share which sort of suggestions were made by those groups and how that's all been implemented into the bill that we're now considering here before the House.

Mr. Wharton: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, a pleasure to share with the member and the rest of the House the consultation process. We were pleased to spend last June throughout Manitoba in June districts at AMM where we visited several communities throughout the province.

And our staff, and first of all I'd like to thank and again appreciate the staff for all the hard work they did during that process of undertaking the consultations through June districts. And we also, of course, met with MMAA at their AGM in the early fall, Madam Speaker, where we had the opportunity to work with them and, of course, consult through the process.

Mr. Kinew: So, again, following up on the issue of consultation, and again, I do make note that the city of Winnipeg is not, you know, being legislated in this bill. I'm curious to know whether that was the product of consultation, the decision to not touch the City of Winnipeg's charter. Was this based on a conversation with the City of Winnipeg, or was this more just a decision on behalf of the minister to focus on municipalities outside the city of Winnipeg. I'm wondering if the minister could tell the House whether they consulted with the City of Winnipeg before deciding not to include the city under the provisions of this bill.

Mr. Wharton: Absolutely, I would love to share this information with the House, and the member, of course. As the member does know, and as I alluded to earlier, the City of Winnipeg is governed under their

charter and currently have an integrity commissioner employed, Madam Speaker, who we have also spoke with. And we're looking forward to having further dialogue with the City of Winnipeg as we go forward.

I mean, Madam Speaker, it's very clear that we want to ensure under our government's no-wrong-door policy and now in moving forward with Bill 2, with the council code of conduct, that we continue to engage other members and other municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, as we go forward.

Mr. Kinew: So I take it that the minister's talking about Sherri Walsh there. I'm curious about the outreach to the city of Brandon as well, noting again that the Brandon is not included under the purview of the legislation we're now debating before the House. Curious to know whether that was a product of conversations with the City of Brandon, or again, was this a ministerial or departmental prerogative? Can the minister tell the House whether they consulted with the City of Brandon, checking in whether or not they wanted to be included in this legislation, and was the decision not to include them a product of conversations with that city?

Mr. Wharton: Certainly, kudos go out to Mayor Chrest; first of all, congratulations for his win in October as running for his second term in office. And certainly, on behalf of our government and, of course, our department, we're certainly—congratulate him and we enjoy the, we enjoy working the next four years and beyond, Madam Speaker, and that's going to be our goal, of course, past 2020.

But I can tell you that Mayor Chrest and our office and our government worked collaboratively on many fronts. And code of conduct, of course, Madam Speaker, is important as I mentioned to the member prior to that last question, was that we need to move forward and make sure collaboratively that we work with all our major cities across Manitoba, including Brandon.

* (15:10)

Mr. Kinew: So, in these conversations with Winnipeg, Brandon and otherwise, I'm wondering how much, you know, back and forth there was about perhaps copying some of those measures that those cities have taken. For instance, the minister noted that Winnipeg has an integrity commissioner. Wondering if that's something that will appear in regulation and if some of those ideas, even though the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon are not included in this legislation, whether or not some of the conversations that have been had with

those cities will find their way, either into the legislation or into the regulation that will be developed under this bill, Bill 2.

Mr. Wharton: As I mentioned again earlier, we continue to have great dialogue with not only the City of Winnipeg, but all our municipalities, all 137 of them right across this great province, Madam Speaker. And, you know, again, I want to remind the member too, as well, that Brandon and the City of Winnipeg have taken a role in putting this bill together, and will continue to, when it comes to the regulations.

We're looking forward to again spending the next several weeks and months to ensure that the regulations are done in a collaborative form. We will continue to consult with the cities of Brandon and Winnipeg and all our municipalities.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I'd just like to ask of the minister, I want to make sure that I've got it correct. In reading the legislation, it appears that, let's say, if an accusation comes forward and it goes to a vote of council, that the person who's accused is still allowed—is to—allowed to vote on their own fate, essentially. So I just wanted to get clarification on that, and what the minister sees as challenges around that. So let's say someone is accused of harassment, they—the—I want to make sure—I believe that under the current legislation, they are allowed to vote to defend themselves, essentially.

So, if the minister could talk a bit about that, specifically how—whether he sees that as appropriate, that a person who's accused can vote to exonerate themselves.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wharton: Certainly thank the member for the question. And, you know, again, council will be—will have a baseline regulation, Madam Speaker, right across Manitoba. So all 136 municipalities outside of the city of Winnipeg that will be involved in this legislation and development of regulation, going forward, will determine the outcomes.

Madam Speaker, municipal councils have the authority currently to censure. We're talking about sanctions. So we're basically giving them more teeth to ensure that if there is issues with harassment and bullying, they have the autonomy to make those decisions.

Mr. Kinew: So one of the barriers that I think that people who may want to report an incident of harassment face is the fear of reprisal. And many

policies, including, you know, the one governing the Legislative Assembly, contemplate how to address the issue of fear of reprisal, and, certainly, that will be an important part of any policy developed under this legislation, again, assuming that it does pass, Madam Speaker.

So I'm curious to know what will this bill do to ensure that anyone who experiences workplace harassment or violence on the job could make a formal complaint without risking their job, recognizing, of course, that somebody's fear of their job is one of the greatest fears of reprisal they face.

Mr. Wharton: Certainly, with some of our conversations and consultations with the Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association, which, of course, include our clerical staff, our CAOs throughout the province, and I keep reiterating when I see a council and reeve and their CAO that I remind every one of them that the hardest working individual in that office is your CAO and your staff. So they ensure that they get that message, Madam Speaker, and it's very true because of my council experience as well; my CAO was definitely a guide for me.

But, Madam Speaker, I can tell you that certainly we're going to be moving forward with these consultations in a collaborative fashion.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Sometimes people can be accused falsely because of employee job performance and at the same time, some elected officials want to score political points by defaming the colleagues.

Will the minister create safeguards to stop this kind of prostitutional and political pimping behaviour?

Mr. Wharton: I certainly thank the member for the question, and in the bill, Madam Speaker, it—we talk about an appeals process that will be available to individuals that have been essentially sanctioned for misconduct.

So, to the member's point, there will be this appeals process in place, and again, building on the regulations on that process, Madam Speaker, will be done in collaboration with AMM.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has ended.

Debate

Madam Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I do appreciate the opportunity to get up and speak about this bill here today.

I do want to note, off the top, that the issue of harassment and discrimination and violence in the workplace is a very sensitive topic and, you know, does cause significant stress, both for people who are going through an incident themselves, but also for people who have experienced something similar in the past and are forced to revisit such incidents because they hear it being discussed either in public, or in the media, or perhaps in the workplace.

So I do want to acknowledge that off the top and I guess offer these words as sort of a—both a salve, in the sense that I offer some empathy and compassion for those who have experienced harassment in the workplace, also, Madam Speaker, that, you know, just saying this off the top as a bit of a trigger warning, if you will.

Before I get into the substance of the comments I wish to make before the Legislative Assembly this afternoon, I do want to highlight the work of one of our colleagues. She comes from a different political stripe than I; she is the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen), but she did bring forward a piece of legislation on this topic previously, and so I do want to acknowledge her work here. Certainly, every party and all of us here have been forced to confront this issue and are working to make our society one that has a culture of consent.

When I was first elected, one of my first roles, Madam Speaker, was to serve as the education critic for the opposition, and one of the bills that I decided to bring forward was to require post-secondary institutions in Manitoba to have policies that would govern those institutions' response to the issues of sexual harassment, sexual violence. And of course, that bill did not gain passage, though perhaps it did lead to this government to acting on that issue and bringing in their own version of the bill.

And so this issue has definitely been important, and I should state at the outset that it's important for all of us to do work so that we live in a culture of consent, meaning a culture where everyone is free of discrimination and harassment, intimidation or bullying in the workplace.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And, when we talk about the workplace in relation to this bill, of course, that should mean in a council chamber or in a municipal building or in all the

different settings governed by The Municipal Act. And so, this bill, I think, is part and parcel of the broader move across our society that's based on listening to the voices of women and also listening to the voices of the LGBTTTQ and non-binary folks who have borne the brunt of this form—these forms of harassment and intimidation and bullying in the past.

