



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Tom Lindsey  
Speaker*



Vol. LXXIX No. 26B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, March 13, 2025

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 13, 2025

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill 212—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 212, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation, be now read a first time.

##### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wasyliv:** I am pleased to introduce The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, which strengthens protections for Manitoban renters by ensuring the above-guideline rent increases are fair and justified. Thousands of renters in Manitoba have faced steep, above-guideline rent increases, often for cosmetic renovations they did not ask for or benefit from. Many tenants struggle to appeal these increases, facing bureaucratic hurdles, lack of transparency and a fear of landlord retaliation.

This bill closes loopholes that have allowed landlords to remove rent discounts before applying for above-guideline rent increases and ensures rent increases beyond the cap can only be approved for legitimate expenses. It also allows phased-in rent increases, easing the financial burden on tenants.

I also want to recognize and thank the West Broadway Tenants Committee members in the gallery today. Their advocacy has been critical in raising awareness of how AGIs are impacting families, and I appreciate their support of this legislation.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### **Human Trafficking Awareness Day**

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity):** I rise today to mark Human Trafficking Awareness Day, part of Stop Child Sexual Exploitation Week.

As the Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity, I affirm my support for survivors and our government's commitment to stand firmly against any form of gender-based violence.

Human trafficking affects all Manitobans, and we all have a role to play in addressing and preventing human trafficking. We know the effects of compounding marginalization like racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia leave some Manitobans disproportionately affected by sex trafficking.

We also know victim blaming, misinformation and harmful stigmas related to human trafficking can prevent survivors from seeking help. Citizens must educate themselves on the signs of trafficking and how to keep our relatives safe. Human traffickers can target anyone, but women and girls account for 93 per cent of police-reported incidents in Canada, with 23 per cent of cases involving survivors under the age of 17.

Our government is committed to intervention and supports for young survivors through the work of Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Prevention Strategy, established in 2002, in honour of Tracia Owen, a young Indigenous girl who died by suicide after being sexually exploited. Tracia's Trust invests \$15 million annually, with community organizations across Manitoba to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Tomorrow, my team, from the Department of Families, is connecting with community members from across Manitoba in a full-day Tracia's Trust engagement summit. Part of the annual Stop Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Week conference, this gathering brings Manitobans together to discuss the needs of those experiencing sexual exploitation in our province, highlight existing supports, identify gaps and barriers and chart a course on what is needed to revitalize the Tracia's Trust strategy.

Miigwech to front-line organizations leading this sacred work with your care and your love and your dedication and your fierceness, ensuring the safety of our women, girls, youth, two-spirit and gender-diverse relatives.

This is heart work, and I lift you up for this incredibly important work. Together, we are creating pathways to healing so every Manitoban can live safe

from the threat of human trafficking and sexual violence, empowered to be their authentic selves and to live their lives to the fullest, most unapologetic and good way.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Today I rise to recognize Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The purpose of human trafficking awareness is to actively work towards preventing exploitation before it happens.

Human Trafficking Awareness Day serves as an important opportunity to raise awareness of the harsh realities of human trafficking.

There is a misconception that this does not happen here in Canada; the truth is it sadly does. In fact, 96 per cent of trafficking victims in Canada are women and girls, and 25 per cent of known victims are under the age of 18.

Human trafficking involves profiting from the exploitation of another person through force, manipulation or coercion. The day highlights the urgent need for support services for survivors, including mental health care, legal aid, housing and job training. It serves to humanize the issue by focusing on the recovery of victims and providing them with essential resources to rebuild their lives.

Traffickers are not always strangers. Often, they build relationships with their victims, gaining their trust to manipulate and exploit them. Every year, Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada gives us a chance to educate ourselves about this critical issue. By raising awareness, we can work together to create meaningful change in our communities.

There's several ways we can help fight against human trafficking: report suspicious activity that you might witness that could potentially be related to human trafficking; support many organizations like that close to home here, The Joy Smith Foundation, which are dedicated to combating human trafficking and helping survivors.

By raising awareness and taking action, we can stand together to protect our fellow Manitobans, ensuring that no one has to endure the horrors of human trafficking. Through compassion and unity, we can create lasting change and make our communities safer for all.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux)?

Okay.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Peggy Wilson

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak):** Today I rise to honour a remarkable constituent in The Pas-Kameesak. Peggy Wilson is a dedicated 'individual' who has become a pillar at the community garden in Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

These gardens were created to address high rates of diabetes in the community but became a place for families in OCN to find reprieve during the pandemic. At the time, 42 families signed up to spend their allotted weekly time in the garden, but more families have since begun to visit and spend time in the garden outside of these hours.

This garden now holds much meaning for the community and is a provider of healthy, fresh, affordable food for the community.

They supply produce for elders and for children at the local schools. They also regularly sell produce from the garden where customers pay what they can, and proceeds are all put back into operations and upkeep.

Through this garden, organizers aim for the community and get involved in land-based learning, teaching others how to grow their own food and about Opaskwayak culture and traditions.

In the North, it's important that we continue to strive for food sovereignty, to lead active and healthy lives, and this garden is an important step towards that.

\* (13:40)

Peggy has become a fixture in this community garden and has been pivotal in maintaining and cultivating the space. She has done so much work for our constituency, and I am proud of her efforts to create a healthy and active community here in the North.

Peggy, we are grateful for your dedication, and to great—and to create a welcoming space for everyone.

She has joined us here in the gallery today, and I ask that the House join me in thanking Peggy for her contributions to The Pas-Kameesak and Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

Ekosi.

*Kathryn Countryman, Julie Price, Dr. Alex Wilson, Dr. Peggy Wilson, Dr. Stan Wilson*

### All Nations Express

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** Honourable Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour All Nations Express, a men's pool team from Winnipeg.

This past June, All Nations Express won the men's masters division title at the VNEA eight-ball world championships in Las Vegas, an event attended by over 4,000 people from around the world.

It is my privilege to introduce the team members joining us today in the gallery: Brad Whyte, a construction manager from East St. Paul, Manitoba. This married father of twin two-year-olds has been playing pool for 28 years.

Cornell Keith McLean Jr., the team captain, a 38-year-old father from lake Martin First Nation who grew up in Winnipeg, in the downtown area. A professional electrician by day, he usually finds himself in the pool halls on weekends in the winter and on the golf courses in the summertime.

Johnny Baptiste, born in Winnipeg Manitoba, raised on the Ebb and Flow First Nation, father of four and a proud First Nations safety officer on the Ebb and Flow First Nation. He has been playing pool for 29 years.

Sean Monkman. This father of two is a self-employed construction foreman from Beaconia, Manitoba. His—he has been playing pool for 29 years.

And Jeff Clare is from Winnipeg. This married father of two has been playing pool for 30-plus years. Jeff spends his days at the bank as a mortgage specialist and in the evenings hitting bank shots on his home pool table.

Honourable Speaker, their win is historic because it marks the first time in the 44-year history of VNEA Championship that the men's master team from Manitoba has won the title.

Honourable Speaker, I ask my colleagues today to join me and recognize Brad, Cornell, Johnny, Sean, Jeff for their historic win, and applaud them for representing Manitoba and putting Canada on the world stage.

Thank you.

### National Ukrainian Festival 60th Anniversary

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** It is my great pride to stand before you to recognize the incredible milestone Canada's National Ukrainian Festival will be celebrating on August the 25th–August 2025—their 60th anniversary.

In 1965, the festival began with a founding group, was given a box of letterheads and \$5 in stamps to get started. The vision was showcased Ukrainian culture Canada by hosting a national three-day festival celebration in Dauphin.

For six decades, this festival has been a cornerstone of the Ukrainian culture and heritage, featuring vibrant traditions, music, dance and food that's made by the Ukrainian community so vital to Canada.

The event attracts thousands of visitors around the world. A recent economic impact study revealed that combining the spending of out-of-town visitors last year totaled over \$2.5 million, generating more than \$3.1 million in economic activity in the province of Manitoba.

The festival takes place to dedication of the 300 volunteers to ensure their success every year. Held at the historical Selo Ukraina site near Riding Mountain National Park, just 10 minutes south of Dauphin, the festival offers the beauty, the settings and their cultural celebrations.

As we all look forward to the 60th anniversary, I express my deepest gratitude to the volunteers, the organizers and supporters who have made this event possible. Your efforts have strengthened the Ukrainian culture and 'contributed' to Manitoba's tourism sector.

I want to recognize the current Canadian National Ukrainian Festival president, Kayla Gillis, and vice-president, Cory Lafontaine, that's in attendance with many board members and their volunteers for their commitment.

Congratulations, and look forward to celebrating in Dauphin, Manitoba, August 25th with you.

Thank you so much.

### New Hospital in Agassiz

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to recognize the work being done in Agassiz to get the new hospital up and running. This facility was part of our PC team's commitment and investment in rural health care with the work beginning in 2022.

Construction is well under way, and this state-of-the-art facility stands as a testament to the PC commitment to delivering top-notch health care in rural Manitoba. With modern amenities and a dedicated team of health-care professionals, the new 60-bed hospital promises to enhance the quality of care available to families across Manitoba.

With the great addition to rural health care, we must also address the need of a computerized tomography at the new hospital. A CT scanner is not just a piece of equipment; it is a crucial tool—a critical tool that allows for accurate diagnosis, timely treatment of medical conditions and saves lives.

We all know that a delay in diagnosis will lead to increased morbidity and mortality.

The needs for the community have changed since the facility was planned. The current hospital is experiencing increased numbers of patients at the existing ER and the new facility will only see more.

I'm hearing from constituents and medical personnel outside of the area, including specialists and radiologists, that the volume of demand originating in this area is enough to justify a CT scanner. When compared to other hospitals of similar size, it would be unusual to see a 60-bed hospital with a 14-bed emergency room not include a CT scanner.

Equipping Neepawa Hospital with a scanner would be taking a significant step toward ensuring that many Manitobans could receive prompt medical attention without the added stress of travel or ambulatory services.

A CT scanner would not only save time and resources, but also enhance the overall efficiency of our health-care services and reduce wait times right across the province.

It is crucial and essential for the new rural hospital to have this technology. I urge the government to incorporate this important diagnostic tool in the new Neepawa hospital so that it can serve many Manitobans and cut back—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

### **HayMad & Co.**

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** Supporting mental health organizations isn't just a charitable activity, it's leadership in action. HayMad & Co. is a woman-run local business that is one of those leaders who get it.

There's no better time than now to be reminding our global community of our shared and multifaceted humility and humanity. That's why I am thrilled to highlight the speed at which HayMad & Co. is taking the global stage.

Honourable Speaker, in 2023, not too long ago, Amber Nemeth, who named the business after her two daughters, opened her first retail store at Kildonan Place mall, which is located in the great heart of the

constituency of Radisson. With the support of her loving family, their store serves as a space for local makers to sell a wide variety of goods like soaps, accessories, apparel, stationary, snacks and more, providing a stable shelf space for small business owners across Manitoba.