Of course, you know, some men experience forms of harassment as well, but I think it's important to highlight the work of women. I know a few years ago I was talking to my wife about her own experience, you know, just walking to work, walking by the Health Sciences Centre and, you know, having to put up with forms of harassment on the street and being catcalled and things like that. And certainly talking to other colleagues and friends and family over the years have been made more and more aware of how much work we have to do in our society so everyone can live free of this form of harassment.

* (15:20)

Of course, it's not just an issue in that setting as well. We also know that there are other forms of bullying that are at work in politics, too, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. We've all been made aware through reports in the media of some of the issues on various town councils and municipal councils around the city including seeing some, you know, women who had promising political careers in front of them being forced out and being forced to step down because of the issues that they were facing. And I think we can all agree that we're all worse off by having talented public servants step outside of public service merely because of this kind of a behaviour that we wouldn't want to see. So that's the, I think, predecessor background that brings us to considering this sort of legislation that is before the House today.

I want to say at the outset that, you know, we believe that everyone has a right to work in an environment free of harassment and discrimination. We also stand for an inclusive and a diverse workplace that is supportive of all employees and provides them with opportunities to strive and be heard. And so, while we do want to take concrete steps to ensure that there aren't those forms of bullying or intimidation or harassment or that kind of negative behaviour, what I have heard in talking to colleagues, in talking to other people in various workplaces is that many employees, many colleagues want more than just the prevention of harm; they also would like to know that their workplace supports them. They would also like to know that they're going to work in a place that

encourages them to reach their full potential in terms of their careers. And so I think that that needs to be a guiding philosophy in the work that we do on this front as well.

Yes, it is important to prevent harm. That needs to be at the centre of a lot of these efforts, but so too do we need to take steps to ensure that employees and colleagues feel supported in the work that they do, and, of course, this extends much further beyond the workplace as well. It is a statement of principle of our party that we believe that we want to move from a society that is centred around competition and move towards one that's more about co-operation. And that, in order for us to be able to take these steps to transform our society in a positive way, that we need to model the behaviour ourselves and also in our politics that will allow such a transition to a more fair and equitable world to take place.

So, as a result, I think that we can understand that the importance behind creating a safer workspace for municipal politicians, for municipal employees, for municipalities in all the settings that they govern, it's not just about fairness in equity for those people immediately governed; it's also about setting a bar in our conduct so that we might be able to spread that good example beyond the confines of our political arenas.

And so that's what I mean by working towards creating a culture of consent. And so one of the things that I have done since, you know, becoming leader—immediately after becoming leader I did bring into place training for all of our caucus and staff and many of the other folks that we work with on a regular basis and that's now a part of our on-boarding process. And I do think that this sort of training is necessary and it's also needed to be ongoing.

Of course, I think you and I could probably compare notes about all the different ways that we could have our knowledge rounded out and expanded, but also that there's a requirement to commit to an ongoing process of education, lifelong learning, if you will. And so, as our society works towards becoming one governed by a culture of consent, it is important to continue to engage in conversations with people—with activists, with feminists, with people from the LGBTTQ community—who can better inform us about the ways that we can continue striving to create a better environment in politics.

And so I say this as one of the things that we'll be looking for under this legislation and under the regulation is this continuous nature of the training, and

that, you know, if I could go off on a tangent for a second. It—recently, you know, there's been a lot of changes in hockey to make hockey a more safe area for young players, and not only to respond to allegations of misconduct amongst past hockey coaches but also to ensure that the parents and the refs and everybody at the hockey rink can enjoy the game in an important way, but also so that the players can develop a love for the game and be able to play it for the rest of their lives and get all the good things that come out of having a meaningful hockey career.

So, along that journey, we've seen sort of from Hockey Canada and from other sport organizations kind of like an escalating requirement. So, at first, you know, I think Hockey Canada and Hockey Manitoba and these organizations brought in some requirements around coaches, and then that was formalized around a national training program called Respect in Sport. And then it became a requirement that coaches had to get their Respect in Sport certification. And the Respect in Sport, of course, it talked about much the same as what these policies talk about at the municipal level—may contemplate things like preventing the bad behaviour. They also talk about cultivating a positive attitude between a coach and a player.

Now, the hockey governing bodies went a step further beyond that, and a few years back it became a requirement not just that a coach would have to take the Respect in Sport training before they would be allowed to be a coach, it's also now the requirement that a parent has to take the Respect in Sport training before their kid can be registered to play hockey in a given minor hockey association right across Canada. And there's probably further steps that will be taken in the future there. Again, perhaps we can do more to ensure that the stands at a hockey game are going to be safe, and it's going to be beneficial for the refs and for the players and for everybody to cultivate their love for Canada's pastime.

So I share that tangent with you as an example for why it's important to have an ongoing training program and a continuous re-examination of the policies which govern issues such as those that are enclosed with the legislation—within the legislation that is before the House today. And so it may be that the regulations which are established under Bill 2 may make sense at the time of their implementation. This is, of course, why I asked the minister about the regulations, because a lot of the details will be fleshed out here. But, again, issues may arise a year from now, two years from now, five, 10 years from now, and we should be ready to respond to those issues once they have arisen. And, of

course, that speaks to the requirement that these policies and that these regulations continue to be looked at in a very close fashion, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

And so I share this particularly with you, having spent a lot of time on this issue and thinking through the various different facets of how a policy can work to create a culture of consent in a workplace that would thereby extend towards having a positive influence in society, and I suggest to you that, of course, if the Legislature is to pass this bill, that the work isn't finished there. Of course, there will be a requirement to have a continued examination and a continued, I think, circumspect attitude on the part of a government. And, certainly, if we return to government following the next election, we will be examining this closely, and we will continue to endeavour to make sure that it is up to date and we're doing everything that we can to right some of the historic wrongs that victims of harassment have felt, but also that we're staying up to date and examining the contours of this issue.

Now, we did have a bit of a back and forth there in the question period, maybe a little bit more tame than the typical back and forth in this Chamber, a little bit less partisan today, though we did touch on the issue of Winnipeg and Brandon not being included under the scope of this bill.

And, you know, I take the minister—minister's comments about how there are, you know, the charters governing these municipalities and how certainly Winnipeg—it's been pretty visible the steps that they've taken with Sherri Walsh being in the media a few times over the past number of years and, of course, you know, comments the minister made about Brandon as well. But, again, I do just want to put on the record I think the concern that we would have on this side of the House is that there not be any significant gaps between the requirements for the conduct of somebody on a Winnipeg or Brandon council versus somebody on a council in a rural municipality, as an example, or another town or a city.

* (15:30)

And so I share that as a commentary to suggest to you, the Chair, and by extension to the minister, that the best practices which are at work in Brandon or Winnipeg ought to be studied and implemented. And should there be—assuming this bill passes—best—new best practices examined within this one, then perhaps those should be shared with the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon as well.

And, hopefully, the mayors and councils of those areas will be committed to improving their approaches to this topic if such improvements can be identified.

Now, of course, a good chunk of the scope of this legislation will be found, not in the law itself, but in the regulations, under the rules which will be enacted and which the minister stated in question period will be developed in the coming weeks and months.

So some of those rules should contemplate some of the issues that we've been raising in the House today and in the past. Certainly, addressing the fear of reprisal that people may feel, some trepidation about bringing forward a complaint because they're worried about a job; they're worried about their position on a council; they're worried about, perhaps, the stress of being put out there in the media or in the public eye or on social media.

And so that fear of reprisal certainly does need to be addressed, and I would share with the minister, by way of you, the Chair, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that we have shared with the Speaker our draft policy on harassment which we have implemented on our side of the House, for the purposes of the Speaker's consideration as she reviews her policy which governs the Legislative Assembly. And I do think that there may be some interesting policy ideas and best practices in that document that the minister may like to review and may choose to adopt some of those best practices.

One of the other issues, of course, that we've encountered, and I do think is still one that the government is also encountering and grappling with, is how do you find a way to create somebody who a report can be filed with who is truly going to be free of a conflict of interest?

Again, one of the concerns that people have when they have experienced an incident of bullying or harassment is when they want to make a complaint, they may feel that the complaint is being made to somebody who may have a vested interest, real or perceived, in the situation.

And so what that has led us to do is to propose a few different options: either that there be a safe person who could be approached, somebody who's outside of the workplace, outside of the employer status, and I guess, in the context of this bill, somebody who's not immediately engaged in the day-to-day operations of the municipality and who is not on the council properly.