HayMad & Co. has gained international recognition for its Be Kind movement, a clothing collection that promotes mental health awareness, and a portion of the proceeds go to support the Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Over the last six years alone, HayMad & Co. has donated over \$10,000 of their proceeds to help build mental health supports across our province. And from the Emmy Awards to the Golden Globes in Los Angeles, HayMad & Co. has been bringing dollars straight from American gifting suites right back to Manitoba in support of mental health.

Amber and family, I am honoured to be your storefront MLA and congratulate you on your plans for a second location. The work that you are doing has inspired a movement. You've not only built a business, but you're building a legacy—a legacy of mental health literacy, awareness and empowerment.

I invite my colleagues to please join me in congratulating Amber for all of her achievements with HayMad & Co., and to wish her all the best as she continues to grow her business.

\* (13:50)

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Premier's Trip to British Columbia Financial Transparency Request**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** So, Honourable Speaker, the Premier of Ontario is meeting with Secretary Lutnick. And our Premier said yesterday, and I quote: That's why earlier today, I was on the call with Premier Ford and Premier Smith and every other premier across this great country.

So what does our Premier do? He plans on doubling down, claiming he had to fly to BC to meet with Premier Eby, something he easily could have done by picking up the phone or going on a Zoom call. We all know his trip was about trying to save his NDP friends in British Columbia.

So I ask: Why doesn't he just admit it, pay back the taxpayers for the flight and expenses and just come clean today, Honourable Speaker?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** You know, they really got their finger on the pulse on the other side of the Chamber here, and so I'll take this opportunity to congratulate David Eby for winning the BC election last fall.

Now prior to that campaign period, I went and had the privilege of having a bilateral meeting with David Eby, in which we discussed how his province was able to expand pharmacare coverage to cover HRT. Now the thing in our society that we're trying to address here is that many women are experiencing menopause earlier, and therefore are going to need that HRT assistance so that they can be healthier over the many years to come in their lives.

And so after learning from that bilateral meeting, I came home and met with our Health Minister and I'm very proud to tell that this past week, we expanded pharmacare coverage in Manitoba to cover hormone replacement therapy, an important step forward for women's health in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, I guess, Honourable Speaker, that conversation could not have happened via Zoom or a phone call.

Honourable Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone) for bringing forward Bill 224 to help hold the Kinew government to account on financial matters, transparency and accountability to the public.

In the interest of accountability and financial transparency, will the Premier tell us how many of his staff and colleagues joined him on this voyage to British Columbia, and just how much it cost taxpayers for them to all campaign to save David Eby's BC NDP government?

And while he's at it, can he tell us whether the Manitoba taxpayers' contributions were counted in the BC election as well? Of course, for transparency, can he please clarify for everyone watching today, plus everyone in the gallery, Honourable Speaker?

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, it's quite a fantastic voyage, but it's not very Coolio with me when these member opposites keep slide, slide, slippity-sliding down the polls into utter oblivion.

Again, I went to British Columbia to meet with Premier Eby to talk about health care and pharmacare. Now, here's the thing: the members opposite are right. I did do something other than being with Premier Eby

while I was in British Columbia. The other thing that I did is that I presented a pair of moccasins to David and his wife Cailey to congratulate them on their then-newborn baby.

So I'll use this opportunity on the record to congratulate them once again. Congrats on that bundle of joy.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** We all know what the NDP were doing in British Columbia and it was not solving health issues.

Fact is, he's not fooling anyone, Honourable Speaker. The Premier took his whole team out to BC to campaign on Manitoba taxpayers' dollars, and he was so proud of this shameful behaviour, he posted it all over the Internet. And I table some additional evidence of that today.

The Premier just simply needs to stop evading the questions, stop trying to distract, stop trying to get back into his rapping days and come clean and apologize and pay back the money, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, you know, while the member opposite wants to litigate the John Rustad campaign and try to have a do-over on his behalf in BC, while the member wants to throw shade at the moccasins that I paid for myself to gift to another premier and his family, what I would say is this, through you, the Chair: Are you going to ask me about steel this week? Are you going to ask me about ag tariffs from China this week?

We've been here all week long—not a single question about the very serious challenges to our provincial economy from the member opposite.

Well, good news for people in the ag industry, the steel industry and everyone out there in private enterprise: your Manitoba NDP government is standing up for you. We've got supports for you here at home, and we're pushing back against the Trump administration's unjustified tariffs, as well against those being brought forward by the PRC.

We're strong on health care, and we're strong on the economy.

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

### Manitoba's Payroll Tax Request to Eliminate

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We've had many questions in the last six days, Honourable Speaker, on various different topics, and the Premier has—gives zero answers. Matter of fact, he intends on continuing to distract.

This morning, we brought forward a common-sense resolution to give the government some direction, to provide permanent tax relief to those businesses who work hard in the devastating facets of the Trump administration's tariffs, Honourable Speaker—a tax that the NDP had created, which most provinces have rejected long time ago, and that's the payroll tax.

Your Finance Minister, Honourable Speaker, has failed to recognize the damage of the payroll tax to job creation and has offered only deferrals for Manitoba employers.

So will the Premier commit to phasing out the payroll tax today?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, did you notice how he started to stammer when he talked about the American President? Again, always uncomfortable to call it like it is and to say that Manitobans need to stand up against Donald Trump.

Again, you know, the members opposite are like a real-life version of those JD Vance memes that we're seeing everywhere: 'Pwease', Mr. Pwemier [*phonetic*], you got to say 'pwease' to the 'pwesident.'