One of the other suggestions we made in that document, which we shared with the Speaker earlier

this summer, is that one of the independent offices of the Legislature may be able to take on this sort of oversight function.

Again, it's not neatly within the mandate of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner or neatly with the mandate of the ombudsperson. However, it does seem that the independence that those offices enjoy may mean that they have the necessary freedom from any real or perceived conflict of interest, which may provide some comfort to somebody to be able to make a report to them.

So, again, I'm sharing this as a topic of consideration as a possible best practice to examine. Again, it would be up to the department and to the minister to think through what the implications of this would be. Would it make sense for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner or the ombudsperson or an independent office like that to field the complaints for all municipalities across Manitoba?

Again, hopefully the conduct is above board, and there aren't too many complaints under this bill once it becomes law, but there should be preparations made to ensure that there is going to be an impartial adjudicator when such a situation does arise.

And, of course, there are many other issues that these policies have to take into consideration, such as confidentiality. And, of course we do want to respect the victim's wishes in instances where harassment or, you know, some form of violence has occurred, but, then again, when those people decide to share their stories, what is a policy to say about that, you know, and how is the confidentiality provision of the policy supposed to govern that?

Again, it seems as though in instances that we've seen at universities that, again, the confidentiality is very broadly interpreted, though there may be a public interest argument to be made that where there is the consent of a victim that perhaps the confidentiality should apply more narrowly.

So, again, these are considerations and issues that will need to be addressed in the regulation and as the rules are developed here.

Again, we should see that the consultations necessary for this should extend beyond just the AMM. It is, of course, important that AMM and some of the, you know, municipal administrators, the councillors themselves, should be consulted. That is an important step. We should hear from the councillors, the mayors, the reeves, the CAOs and all those folks, but there probably will be a need to consult beyond those

political and administrative individuals as well, and I would suggest to you, Mr. Chair, that the consultation should include activists who've been working on these issues—feminist activists, women's rights activists, activists from the LGBTTTQ* community, non-binary folks as well.

And so that sort of consultation is important. It may also, you know, behoove the government to consult with human resources professionals. Again, this is a field with some very, very important expertise in it and I would acknowledge that consulting with individuals from HR would perhaps offer some very, very needed insight into what can be done to develop this policy in a way that serves all people in Manitoba.

So, that, you know, is certainly not an exhaustive list, but I think it begins to highlight some of the questions around the implementation of this bill once and if the government passes it and it proclaims it into law.

I do also want to return to the issue that I raised in the question period, which was around the supports that will be needed for the implementation of this bill. I can tell you that there is a cost to delivering training to staff and to people in an employment setting, in a workplace, and some of these costs are, you know, around the training itself, the people hours required to deliver the training and to ensure that people do go through all of that.

There's also the development time, and certainly on an issue like this, where there are local governments interfacing with the provincial government and, of course, addressing such an issue that can be as fraught as that of harassment and bullying and violence and intimidation, that it is important, you know, on occasions like that to have expertise weigh in, whether that's legal expertise, whether that's human resources expertise, whether that's human rights expertise.

And so, of course, you know, there will likely be a cost for municipalities on that side as well. Perhaps municipalities will look to pool resources; perhaps they will each set out to undergo their own process; perhaps the AMM will broker some of these conversations and, you know, advance some of these areas of inquiry, but there will be a need for real and ongoing support.

And so I would put it to the government that they need to be there, if and when they pass this law, not only to put the law on the books but also to put the resources there in the community to ensure that each and every municipality is able to live up to the spirit

and intent of the bill that is being brought before the House of today.

* (15:40)

Some possible ways that this could be done is perhaps, you know, provincial resources could be developed towards the training itself, or perhaps a draft template that may meet the legislative and regulatory criteria but that municipalities would be able to customize based on their own situations and the expertise contained therein. We also know that training resources could be deployed on a provincial scale particularly targeted towards those smaller municipalities and councils who don't have a significant capacity.

Again, I think you and I have both travelled across the province and we've seen that there are some municipalities with, you know, tons of resources at their disposal. There's other municipalities that are very humble—though no less dedicated—operations and so the Province may consider its duty to step in and ensure that there is equitable access to resources in some of those situations as well.

So we also need to have some thought devoted to the question of compliance and also the question of oversight when it comes to this bill as well. And when it comes to that, I would suggest for the consideration of the House today that it's not merely a question of, you know, reporting on how many incidents and, you know, what the penalties served were, but there's also returning to that idea of lifelong learning, and the fact that these policies ought to be living documents, that there needs to be oversight and consideration given to how the government is going to follow up on—if the implementation of the policy is one level, then this level that I'm talking about would be the meta-level examination of this issue now before us in the Legislature today.

So we need to work together, both, you know, on a political level, on a provincial level, on a municipal level, but also across our society, to begin to ensure that everyone's protected and everyone is supported when they come to work on behalf of the great people of Manitoba. So safe work places, free of harassment and violence and intimidation and bullying, are critical to our goal of creating a society with a culture of consent. We also know that it's also going to lead to a more effective, a more productive, a better society, too, Mr. Acting Chair—Deputy Chair.

We know that at the most recent AMM convention there was a record number of women present on the

floor representing their communities, but of course that work is not finished. There ought to be more women representatives. We know that also many other folks who have historically experienced issues of bullying and intimidation are under-represented in our politics, whether that be LGBTTTQ folks, non-binary folks or folks from other walks of life.

And so, certainly, a further step that we ought to pay attention to is to ensure adequate representation of everyone in our society. If our democracy doesn't adequately represent everyone in our society, then we are still left with the question as to whether we're getting the best of the best in our public service. And yet when we do, in the future, arrive at a situation where we know that we have representation from everyone in our society, then we will be able to say, well, we know we are getting the best of the best because everyone has an equitable shot at reaching these levels of government. So that's an additional point of consideration not explicitly contained within this piece of legislation but certainly and no doubt one that is very important to this.

So, with those few comments, Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, I know I've kept you riveted and, you know, alert this entire time that you've been listening to my commentary, and I do want to thank you for your undivided and complete, total attention as I make these comments. Of course, making a little light of myself—self-deprecating comments about you know, perhaps I'm not preaching fire and brimstone here, but I do want to assure you that this is a very important issue to myself and to others and that we do want to do the right thing so that we can ensure that our society has the best sort of behaviour from our politicians at the local, municipal level, of course at the provincial level and we would demand the same at the federal level, as well.

So, with those brief comments on the record, I would thank you again for your time, and of course thank all my colleagues in the Legislature for this opportunity to speak.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): It is really an honour to come into this House and have the opportunity to speak on bills that work to improve the lives of Manitobans. And Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members), is an important piece of legislation, and I do believe that all Manitobans should have the right to a respectful and harassment-free workplace.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that as a former councillor for eight years, so I can speak to codes of

conduct of council members. I also speak from a point of view as an employer that's had many employees over a lot of years and I've tried to adhere to codes of conduct that were respectful in the workplace, and also as a parent as well.

And this code of conduct and, you know, it essentially leads into actions and consequences. As a parent and one that's known personally some of the effects that harassment and bullying can have on people, I'm really proud to speak in favour of Bill 2 and these—the need for this bill.

So I do want to thank the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton) for bringing this bill forward. It is a very important bill in this time of when we hear talk about discrimination or harassment or bullying that there's just no place for that. There's no place for that in the workplace. There's most certainly no place for that in any code of conduct.

And I think the AMM and local governments are—as leaders, it's important to set the right tone at the top, and I think as leaders in this House, AMM and local governments are looking for our help, looking for—they're asking for this help, and as leaders, I think it is entirely the right thing to do is to provide that help and support to our local governments that are very much—do a very important job in our communities. And, again, I'm glad our government is working with AMM and local government to create better working environments and better councils.

Now, again, my experience is eight years of municipal government and we did sort of have a—that goes back about 12, 13 years I suppose. I don't know if there was a formal written code of conduct but we did have a code of conduct that was understood amongst our council, and I was very, very fortunate for in those eight years to have a strong reeve and, you know, essentially a great group of council people, council colleagues and administrative staff, CAOs.

We weren't always—it was always feisty, the arguments and the debates that we did have, but I can honestly say it was always respectful. And if it got out of line, the reeve or the council stepped in, and anything that was even remotely close to being out of line, it was put back into checks.