The members opposite, day after day, have the opportunity to ask about the ag industry, to ask us about steel, and yet, they come in here with policy decisions they never took when they were in office.

The member opposite was at the Cabinet table and collected the payroll tax every single day.

My question for him is: If we phase it out, will he then stand in his seat and applaud your NDP government?

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, once again, we see the behaviour of this Premier, which is absolutely not becoming of a premier.

The CFIB, the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council have all been calling for changes to the payroll tax because they know that businesses looking to invest in Manitoba often see the payroll tax levels,

and they move on to look somewhere else. That's how this tax destroys jobs, Honourable Speaker—good jobs that could be locating here in this province.

The businesses see this Premier and his behaviour and the NDP's tax-and-spend ways, and they decide to move the jobs somewhere else, Honourable Speaker.

So will the Premier commit today to phase out the job-killing payroll tax, yes or no?

**Mr. Kinew:** We've added jobs in Manitoba thanks to the hard work of your Manitoba NDP team.

The literal member opposite, the member for Lac du Bonnet, oversaw the payroll tax's application every single day during his time in government—every single day while he was at the Cabinet table.

So I'm not sure what last strand of credibility he is straining today. But I will say this: I know there is a lot of insecurity about jobs on the other side of this Chamber, because Wally is apparently running away with the PC leadership, and he's promised to fire everybody.

So, again, we are going to be there for Manitoba workers. We're going to be there for Manitoba industry. Hey, who knows? Maybe we'll even be there when some of them are looking for work in the very near future.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, we had successive budgets which we took small businesses, large businesses right off the tax rolls entirely for that job-destroying payroll tax.

\* (14:00)

Honourable Speaker, Manitoba businesses are facing tariffs today. Trucks are no longer moving our goods across the border. They need to know that there is more than a deferral to help them get through these tough times. They want real, permanent tax relief. What they've gotten instead from this Premier and his Finance Minister is a whole lot of bluster.

This NDP party has no plan. No plan for tariffs, no plan to expand our trade, diversify our markets or even tear down barriers. All we get from this Premier is mocking platitudes, while other premiers do the heavy lifting, Honourable Speaker, on this trade battle.

Will this traveling Premier, for a chance, put Manitoba first and phase out the payroll tax today?



**Mr. Kinew:** Apparently the Wally campaign reached out and the member opposite asked if they were going to keep him on, and he heard what their answer was, and said: so you're saying there's a chance.

Pop culture references aside, we know that we're standing up for the people of Manitoba each and every single day. We're bringing back a permanent presence to advocate for your jobs and our economy in Washington, DC, something that the PCs cut.

We're re-opening hospital emergency rooms and hiring back workers on the front lines, something that the members opposite cut. And when it comes to the payroll tax, well, that was something that the PCs never cut, so how dare they come in here with that hypocrisy at a time that they're trying to divide Manitobans yet again.

It's an important time for all Canadians to stand together. That's what we're doing, and we thank Manitobans for stepping up to work together each and every single day.

#### **School Property Taxes Increase Concerns**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** Despite promising in the 2023 election campaign that they were going to revamp the education funding model, this Education Minister failed to deliver, which has meant more status quo of a less than top five priority for education funding for school divisions from this Kinew government and Education Minister.

This has resulted in a 15 and a half per cent increase in school taxes for hard-working, blue-collar families in the minister's own backyard.

How does she think this is acceptable at a time of looming Trump tariffs and increasing affordability challenges for Manitoba families?

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Do you know what we're doing in my own backyard? We are building a brand new school for the students and families in Devonshire Park.

It's, again, another day and it's another lesson in hypocrisy from the PC benches. We heard it from the questions from the interim Leader of the Opposition; we hear it continually from the member from Spruce Woods.

For years, Honourable Speaker, they cut funding to school divisions, including the Hanover School Division, who this year, thanks to the NDP government's

predictable, stable funding, have this year frozen their mill rates. And do you know what the Hanover School Division said about the PCs'—

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

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

**Mr. Jackson:** Well, I thank the minister for highlighting the new school at Devonshire Park, which was a PC proposal. They paused it for a year and a half, and then decided that it was actually a good idea and they were going to build it.

The school would have been half built by now if they had just gotten on with it after they won the election, but they had to waste everybody's time for a year and a half, pretending like it wasn't a good idea, and then they decided to build it anyway.

So thanks very much to the member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt) for that credit to the former PC government, and the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), who was Education Minister and proposed that school in the first place.

The question was about River East Transcona School Division, not Hanover. Those are two different places in two different parts of the province.

Why is this minister comfortable with a 15 and a half per cent tax increase on her constituents and everybody else in the River East Transcona School Division?

**MLA Schmidt:** We know that, thanks to the great work of our Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), that more Manitobans than ever are going to be saving on their property taxes this year, thanks to our homeowners' affordability tax credit.

But let's talk about River East Transcona School Division for a minute, and let's talk about what their board had to say about their—about the time during the PCs were in government. Provincial funding in the over—last—sorry. Provincial funding in the—over the last number of years has been substantially shorter than what we needed in comparison to inflation, as well as the number of new students we are receiving. That was Rod Giesbrecht being quoted in the CTV News in 2023.

And let's go back to Hanover School Division and hear what their board chair had to say about the PCs and their school funding: worst by a mile. I've been on the board for 30 years, and I—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Jackson:** The minister is reading quotes from 2023. Here's a news flash for the NDP government: it's 2025; taxes are going up by 15 and a half per cent in River East Transcona School Division.

What is this minister going to do to stop that tax hike on hard-working blue-collar families in her constituency and every other constituency in northeast Winnipeg?

**MLA Schmidt:** I'll tell you what we're going to do: we're not going to take lessons from the member opposite.

When the PCs were in power, what they did was underfund school divisions and pick fights with school boards. In fact, when the PCs were in government, if they had succeeded in bill 64—again, I'll remind the House, maybe the most hated piece of legislation ever in Manitoba history—they would have done away with school boards altogether.

On this side of the House, we are going to work with school divisions and school boards to make sure that they are meeting the needs of Manitoba families and students while also balancing affordability, affordability that our government is delivering on, thanks again to the great work of our Minister of Finance (MLA Sala). The Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit—we saw savings at the gas pump for a year, thanks to—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

#### **School Property Taxes Increase Concerns**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, it's clear that this NDP government is not doing their job to keep property taxes low for Manitobans. Every single day over the past few weeks, we have heard some kind of increase being proposed by school divisions across the province.

Yesterday, I gave this minister an opportunity to stand up for families and to stop these tax hikes today. River East Transcona School Division: 15 and a half per cent hike was the highest we've seen this year until today, because Turtle Mountain School Division is planning for a 16.55 per cent rate hike as a result of a broken funding model. I table that for the minister.

I give the minister another chance: Will they stand up for families and stop these tax hikes today, yes or no?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, for many years, our education system had cuts under the members opposite. Year over year over year, they underfunded education, and it impacted our kids.

And what have we done? We're funding at the rate of inflation, and this year, 3.4 per cent lift. We are taking care of kids in this province.

When it comes to affordability, Honourable Speaker, we were proud last year to bring in our \$1,500 Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit that will lower the cost of school taxes across the entire province. We're doing the work every single day on focusing on the needs of families, and we will continue to make life more affordable.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** Honourable Speaker, the list of property tax hikes is growing every single day: 15 and a half per cent River East Transcona; 11 per cent Seine River. I table for the member for Southdale (MLA Cable) a 7.5 per cent hike to property taxes in their constituency.

If the minister won't stand up for families, the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) won't stand up for families, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard) won't stand up for families, will the member for Southdale stand up for families in their constituency and stop these tax hikes today?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, the only list that's growing is the list of things we're doing to make life more affordable.

You know, in our last budget we had this beautiful list, 21 ways to save: extending the gas tax holiday; \$1,500 Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit; broad middle-class tax cuts; doubling the Fertility Treatment Tax Credit; increasing the Renters Tax Credit after they hiked taxes on renters.

And, of course, in addition to this list of 21 ways to save, what else did we do? We brought in a hydro rate freeze for 2025.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** Honourable Speaker, in what world does this minister live in where a 15 and a half per cent tax hike increase is affordable?

\* (14:10)

Not the minister standing up for families, not the member for Seine River (MLA Cross), not the member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard) and not the member for Southdale (MLA Cable)—nobody from these government benches are taking accountability for their poor financial decisions.

So will the Premier (Mr. Kinew)—since his members aren't standing up for families, will the Premier stand up today and stop these tax hikes on hard-working families, yes or no?

**The Speaker:** The honourable minister of family—honourable Minister of Finance.

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, we're going to continue doing the important work of making life more affordable.

Again, our \$1,500 homeowner affordability tax credit is lowering school taxes for the vast majority of Manitobans. More work to do and we're very excited to bring forward more of our work to make life more affordable in Budget 2025.

But, you know, we got to remind the members opposite of their record when they were in government. What did they do? Again, they applied the fuel tax every single day they were in government, gladly. They continue to pound Manitoban businesses with the payroll tax. They've increased costs for renters. They jacked up hydro rates. That's their record, Honourable Speaker.

On this side of the House, every single member of this team is committed to making life more affordable. We know that's important. More work to do and can't wait to release our budget on March 20.

### **Surgical Wait Times Out-of-Province Care Options**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Debbie Fewster was a mother of three and a grandmother of 10. She had just retired and was excited to spend more time with her family. But tragically, she was failed by the NDP's health-care system. Debbie passed away while waiting for a life-saving surgery last fall.

I know the minister hasn't reached out to the family but I spoke with them this morning. They have a straightforward proposal: Debbie's law, a law that would require the government to inform patients when life-saving care cannot be provided in a timely manner. It would also require the government to discuss out-of-province-care options when wait times here are too long.

This is about accountability, putting patients first and common sense.

The PC side of the House is ready to fully support this legislation; will the NDP, yes or no?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Speaker, I want to express on behalf of our government our deepest condolences to Debbie Fewster's family, who had been grieving this very tragic loss.

This is a situation that we never want to see happen, and I know that the WRHA leadership, health leadership, is actively meeting with the family to have those conversations to provide any support and information that the family needs. You know, we take all aspects of health care very seriously but certainly the area of cardiac sciences and women's heart health.

Our government is committed to doing the work necessary to ensure that our services are there for Manitobans when they need it, and I look forward to sitting down and having conversations with the family as well, if they'd like to do so.

Thank you.

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

**Mrs. Cook:** I would ask the minister if they'd considered that Debbie Fewster could still be alive today if their government hadn't callously cut out-of-province care options for patients when wait times here were too long.

When asked if he'd adopt Debbie's law on CBC this morning, the Premier refused to say yes. Instead, he took credit for a wait-list system that was created by a task force he has smeared on dozens of occasions and fired the first chance he got.

And despite taking credit, he didn't even know that this system doesn't track cardiac surgeries. He didn't know if wait—deaths on wait-lists are tracked in Manitoba, so let me enlighten him: No, Manitoba does not publicly report how many patients die waiting for surgery.