So, but the fact remains that doesn't always happen and problems do exist. And I guess when you take, when you give an inch and some people will take a mile. And in some cases in local government, again, if you let something, you get away with something and nothing is said or nothing is done, then it escalates to

the next level. And you need to have those effective tools to, again, describe, tell people exactly what kind of code of conduct, what is expected of you as a municipal leader, and knowing.

* (15:50)

Again, going, putting this thing in a bylaw, everybody knows, the public knows the consequences of action and that's a very, very important step to making sure that you have good government and things stay in control and things stay reasonable and respectful.

Again, if you give a—if you—something—again, you take an inch—give an inch, they'll take a mile, and eventually if that's not reined in, you've got nothing. And local governments—I've seen where those relationships amongst council, amongst staff, they really go south in a bad way. And they can last for years between next councils. And they're such a horrible working environment that you can't get anything done.

So, again, I was very, very fortunate. I had good councils and good Reeves and—but that doesn't mean that it won't—it can't and won't happen. So the municipal governments—local governments need those tools to maintain respect and responsibility and integrity and accountability of elected people. It doesn't mean that it has to be so 'burdensome' that it, you know, takes away from the debate or prevents people from speaking their mind on issues. But this is about, again, respectful behaviour and ensuring a respectful behaviour is maintained. And, unfortunately, again, sometimes you need tools to make sure that happens. And this is what the councils are asking for.

So Bill 2 does provide the AMM and local governments with the tools to ensure better workplaces and ensuring that—again, councils are inclusive. They're not something to be dreaded. If somebody was thinking about or running for local government, you want to know that you're going to get—you're going to go to government and you're going to get—your voice is going to be heard, your opinion is going to be heard, you're not going to be harassed or bullied into—in your opinion. And this can happen. This can happen, and what we want to have is an open environment, inclusive—everybody's opinion. And, again, nobody should be in a position where you're bullied or intimidated into making a decision. And, again, that's just—that's counterproductive to a positive environment.

So the bill dictates some minimum requirements with respect to mandatory training standards and

values that must be addressed in a code, as well as compliant—or, sorry, as well as complaint procedures and appeal process. Now, this is essentially the help that the—and—the framework the Province is providing. The mandatory training is an important point to make because, again, if you're going to be in a position where you're going to be—being—rolling out punishments for action, then there's no excuse. You know, the mandatory training ensures everybody knows what conduct is expected. And it's—again, it's an important step that—because if something happens and you're all of a sudden getting into a he-said, she-said thing and you—and things get away—again, things can get out of hand and mandatory training of expectation is an important step.

So the municipality benefits. They would be responsible for implementation, empowered to customize their codes beyond the minimum requirements according to the council's principles and values, ensuring that they retain a fair say. And that's again very important that the municipalities have that ability to customize it somewhat, to—but it's got an essential framework. But local governments are going to be able to put some local element to some of the requirements of the code if they see fit.

Bill 2 empowers the councils with stronger penalties at their disposal in the event of a code of conduct breach, ranging from an apology to a suspension of 90 days. Again, this—these—I think the minister mentioned it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about teeth. Again, if you're going to have enforcement, you have to have the effective—if you're going to implement effective enforcement, you need to have teeth, and Bill 2 empowers the councils to have that. And they're in the best position, really, in a lot of cases, to understand the circumstances, and they're the ones closest to the issue, and they're the ones that are best suited to have some discretionary authority on rolling out punishments.

So, in closing, I'd like to thank all those that serve on local council. I know that it's—it can be a—very challenging, it can be a very fun job, it can be very intense. And absolutely, they're the front-line government that has the best pulse of the people that are on the ground across private and public sector. I do thank them for their work.

For—to the AMM: Congratulations on a previous—on a good convention last week. Had a good chance to meet with lots of councillors and reeves I hadn't seen for quite some time.

Again, thank the public works people and the CAOs and administrators for all the work that they do.

But, again, in close, I'd just like to—I appreciate the opportunity to speak in favour of Bill 2. It's really, really important that helps to build a more respectful and harassment-free workplace, and hopefully harassment and bullying are going to be things of the past.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Thank you to my colleagues for that warm welcome, and thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. Yes, I have a few thoughts to share on Bill 2, which is an amendment, of course, for The Municipal Amendment Act—or, it is The Municipal Amendment Act that amends The Municipal Act in the topic area of strengthening codes of conduct for council members.

My first impression of this, of course, Mr. Acting Speaker, is this is essentially a human rights issue, and the first problem which leaps right out at the government's approach here is if it is indeed a human rights issue, if everyone does indeed—as the minister said and as his colleague just finished saying, everyone deserves to have a safe and respectful workplace, why is it that not everyone is included in the legislation? That just—it does not make any sense at all.

They have left out any reference to the City of Winnipeg charter in their proposed legislation, which means that if/when this bill is passed, lo and behold, the City of Winnipeg and all of its employees, all of its elected officials, presumably anyone who interacts with any of the employees or the elected officials, will not be in the same category as this legislation.

And I just note this afternoon, Mr. Acting Speaker, there was a story that just came out from the CBC Manitoba website—was where I first saw it—that the City of Winnipeg was, in fact, not successful in finding an outside entity to properly review its governance model. So we already have a live file at the City of Winnipeg. City of Winnipeg issued a tender for an outside firm to review its governance model. Presumably, the absence of harassment, sexual misconduct or anything else of its sort should be on the radar across the province. The City of Winnipeg, unable to find a consultant at the price offered to perform that work. Here is an opportunity missed yet again by the Pallister government to actually step forward and amend this legislation in a way that would mean it applies to everybody.

* (16:00)

The fact that the city of Winnipeg is, of course, the largest municipality in Manitoba—I don't think anyone disputes that—the fact that it would have the largest number of staff, the largest number of citizens, none of that should in any way mean that the standard for human rights legislation is different in a large, urban centre than it is in smaller, rural community or than it is in a more remote, northern community. A human right is a human right is a human right. If you're going to pass human rights legislation, why on earth would you not include everyone in that?

And that is a question that we have asked and which this government has either been unwilling or completely unable to answer, unfortunately. But that's true on a long and growing list of questions that we have asked and which the government has failed to provide a decent answer, not just to us, but to all Manitobans.

And what is this government going to do, if, let's say the City of Winnipeg, of its own accord, now passes its own internal regulations or bylaws governing these types of issues and they're different in some way from what is going to be proposed here by the Pallister government? Perhaps there might be an element in the City of Winnipeg's approach which is better and everyone in the rest of Manitoba would benefit from if the Pallister government actually just got its act together properly and incorporated Winnipeg into the proposal.

What happens if what the City of Winnipeg comes up with is actually lacking in some area, or they missed something that would be contained in feedback provided by the other municipalities? Well, then that's going to be just another example of the inconsistency and, you know, missed opportunity that this government will have created all by itself. If you're going to bring in human rights legislation, you make it apply to everybody. And you talk to everybody about how best to go about that.

And the rest of the legislation, I don't think anybody is going to obviously have a problem with efforts that attempt to enshrine human rights in the workplace. And, in particular, we certainly, in—on our side of the House, we are, as a caucus, we're fully committed to ensuring that, you know, any complainant who comes forward to begin a process where they have raised a concern about something that has happened to them, or something that they are aware of that has happened to others, that there will be no penalty for such an individual. They're not going to lose their job, they're not going to lose their pay; they

wouldn't face any other types of reprisals. That's our formal and official policy on these types of crimes.

And, in particular, of course, the #MeToo movement, the Time's Up movement has said far better than I ever could—have just raised the concerns that women face in the workplace when it comes to sexual harassment. And that needs to have a prominent place in any legislation that would offer to address or make a dent in the completely unacceptable behaviour that women have had to put up with in the workplace for decades and decades.

And so, in that way, certainly, I think everyone in this Chamber is going to be on the same page. But, again, a woman working in a rural municipality or a female councillor elected in a rural municipality versus a female employee at the City of Winnipeg or an elected official at the City of Winnipeg are going to be held to two different standards because for whatever reason the government decided not to include Winnipeg in its legislation.

The other—well, there's several other big problems associated with the government's approach. And one of the other questions that they have refused to answer, is where are the resources going to come from, in order to make sure that appropriate training is put in place and appropriate work is done to try everything we can to prevent issues of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination from happening in the first place. And this government's track record and how it treats municipalities, suggests very, very strongly there's going to be a new rule issued here from Manitoba Legislature and absolutely no new resources provided to help the municipalities implement these new rules, leading to the question: How effective are these new rules going to be if there is no implementation mechanism and if there is no enforcement mechanism?

Again, questions that were asked of this government, which the government could not or would not answer. And I think we're—we'd be deluding ourselves, Mr. Acting Speaker, to suggest that this type of systemic issue—this type of systemic change that is required—is just going to happen naturally by itself with any sort of—without any sort of concerted effort and resources dedicated to making that change happen. It's going to come down to a question of resources—either people hired by the provincial government to meet with municipal councils and ensure that they are moving in a good direction. There's going to be resources required just to establish what that new better direction is. And, of course, resources are going to be needed to provide the training and support works

necessary so that incidences of workplace harassment and inappropriate behaviour can be prevented. And when they do still occur, that they can be dealt with in a manner that is safe and appropriate for the people who've been on the receiving end of the distasteful conduct.

So, to prove my point, Mr. Acting Speaker, let's just touch on a few of the areas where this government has already made it tougher for municipalities to have money available to do the work that this new legislative requirement will be placing on them. Because if the municipal governments don't have the resources to do this properly, there's a real risk that not only will the laws be different from one part of Manitoba to another, but the actual implementation of the law could end up being exceptionally different from one place to another.

Just look at transit. For goodness' sakes, three huge issues have already cropped up in this government's existence just in its first two years. All of the public transit funding agreements have been cut. A provincial government used to—under our government, used to—provincial governments would pay for half of the operating cost of public transit. And we brought that formula back in, of course, after the Filmon Conservatives killed that project. So the MLA for Gimli will, I'm sure, continue to hear from a number of constituents inside the Perimeter Highway, as he's the minister who oversaw that cut and is hearing first-hand what that means to people who are already having a tough time getting around town.

That decision all by itself means that fares—individual fares have gone up by 25 cents a trip. A monthly bus pass is now over \$100. And members opposite may well shrug that off because they don't care about low-income people, but believe me, lots of people feel every single change that this government makes, and it hurts. That cancelling of that 50-50 funding agreement for Winnipeg alone means millions and millions of lost revenue. And the City of Winnipeg even contemplated cancelling routes for a time. They decided instead to raise the fares to make up the shortfall. In Brandon, they did have to cancel some services, I—as I understand it.

This type of attitude, of course, of starving municipalities means how much money does the municipality have available to now implement a new set of rules that the government is fully prepared to impose on them.

Northern airports, very similar situation. Pallister government's trying to download responsibility for

those to local municipalities without any financial support. This government's convoluted and fatally flawed legislation around ride sharing and taxi cabs meant that each individual municipality is now—all 137 of them are now responsible for writing their own regulations on how they will cover ride-sharing rules and operation in Manitoba. And that is itself, of course, an enormous undertaking that involves time, that involves resources and that is another example of what this government has done to municipalities.

* (16:10)

So just three examples there under transportation.

In education there have been cuts of guaranteed funding for local school divisions, another local level of government which would be impacted by the legislation. You know, we've had big cuts in offloading of water pumping stations for agricultural and irrigational purposes, for drainage issues up in The Pas, offloading there.

Larviciding, there's a few people in Wolseley who care about mosquito issues; it's something we're quite famously known for. Well, the government's actually cancelled funding to 37 local Manitoba communities; they no longer receive any funding for larviciding. Larviciding, of course, is where you go in and get at the root cause of the problem or closer to it anyways by trying to eliminate mosquitoes before they grow wings and can fly and be mobile. A very effective program especially with the new biological treatments that we initiated while in office and grew year after year.

But this funding cut leaves 10 rural municipalities surrounding the city of Winnipeg with over \$600,000 less money to actually work with. So they either do larviciding to reduce the amount of mosquitoes and reduce the potential risk of harmful illnesses such as West Nile, never mind the inconvenience factor of mosquito swarms around the barbeque. They've gone and cut that. And yet the government wants the municipalities to make up for that all on their own, and then also still somehow be able to handle increased costs associated with their legislation here in Bill 2.

Emergency stations are being shut down. Ambulance funding is being cut and reduced under the health category. There's been multiple joint provincial-municipal justice-related initiatives. Crime prevention in Winnipeg, gang action programs that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government has cut.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Infrastructure has been clobbered to the point that the heavy construction industry's now running advertisements on local radio stations pleading with the government to change their mind.

All of this, then, puts more pressure on municipal governments which are now being asked to try and find still more money to implement Bill 2.

The local Crown corporations have been shutting down their various offices around rural Manitoba.

And all of this, Madam Speaker, all of this is against the backdrop of a political party, the Conservative party in Manitoba, which ran on platform of no cuts and no job losses. There weren't going to be any cuts if they were elected. There weren't going to be any job losses. That's pretty much all they've done since coming to office is impose cuts and impose job losses.

And now with this legislation, which, you know, is certainly targeting a very valid topic in the form of wanting to ensure a code of conduct for all council members, but with no resources to actually implement this, with no promises that there would be any kind of support available, we really have to wonder what's the end result going to be.

There's no reason why anyone in Manitoba should be going to work and feeling unsafe about that, either from, you know, the perspective of their own physical safety or in the case of fearing inappropriate behaviour of any type from colleagues or superiors in their workplace.

And there have been documented incidences of women in particular who were elected and ended up quitting because there just was not the support in place to properly address the completely inappropriate behaviour that they were subject to.

And, of course, one example reported from just earlier this year in April of 2018 was Jackie Hunt, who was the former mayor and a councillor in the Ritchot municipality, and she resigned due to what she considered belligerent behaviour; that was probably a diplomatic summary of it on her part. And, you know, the type of behaviour that she would have been subjected to just needs to be addressed, and there needs to be not just law brought in to declare that this type of behaviour is inappropriate and that there will be a code of conduct; everyone needs to know what the code of conduct's going to be. That's not spelled out in this legislation either. That will fall under regulations, apparently, and yet there's no similar or aligning commitment from the government

to help municipalities implement those regulations in an equitable way.

And, as I said from the outset, the biggest gap of all is that where, well, over 650, 700 thousand people of our province live in the city of Winnipeg, is not even covered by this legislation in the first place. So how on earth is this government going to be able to look at any elected female councillor or mayor or any municipal staff person who may come from any traditionally marginalized group?

We have to, of course, bear in mind the historic struggles of groups such as the LGBT community, the disabled community, the racialized communities. All of them have had to fight for rights that should have been recognized from day one, which should have been respected from day 1 and which have not traditionally been respected in our society in the same way that it has for others. Human rights must be defended at all times, and when the government has an opportunity to bring in human rights legislation and fails to recognize that those principles apply to every single person here, no matter who they are or what they look like or how they self-identify, then the government's just missed the point altogether right from day one.

So I would certainly encourage the minister to take not just my advice but the advice of others. Take that back. He will have opportunities to amend his own legislation. We saw his Premier (Mr. Pallister) basically gut legislation that his government had brought in, in the previous session, around climate change. A much healthier amendment would be to change Bill 2 so that it does include the City of Winnipeg. And, if this minister has failed to properly hold consultations with his counterpart, Mayor Bowman at the City of Winnipeg, and that's why the City of Winnipeg isn't included in this act, well, he should make every effort to do so and then amend his bill in accordance so that all members of elected office in Manitoba are covered by the same rules, which do the best job possible of enshrining and protecting everyone's human rights and preventing problems from starting in the first place.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I do want to recognize the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) and thank the leader of the opposition for also recognizing the member for Kewatinook, who originally brought forward anti-harassment legislation for municipal councillors after the Manitoba Liberal caucus had extensive meetings with municipal councillors who'd been

incredibly frustrated. For a long time, they'd been calling for better treatment because they had experienced—they personally had experienced harassment at the level—I mean, really quite exceptional bad behaviour on the part of other—of individuals, people even pulling hair, name-calling, threats and so on. And it's always been said that sunlight is a great disinfectant.

We are concerned that with this bill, though it makes some great—it makes some positive steps, that there is a need for greater independence, in part, because as we know, all know, justice demands fairness; it demands due process. It demands that punishment fit the crime, that the innocent be defended, but also that it needs—we need a degree of independence. And this is one of the challenges with this legislation.