How is it possible that this Premier, who campaigned solely on health care, knows so little about health care in Manitoba?

**MLA Asagwara:** Shame on that member. Shame on the member opposite for referencing a task force that didn't actually even provide cardiac care out of country.

Shame on that member for not acknowledging the fact that Manitoba used to be a cardiac centre of excellence. But back in 2017, the cardiac sciences program at St. Boniface Hospital was systemically dismantled by the PCs. It was the envy not only nationally but internationally. That—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Asagwara:** —member's side of the House is responsible for the erosion of a program that was the envy of the rest of the country.

On this side of the House, we're doing the work to restore it.

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

**Mrs. Cook:** We know where the NDP stands ideologically on even the idea of out-of-province care.

But the fact is, before the NDP, if waits in Manitoba were too long, you had options. You could be sent out of province for faster care, whether it was a knee replacement, a hip surgery or even a life-saving cardiac procedure, all paid for by the provincial government.

Ask a patient who received a surgery as a part of this program if they think that money was well spent. I have many times, and they will tell you it saved their lives.

Under the NDP, that option is gone, and now we're seeing the real-life consequences play out in hospitals across Manitoba. The NDP are playing with patients' lives.

Will they do the right thing and reinstate out-of-province care options for patients when wait times here are too long, yes or no?

**MLA Asagwara:** Honourable Speaker, I'm going to put some facts on the record because it seems that the member opposite really struggles to do so.

In Manitoba, we had a cardiac sciences program that was the envy of the rest of the country and was known internationally to provide innovative care across our province and for those outside of Manitoba. In 2017, members opposite—that member did the work of dismantling that program, pulling it apart piece by piece even though the specialists in that program begged for them to not do so.

Our government is doing the work of restoring that program, working directly with doctors like Dr. Soni,

who is an expert in cardiac care for women in this province and across the country. On that side of the House, what they should do is stand up and apologize—

**The Speaker:** The time has expired.

### **Métis CFS Agency Layoffs Impact on Programs and Children in Care**

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** This minister claims she's stepping up with real money. Yet, if this government cared about children, they would step up with real action. The increase the minister keeps referring to has not prevented the devastating cuts to pivotal programs, vital programs and services for our most vulnerable youth. Instead, she is firing their one-to-one support workers and social workers, leaving children, their families and their communities at greater risk.

So I ask again today: What concrete actions is this minister going to take to protect our most vulnerable and ensure their safety and well-being?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I'm pleased to get up for a fourth day in the—in a row to put on the record, put on the official record, that since we took government and since I was appointed Minister of Families, we have put in a 6 per cent increase in annualized payments, in annualized dollars across the CFS system. That's \$33 million alongside \$11.3 million to the CFS system in respect of operations and wages.

We honour those that are on the front lines. We know that folks do very, very good work and care about Manitoba children. And, again, the most vulnerable—

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

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Byram:** Social workers within CFS have voiced their concerns, described this minister's response as a failure in this critical area. The narrative that this increase to annualized funding is the solution is actually ignoring the reality. The agencies do not have the sufficient funding to operate programs and services. Children are left without their support workers, while this minister looks the other way and fires staff.

Given that relationship-based connection has been critical in the successes of these youth and children, what support has the minister provided to the youth and families directly impacted by these cuts?

**MLA Fontaine:** I remind the member opposite, as I've said all week here, that we've added \$898,000 to southeast CFS and \$2.4 million to Métis and Michif

agencies to ensure that their wages—they've got dollars for their wages.

The other piece that we've done and they're so very quiet on this, and they're so very quiet on this because they did nothing in their seven and a half years of a failed, cold, callous, uncaring government. We raised the basic maintenance rates to foster parents by 10 per cent, something that folks opposite never did.

So I know the member gets up day after day, trying to feign that she actually cares about Manitoban—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a final supplementary question.

**Ms. Byram:** I get up day after day because I care about these kids; these kids that are going to be affected.

\* (14:20)

These layoff notices were responsible for essential programs that supported these children again and again and their families and they helped keep these children safe, provided trauma-enforced care, promoted family preservation and reunification and cultural education. Children and youth depended on these services.

Can the minister share what efforts she has taken in the last seven days to minimize the impact of these cuts on the children and youth within the Métis CFS system?

**MLA Fontaine:** I know the member opposite again—once again, is trying to get up in the Chamber and act as if she actually cares about Manitoba children.

No member opposite can get up with a clear conscience in this Chamber and say that they actually care about Manitoba children when they still have yet to get up and apologize to trans children: trans children that were targeted and bullied by every single one of them under the leadership of the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) who, again, is second in this leadership race.

Not one of them have gotten up. These are the same members that legislated the rights of Indigenous children away. It is not true what they're trying to put on the record. They do not care about Manitoba children. They never have. I would encourage them to get up and—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

### **Increased Crime in the Retail Sector Consultation with Business Community**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** The day-to-day of retail business is becoming more challenging. Large retailers, small shops, chains and convenience stores in every neighbourhood are affected and many are being forced to close.

Businesses are seeing more break-ins, assaults on employees, theft; and not only does this affect their bottom line, but it affects the safety of the staff and customers.

Can this government share with the House which specific businesses they have consulted with in the hopes of being able to better support?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, thank you very much for the question, Honourable Speaker, for the member for Tyndall Park. It is an important one and it's one that our government has been focused on over the last year and a half.

That's why we called together leaders from business from across the province at our retail summit, to ask them how can we support them when it comes to public safety, when it comes to safety for their workers and for employees across this province.

And what we heard was that there was a lot of good work that had been done with our security rebate. They saw the value in the retail crime initiative that was undertaken, and they wanted to see that made permanent. That's why our government stepped up: 12 new officers in the fall, 12 more coming in the spring.

We're working with businesses. We want to make our communities safer and we want to do it in partnership with retailers.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a supplementary question.

### **Winnipeg Transit Buses Request for Safety Initiatives**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Honourable Speaker, crime is not only affecting retailers but many commuters on transit buses are also being forced to witness and experience intoxication, violent behaviour and even exposure to dangerous weapons.

Unfortunately, we are at a point where we need safety officers on some bus routes due to the frequency of crime. In a recent incident, bystanders intervened and restrained a suspect until police arrived, putting themselves at risk.

What is this government doing to increase safety on buses?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Again, I thank the member for Tyndall Park for the important question.

When it comes to public safety, specifically in our downtown, I already mentioned our retail crime initiative. But, of course, we're taking that a step further. We're working with the DCSP, the Downtown Community Safety Partnership. They have patrols across the downtown and we added additional funds and supports for work that they're doing. We're also in talks to add mental health workers to make sure that their work is done in a holistic way.

When it comes to those transit safety officers, part of our community safety officer program, we enhanced the tools that they have in their toolkit. We're willing to support the City in their endeavours to make our transit safety—safer and all of downtown—our entire city safer.

It comes down to community policing and that's why we support law enforcement and the work that they do.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a final supplementary question.

#### **Increased Crime Rate in Manitoba Request for Plan to Address**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** In 2024, there were 99 homicides in Manitoba. This is not only Manitoba's highest homicide recorded in history, but it is also the highest in the Canadian provinces. Rural Manitoba alone doubled their average number of homicides last year.

Now this government campaigned to be tough on crime, to enforce real consequences, to better support police. They even committed that downtown would become safer and that there would be a deduction—a reduction in youth crime. Yet none of this has happened.

Honourable Speaker, can the Minister of Justice tell us when we can expect to see some results?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, I'll remind the member for Tyndall Park that the statistics that she's quoting are, in fact, a reflection of the time when the PCs were in government.

And, of course, we know that crime did skyrocket under the previous government.

But really—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —you know, it's not—it's no wonder, Honourable Speaker, because under the previous government, we—of course, we saw a freeze in municipal funding for police, and that impacted communities across the province. But here in the city of Winnipeg, 55 officers less on our streets during the time that the members opposite were in power.

Now, since taking office, we've added 12 new officers, 12 more coming just in the next few weeks and 12 more again in the fall. It's about working with law enforcement. It's about funding law enforcement and all the supports that they have.

Honourable Speaker, we are getting tough on crime and its causes.

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

Could we stop the clock for a minute, please.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** There are some guests in the gallery that are going to be leaving before we're done here, so I want to take an opportunity to welcome to the public gallery, from Concord Christian Academy, 15 students under the direction of Ryan Kleinsasser. The group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. King).

We welcome you here today.

#### **Internationally Educated Nurses Accelerated Training Program**

**MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo):** Honourable Speaker, years of cuts and chronic underfunding by the PCs have led to serious staffing shortages in our health-care system.

Millions of dollars were spent on failed recruitment trips, all while they were firing nurses and treating health-care workers with disrespect. Meanwhile, many capable health-care workers living in Manitoba were never invited to join the front lines.

But, Honourable Speaker, that's about to change. Our government is making it easier for internationally educated nurses to work in our health-care system.

Can the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care tell the House more about the opportunities for these nurses and how our government is clearing a pathway for them?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I want to thank my friend from Tuxedo for that excellent question, and I want to thank my colleagues, the Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino), Minister of Advanced Education, the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (Mr. Moses) for the collaborative effort that they've played in making this happen.

Our government values the expertise of internationally educated health-care system—nurses, rather, in our health-care system. And that's why we're helping to bring more folks get access to our health-care system through an expedited innovative training program.

I'm really happy to say that the first cohort of IENs have already completed the program, and more are on the way.

If you live in Manitoba, if you've made Manitoba your home, and you have the skills to join the front lines, our government is going to make sure you have a pathway to practice, and we welcome you to our health-care team here in Manitoba.

#### **Tariffs on Manitoba Canola Growers KAP Recommendations to Government**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Just so everybody's aware, this is the third time I've been up asking an agriculture question. And I just—I wasn't going to ask a question today, but I had to.

Honourable Speaker, the Ag Minister yesterday had no answer even from his own—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** —colleague of what action this government has taken on the letter received from KAP dated February 25. In fact, let me table it, as the minister seems to be unaware.

What specific actions can you tell the canola growers you're doing to help them right now as they're losing confidence and huge money every day with this government's inaction?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** You know, it was great to have the KAP organization sit in my office yesterday after they sat in the gallery and we moved towards—I'm gathering—Honourable Speaker, I'm not gathering they—the critic is assuming that the Keystone agriculture producers have an issue with our government dealing with agriculture issues.

Well, I want to assure you we're very glad to see the chair or the president of the KAP organization be

appointed to be on the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) US mission trade to work.

So we're talking about communication, we're talking about co-operation and we're talking about team Canada, not—on team Manitoba—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

\* (14:30)

**MLA Bereza:** Honour—one of the actionable items from KAP is to provide the industry with accurate and up-to-date data on immediate and long-term effects of tariffs.