* (16:20)

I know that Cheryl Christian, who was a councillor for West St. Paul, who is an advocate for this legislation and who advised us on it when we were—or advised the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) when she was preparing the legislation, had expressed concerns and actually expressed hopes that there would still be an independent ethics commissioner so that it's very—it's clear to who people can go to if they're experiencing harassment and somebody who's independent so it isn't a question where politicians are marking their own homework or having to pass judgment on each other when you have a clear due process and an independent process which is resourced but also has the ability not just to set standards or have—or give advice but to investigate and as well as enforce rules, because there have been challenges—or there—sorry, there've been many examples of harassment that we've talked about in municipal councils.

The mayor of Ritchot was one and we basically have—we continue to recommend that there be an independent ethics commissioner who could investigate these claims of workplace harassment and which could also recommend ongoing improvements to codes of conduct. Of course, because this is a municipal bill, it does not cover members of the Legislative Assembly. And there's also—now we're talking about municipalities and there are school boards, but school boards also do not have the capacity to investigate complaints.

So capacity and resourcing is also part of it, and we—we're—I said we'd like to see a plan and no matter who's in government will maintain independence

and objectivity as well as 'prioritizing'—prioritizing healing and justice for victims so that all—because all elected officials in Manitoba and their staff deserve equal protection. And Cheryl Christian, who was a counsellor for West St. Paul and was recently elected mayor, said harassment and bullying is widespread in municipal government. Many mayors, counsellors and CAOs from across Manitoba have shared their personal experience of harassment with the Province, only to be told nothing can be done.

So it is a positive step that this is moving forward. But that in the past many have been too afraid to speak out without opportunities for safe disclosure, harassment and bullying. Without clear policies in an external, unbiased investigation process for municipal officials, victims' harassment will continue to suffer in silent—in silence.

So it is vitally important that if voters are the only people with the ability to hold elected officials accountable, they have to be fully informed and commission decisions would have to be made public. And while municipalities and school boards were—up until now—have been required to have codes of conduct under provincial legislation, there isn't an independent mechanism for investigations that includes a place where victims can go to be heard and protected and where positive working relationships could be restored.

As a background, this—the policy that drove the member for Kewatinook's bill was driven by a landmark vote of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities at the AGM not last year but which saw nine—not this year but previously, which saw 91 per cent of members of the AMM voting in favour of a policy that would include municipal councillors under the workplace health and safety act to investigate this type of misconduct and bullying. And, once again, the mayor of Ritchot was one of the people who was bullied.

We still are facing a challenge because up to this point the elected officials have not been covered by workplace health and safety as they're not employees. It's helpful that the Province has revived our call for respectful workplaces for municipal councillors, but it also be—would be an improvement if this government showed a serious intention to have a similar process for MLAs.

And there is an issue that I raised with the minister or I asked a question is that: with this bill, that the voting-majority-plus-one requirement for suspension, is it—it would appear that it allows the member being investigated to vote for their own fate and in smaller

councils could be the deciding vote. And once again, this is—it's actually a question where, on the one hand, we wanted to make sure that an individual who's been accused is in a position to defend themselves adequately, but it's a strange situation in that they may actually be able to vote on the outcome of whether they are—whether they're found guilty or not or whether they could be suspended or not. So that's one of the major issues that's a concern; we do require protection from reprisal.

And one of the—again, one of the issues in making sure that it's independent or having independence it means that instead of a patchwork of different processes or different codes of conduct—*[interjection]* In terms of different codes of conduct, that we don't want a patchwork, that we do have a standard that's all the way across the province. And that is one of our central concerns is that we are concerned that there is a need for greater independence. And in some ways it—the—in some ways, the challenges that councillors have faced up to this point are similar to what is—what whistle-blowers have faced, and I know that we have inadequate whistle-blower protections in Canada, generally.

But one of the issues that happens—I've sometimes said that when it comes to politics, is that it's almost as if we deliberately created a hostile workplace and a workplace—hostile workplace in order to make it harder for people to do their work, that there are certain expectations of how—that, well, this is politics, it's a blood sport. I'm often—that—I've often heard that politics is a blood sport; therefore, you have to be expected that certain things are going to be said.

However, I think it's important, and that this is an important step in this bill if it actually manages to correct some of the negative behaviours, because I do have concerns that we need—that democracy needs to function—for democracy to function, people actually have to have faith in the authority of their leaders and that one of the things that has been—that has happened over many years is that that faith has been eroded for a whole series of reasons, and certainly harassment doesn't help—issues of harassment at the municipal level don't help. And when the idea that people—say, good people would be afraid to step into the public ring or afraid to run for office because they're afraid what might be said about them, that they'll be—that something terrible, whether it's true or false, might be said about them and that their reputation will be smeared.

And one of the ideas is that—one of the challenges, I think, is that when we have a deeply divided political situation, you can get what is sometimes called noble-cause corruption, which is that—this idea that people on one side originally basically think that everything they do—that they are good no matter what, their opponent is bad no matter what, and that even as a good person if they use bad methods to beat bad people they can still be good. And this is one of the major challenges.

And, again, what—I believe what Cheryl Christian was talking about is a—and being able to deal with or even bring up issues of harassment where your—where there are power imbalances, where people are trying to bring up an issue of wrongdoing is extremely challenging in part because that person in—especially in politics or in power structures that basically people will react to a whistle-blower by pushing back against them. So one of the issues is that—and this is a common thing—is that even if you have—that workers can be afraid to speak up in all sorts of situations, even though they know something's going wrong, because there's—it's—because breaking the rules becomes normalized and misbehavior becomes normalized so it actually becomes a political challenge to overcome that.

A study of more than 1,700 health-care professionals found it was between difficult and impossible to confront people, even though knew where something was going wrong. Obviously, it's a basic human issue that we're dealing with. People don't like being told they're making mistakes, and they may be hostile when they're confronted, and sometimes when you catch a mistake, people may be more inclined to cover it up than to bring it to light because someone will get into trouble. And this is one of the fundamental challenges when it comes to dealing with wrongdoing.

There are examples of this. It's a—there's a term when it comes to all sorts of different systems of politics triumphing over safety, that leadership may withhold or dilute findings on system problems of things going horribly wrong that a supervisor—this is written in the case of health care—things gone wrong in the health-care system—a supervisor might be abundantly aware of standard or rule violations but be fearful that if her superiors knew about them that she and her unit would look bad to administration. And this is something the author, Marc Gerstein, said: This is politics triumphing over safety as the objective through concealment is to save face among one's superiors.

And a further example of this was that if you get somebody who's a high-profile individual who is key to the success of an institution, if they are misbehaving, addressing their misbehaviour ends up—can end up putting the entire institution at risk. So they—Gerstein gave the example: If you have a hospital's misbehaving—but only—neurosurgeon is left to his problematic behaviours because administrators feel—fear that if—he will leave if confronted with his unprofessionalism. And, again, this is due to some actual case studies. Admittedly, the neurosurgeon's departure could represent a financial blow to the hospital but not only from the standpoint of lost revenues from neurosurgical procedures but also from the lost opportunity for neurological consultations. It is easy to understand how a hospital's—in this case a hospital—hospital's administration might shrink from initiating remedial, not to mention disciplinary, measures against him.

* (16:30)

But—and this is a very common practice that happens in all sorts of human institutions—what is as unsettling as it is interesting in these situations is how an administrator might convince herself that correcting an employee's practiced deviations can be more trouble than whatever future disasters may result from those deviations. The latter are discounted as improbably while the former, such as the possibility of a neurosurgeon's resigning in a huff and going to a competitor hospital are perceived as disastrous.

And part of this is the entire challenge with—in politics, but also in these systems, of being able to deal with an issue that might be perceived as small when it is small, and nip it in the bud before it becomes a systematic—a systemic problem.

And this is—again, this is a challenge that happens when we're talking about what is essentially a form—not just of harassment, but if it—if a harassment becomes a systematic practice, it essentially becomes a kind of low-grade corruption that—when you have someone at the top who's accused of wrongdoing, it's somewhat different than when you have someone at the bottom of a status structure who's doing something wrong. And that's one of the things that will happen with all sorts of scandals is that—when nothing will actually happen at the time of wrongdoing. It's only when a certain amount of period of time has passed that a person is no longer in the position of power that they once were that it's possible for victims and accusers to come forward and have their concerns be taken seriously, which is part of what happened

with the #MeToo movement. It wasn't the question—it was not always a question of current accusations, it was accusations that dated back many, many years which were only coming to light in part because the individuals who were being accused in some cases were no longer at the peak of their power and were no longer in a position to be able to retaliate, as they once were.

So you might have rumours of wrongdoing, you may have newspaper stories about it and accusations of wrongdoing, but the actual people involved will not be charged or convicted. Or, if they are, it may not be until years later. And this has happened in many different scenarios—political scenarios that we've seen. Whether it's political institutions, religious institutions and even business. And it may be 10, 15, or 20 years later—35 years later and people will start writing about it and the police may actually start to get involved.

And this relates in part to whether people involved—the people involved in accusations of harassment are powerful or have high status, or they have a lot of powerful allies. And what is important is that whether uncovering the wrongdoing threatens not just the individual but the entire institution—organization they belong to or represent. Again, it can be a business, a political party, an elected official, a coach, a bureaucrat or anyone in a position of status and power. And it doesn't come out, again, when it's happening because that person is at the peak of their power, and it isn't just that one person who will end up going down with the accusation because there's a whole group of people who depend on that person—colleagues, assistants and employees. If the person at the top goes, they'll take a whole bunch of people with them.

So some of it—one of the challenges of actually being able to root out wrongdoing and confront wrongdoing is that there are a whole series of individuals surrounding a person who might be doing wrong who depend on that person not just for their job for the present, but well into the future. So there are a whole series of people who are actually incented to cover up or deny or protect someone who is engaged in, or enable wrongdoing.

This is one of the challenges of this legislation, but it also makes it incredibly hard for whistle-blowers, which has been the position that some of these municipal councillors have essentially been in. You have people who want to do the right thing and follow the rules and make sure things are done right, but Canada has weak whistle-blower protection laws and I

certainly hope—this is something that needs to be considered in the preparation of this harassment bill, that people who bring forward accusations are protected and that one of the things that should be considered is that they be made whole, that—for people who do suffer retributions or who—wherever there is a—who lose—and they can lose in all sorts of ways, they can pay in terms of employment—that there would be a guarantee that they be made whole because one of the things that happens when people do know about wrongdoing is that the repercussions against whistle-blowers are well known. And some of them are workplace bullying.

In fact, the retaliations that happen against whistle-blowers can be a form of—often are a form of harassment. Workplace bullying, ostracising them, removal of work responsibilities or authority, losing promotion opportunities, manufactured poor performance reports, demotion threats, suspension, firing, constructive dismissal or even blacklisting—this is a list of the repercussions against whistle-blowers from Canadians for Accountability, which is a pro-accountability and pro-whistle-blowing group, and it includes many former whistle-blowers, but some of the stories on it frankly paint such a grim picture it makes me wonder whether they're trying to discourage whistle-blowing.

But this speaks to the importance of one of the things that has to happen in the preparation of harassment legislation is that people have to—we have to shift from a culture where people are actually—are encouraged and expected to bring forward issues of wrongdoing when they are at a very small stage or that they are correctible before it blows up into something worse and becomes something more standard.

And, again, you can also have what are systemic responses to whistle-blowers, which is part of what has happened in the past when you had people bringing forward questions—issues of allegation. You have sort of what—again, this is from Canadians for accountability—flawed and non-independent inquiries, attempts to characterize the whistle-blower as not in a position to know all the facts, a liar, unreasonable or unstable. There's the destruction of evidence, the creation of false or post-dated documents, collusion with other implicated individuals and the intimidation of other employees to prevent further whistle-blowing.

And these do happen and there are examples of these happening. I believe this happened with the federal—under the federal government with the Department of Veterans Affairs. There were veterans

who were objecting to their treatment by—or, advocating for better treatment of veterans by the federal government, with the result that their personal health records were circulated and they were smeared in the media.

You get non-serious investigations. Whistle-blowers get smeared as disgruntled or mentally unstable and evidence gets shredded. The list goes on, and the impact on whistle-blowers is extremely serious, just as the impact of harassment can be extremely serious. You can have deterioration in health, depression, loss of career progression, loss of income, marital stress up to and including divorce.

And this is part of a bigger issue of actually being able to deliver effective government. There is a political scientist named Bo Rothstein who wrote that one of the challenges for democracy in our age is that there is a spectre haunting democracy and it is bad governance. He says—he wrote, and I quote: There's a spectre haunting democracy in the world today. It is bad governance, governance that serves only the interests of a narrow ruling, elite governance that is drenched in corruption, patronage, favouritism and abuse of power that is not responding to the massive and long-deferred social agenda of reducing inequality and unemployment and fighting against dehumanizing poverty, governance that is not delivering broad improvement to people's lives because it is squandering or skewing the available resources.

And this is actually—it is important, again, just in terms of our ability as politicians to do our jobs because people have to believe in what we are doing in order—and for us to have credibility, for us to be able to be effective legislators.

There was another finding that experiencing low-quality government is more important for the decline of political legitimacy than being part of the constituency behind a ruling electoral majority. In other words, it is the absence of corruption, discrimination and similar violations of the principle of impartiality when exercising political power that creates political legitimacy.

So we have to be fair. We have to demonstrate our fairness in order to be trusted by the people to deliver our—to do our jobs, and this is a major challenge because there have been—there is greater and—there have been a number of issues, but there is a greater and greater mistrust of politicians, of political parties, of important institutions that have—that used to have far greater trust, and one of the ways you can challenge it in order to deal this is that within an organization, or if,

say, if people want to tackle harassment there has to be an expectation that people can feel safe in speaking up, so we need policies where speaking up is expected. You have to—we have to promise protection to staff who do speak up.

We have to realize that in—that this is not a one-time issue; that this is something where we have to continually be acting and continually be putting energy into correction because we have to realize that oversight and monitoring for—to keep people following the rules is never-ending, as I'm sure the Speaker knows—that there's an old saying that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

But—and I think I've read this before because it's—there's the sense that we can't just leave these systems to something automatic. We have to actively engage in order to be able to make sure that people are not getting slack in or relaxing their vigilance in how these things are handled.

But, again, to go back to one of the concerns we've had is that there is not enough independent oversight or oversight that's separate from the councils themselves—is that basically the divisions of powers matters because one of the limits on the powers of government and strong institutions that can hold power to account are absolutely critical to our democracy, including the media and the judiciary.

* (16:40)

If we have a strong and independent judiciary, that matters. It means we have police and prosecutors who can investigate and prosecute powerful people without political interference. And if we have a strong and independent press that can do investigative journalism—which is quite rare—that also makes a difference. We've seen it all the time in this country and as well as in this House.

The impact of the public knowing and the media being able to bring forward stories that deal with these issues that otherwise would not have been able—that we—not have been—if they had not been brought to light by the media, they might not have ever been dealt with at all. *[interjection]* Gesundheit.

But that's it, is that transparency is not enough. We need watchdogs. Again, we need watchdogs with barks and—which bark and bite because openness and transparency is simply not enough. Openness and transparency is not enough to fight corruption on its own. There is a saying that sunlight is the greatest disinfectant. It is absolutely the case that people's behaviour is different if they think that they are being

watched or if they think they can get caught. However, it is not enough because transparency without consequences can mean that if you are reading about people acting corrupt, getting—or doing things that are wrong, and it's transparent about it and they're getting away with it without punishment, it ends up being corrosive to public—the public trust, because it sends a message to the public that the system is rigged and that powerful people can commit wrongdoing without fear.

So transparency is a—is only part of the step. We have to have watchdogs with bark and bite because when people are openly and brazenly able to flaunt the rules without punishment, it basically spreads rot and can risk turning into systemic corruption because that—it sends the message that nobody will be punished for wrongdoing and that there's—and—there's all—there's a saying that there's no point in being the only honest player in a crooked game. And again, this is something which—this—I hope this law, that this bill will be taken seriously, but it requires a substantial political push in terms of change because, again, Bo Rothstein said that endemic corruption is not some flaw that can be corrected with a technical fix or a political push. It is the way that the system works. And it is deeply embedded in the norms and expectations of political and social life. Reducing it to less destructive levels—and I will repeat that—reducing it to less destructive levels and keeping it there requires revolutionary change in institutions.

And I will return to the challenge which is the—essentially, the loss of people's faith in authority and institutions that Elinor Ostrom, who was the 2009 Nobel laureate in economics, in her presidential address to the American Political Science Association in 1998 said, we are producing generations of cynical citizens with little trust in one another, much less in—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lamont: —then—in their governments. Given the central role of trust in solving social dilemmas, we may be creating the very conditions that undermine our own democratic ways of life. And this is, again, one of the challenges that—of the loss of—the loss in faith or perceptions of corruption or perceptions that government is not operating in the interests of the people. In Canada, from 2013, the—Transparency International ran a poll asking people which institutions were corrupt or extremely corrupt in a particular country or territory. The—and there were very disappointing or distressing results. The least trusted institution in Canada at the time was political

parties. Sixty-two per cent of people did not trust them, followed by business, followed by parliaments and legislatures. And just less than half per cent had faith in—thought that parliaments or legislatures were corrupt or extremely corrupt; followed by the media; public servants, then religious bodies. And then with much better scores were the police, the judiciary, NGOs, medical and health professionals, the military and then education—people working as teachers.

And this is actually—these are fairly high levels, but when it comes to corruption or perception of corruption around the world, Canada is actually one of the best or is perceived as being one of the best, but Canada still has—in 2013, more than half of Canadians thought that the country's government was run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.

And this is—Rousseau once said that the more a country asks of its citizens, the greater the devotion to it. In a well-ordered city, every man flies to the assemblies. Under a bad government, no one participates in public life because no one is interested in what happens there, and domestic cares are all-absorbing. But one of the most important things is that the idea of civic virtue is a—is not something that is—you can take for granted; it's something you have to invest in and cultivate. Civic virtue is built up and not spent down by strenuous citizenship. Use it or lose it, Rousseau says. As soon as public service ceases to be the chief business of the citizens and they would rather serve with their money than with their persons, the State is not far from its fall.

So change is hard, but it is possible. And institutions can change, and so can people. I certainly hope that this bill will bring some meaningful change to municipal councils. I do think that we will have to go further in order to be able to really lift the level of public service. I know that there are lots of people out there in all parties of all interests all over Manitoba who have—who are genuinely committed to public service. They want the very best for their communities, but they can't always make it happen because sometimes it's just pure lack of professionalism on the part of some individuals, but also because we haven't been able to have a system where people can right wrongs and seek justice in a way that's fair.

So thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I—that's all I have to say for now.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I thank my colleagues for that tumultuous applause.

Madam Speaker, prior to the introduction of Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members), there was no mechanism in The Municipal Act that protects municipal elected officials from bullying and harassment, nor allows for elected officials to be disciplined for behaviour—for such kinds of behaviour. Maybe in the years past, there was no such situation happening in this kind of job, as all elected officials acted honourably and respectfully.

But incidents close to home in other jurisdictions in Canada, and especially south of the border and beyond, point to the fact that an enforceable code of conduct for elected officials—for elected public officials is badly needed. It has even become critical and exigent in view of more and more incidents of elected officials acting as immoral individuals speaking in language that are reprehensible and doing actions devoid of decency, truth and accountability.

My colleague, earlier, mentioned the incident of what happened to the municipality of Ritchot. In the summer of 2017—or was it 2018—the elected mayor of the municipality and two members of the council tendered their irrevocable resignation, leaving only two members of the council. With that number, the business of running the municipality cannot take place.

In her resignation letter, the mayor stated, quote: When a council cannot function as a group and when mediation does not work and when name-calling and belligerent behaviour become the norm, it is time to re-evaluate your spot at the table.

I gave up my seat so that it might start a conversation at the municipal and provincial levels of government about how to better protect the residents that want to serve our communities. If I stayed and did nothing, then I become complicit and accepting of the behaviour. We are trying to encourage people to run for public office, and we need to ensure they are protected from bullying and inappropriate behaviour while serving their communities.

* (16:50)

My hope is that the RM of Ritchot can—Ritchot? Ritchot—can find people to run for office who are community-minded, want to work together towards common goals and always, always look at the big picture when making decisions. Unquote.

Madam Speaker, bullying and harassment at—in the workplace should never be tolerated. There should be a robust council of—code of—a robust council code of conduct that enforces rules with concomitant

repercussions, not merely censuring, which is clearly and ultimately just a public slap on the wrist. If there's—if there are no strong consequences for aberrant behaviour, these kinds of situations will continue unabated.

We all can agree everyone has the right to work in an environment free of harassment and discrimination. We stand, on this side of the House, for an inclusive and diverse workplace that is supportive of all employees and provides them with opportunities to thrive and be heard. I'm sure everyone in this House would agree we all want to live in a society where a culture of consent informs interactions in all relationships at the workplace.

We need to ensure that people are protected from bullying in the workplace. Particularly, we need to combat sexual harassment and workplace misconduct. Such a change is long overdue. All employees, regardless of their rank, deserve a safe workplace. There is no excuse for toxic behaviour in the workplace.

Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we are deeply concerned. The cities of Winnipeg and Brandon do not appear to be included in the scope of this bill. We wonder why. Was this just a case of omission on the minister's part, or is there a strong case to make that we have not just heard yet, for not including these two big cities?

Both Winnipeg and Brandon are the two largest municipalities in the province. It would make sense for them to also be required to have codes of conduct, especially since there have been several allegations of misconduct on some elected officials from these municipalities in the recent past. It makes clear and perfect sense for Winnipeg and Brandon councils to have regulations regarding workplace conduct.

While still on these two cities, it is unclear whether or not the mayor and council of the cities of—the mayor of Winnipeg and the councils of the cities of Winnipeg and Brandon, have been consulted on their views. It is specially important to hear their voices, and to ensure that all municipalities are captured by this bill.

And speaking of Winnipeg, the Pallister government offloaded all responsibility of the ridesharing industry onto municipalities. They also dumped the responsibility for the Taxicab Board onto the City of Winnipeg, shortchanging the City of Winnipeg by \$500,000. No wonder Mayor Bowman did not appear buoyed and enthused when he attended the Legislature for the Throne Speech last month.

This government cut the long-standing 50-50 transit funding for municipalities, costing Winnipeg a shortfall of \$10 million and Brandon \$227,000; big amount, a big dent on the budgets of both municipalities.

Madam Speaker, it is also concerning that the content of codes of conduct under Bill 2 have, for the most part, been left to be determined by regulations. When will these regulations be introduced or made known?

Speaking about these yet-unannounced regulations, there should be uniformity and consistency regarding these regulations and there should also be provisions to ensure the codes of conduct are comprehensive. That said, these codes of conduct need to be sensitive to regional and geographical differences that might affect how councils operate and function. If the government is going to get these regulations right, they will need to consult widely and properly. It is important that regulations surrounding workplace conduct be—for members of council are created in consultation with experts, the AMM, councillors and the mayors of Winnipeg and Brandon.

Resources are also needed to implement the changes proposed in this bill. If training is going to be required, it cannot be something that is simply downloaded onto municipalities. Real, ongoing support needs to be offered. For example, provincial resources should be—could be developed, such as a standard training manual. Alternatively, training resources could be deployed on a provincial scale to support smaller municipalities and councils who may not have access to the same capacity or staff larger municipalities and cities do.

No matter what, is important that resources are put in place to ensure there is realistic chance of compliance and making sure these codes are living documents that actively govern the actions of Reeves, councillors and mayors. We need to work together to ensure that everyone is protected and supported when working for Manitobans.

And we would like to point out that Bill 2 should be clear in its language to include safe, inclusive work space. Safe workplaces, free of harassment and violence, have been mentioned several times already because they are critical to fostering an inclusive and productive work environment. With the unique nature of political workplaces in which so many different individuals are brought together, it is crucial to ensure that everyone has the same rights, support and protection in the face of workplace harassment.

Many people within these spaces hold positions of influence and power and can underestimate the influence they have on the people around them—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Marcelino: —despite their intentions. Allegations must not be hidden, covered up or suppressed. Doing so is equally as wrong as committing actions which are deemed inappropriate. If the safety of the complainant is ensured, a rehabilitation process that advances the healing of both sides should be an important principle in charting a path forward.

Madam Speaker, though we believe and we want to side on the—and be siding with complainants, there have been many instances in the past wherein there were wrong—there were allegations made that were wrong.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 17 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

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