Now, how often are you providing this valuable data? Will you share this information with the House and all Manitobans? What are you doing to support producers with this data?

**The Speaker:** The honourable—just before I recognize the honourable First Minister, I remind the member from Portage la Prairie to direct his comments through the Chair.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I just want to thank Jill Verwey and KAP personally, on the record, for all the amazing work that they're doing to help with the US Trade Council and to co-ordinate a joint response to this trade for—trade war that we're fighting on two fronts. And thanks also to the amazing Ag Minister that we have in this province of Manitoba.

Now, one thing that I also want to say before we break for the week is to just return to quoting Shelly Glover once again. She returned to the media and said, quote: I do not believe that the PC party can recover. It certainly doesn't represent the conservative principles, values and ethics that I hold dear. End quote.

And then their former colleague, Kevin Klein said, and I quote: Shelly Glover's comments were excellent and she was absolutely correct. End quote.

So I just want to say, I don't know many—how many times I'll be able to say this, but on this one instance I agree with Shelly Glover and Kevin Klein.

**The Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

Order. Order.

## PETITIONS

### New Neepawa Health Centre

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I wish to prevent—or, present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Norma Rainkie, Stan Rainkie, Janice Bailey, Brian Bailey and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

\* (14:40)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Vanessa Finnimore, Gordon DuBus [*phonetic*] and Lillian Warburton and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the Clinical and Preventive Services Plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Darlene Miscavish, Paul Wellman, Marg Loracks [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, and the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks, and there

are over 14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic imaging procedure.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Darcy Fischer, A.E.A. Leigh, Don Smith-Harris and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC political-provincial government as part of the Clinical and Preventative Services Plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from adding diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically, the addition of a CT scanner.

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

\* (14:50)

(3) CT scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed, three-dimensional models of structures inside the body.

They perform critically—critical diagnostic procedures that support the diagnosis of—and treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these—sorry, that will be able to complete these important scans faster and with sharper and clearer images.

(4) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks and there are over one—14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic images procedures.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Glenn Wright, Bernice Baker and Brian H. Bailey and many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Karen Kilgore, Charles Morden, Lynne Johnston and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit

from added diagnostic machinery and equipment but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Kristin Tibbett, Doreen McLeod, Gladys Anderson and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

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

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

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

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

\* (15:00)

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we continue, I'll just remind all members reading out petitions that you are able to read up to the first three names on the petition.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Sylvia Feist [*phonetic*], Candace Dilling, Diane [*phonetic*] Evans and many more Manitobans.

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the House.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

(2) A new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of the Yellowstone highway, PTH 16. It will be nearly double the size of the existing hospital and will serve patients from this broader western Manitoba geographical area. CT scan—

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Shari Squires, Francis McCarty [*phonetic*], Sarah Nathram [*phonetic*] and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

\* (15:10)

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Lori Jean Levandosky, Holly Leanne Pankratz, Marilyn Soriano and many, many other Manitobans.

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Hector Swanson, Linda King, Darren Smith and hundreds of more Manitobans.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no further petitions, grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Could you please call second reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, and should that pass second reading, can you please call second reading of Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures).

**The Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved—it has been announced that we will move to second reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, and if that bill passes, we will move on to Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures).

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 2—The Provincial Court Amendment Act

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Administrator has been advised of this bill, and I table the message.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, that Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Administrator has been advised of the bill, and I table—the message has been tabled.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I am pleased to rise in the House today for second reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, also known as Keira's Law.

Bill 2 responds directly to calls from survivors of gender-based violence, many of whom showed incredible courage and resilience when they came and shared their stories with us here in committee last session.

I want to take some time to acknowledge and thank them for their contributions. I want to thank them for their years of work and advocacy on this issue, and I want to thank them for continuing to help us shape this bill and continue to work together on improving this legislation as we move forward.

In particular, I do want to acknowledge Dr. Jennifer Kagan-Viater, the mother of Keira Kagan, who I met with and I heard directly from about the importance of these changes and how introducing Keira's Law in Manitoba will help prevent these horrible acts of domestic violence and coercive control. Dr. Kagan-Viater is a remarkable person who's made an incredible difference, not only across the country but now here in the province of Manitoba. Her tireless efforts have already led to changes made federally in Ontario and, as we hope, very soon here in Manitoba as well.

I'd also be remiss if I didn't acknowledge two members of this Legislature who were instrumental in getting us to this point. Of course, our Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) and the MLA for Tyndall Park.

Minister of Families, for folks who've been in this Chamber for a while, will know very well, has been an advocate and a champion of this legislation and, in fact, brought forward similar legislation while we were in opposition and spoke to the need for judicial training, and, of course, that helped bring the issue first to our province and to the Legislature. Allowed us to debate and consider that, of course, without any success and any support from the members opposite.

Following that important work, the member for Tyndall Park also introduced her own private member's bill, which now we can proudly say we've looked at, we've built upon and we've added additional topic areas and a funding provision which makes the bill stronger and more effective. So I want to thank her for the collaboration and dedication that she's shown to this issue.

The bill that we have before us, honourable Speaker, will make amendments to The Provincial Court Act regarding the continuing education for provincial judges and for judicial justices of the peace.

\* (15:20)

At present, to be eligible for appointment as a provincial judge, an individual must undertake to participate in continuing education on sexual assault law and social context, which includes systematic racism and systematic discrimination.

The current legislation, however, does not address continuing education for judicial justices of the peace who perform a number of the responsibilities under the act. With the proposed amendments, candidates seeking appointment as a provincial judge or as a provincial judicial justice of the peace will be required to undertake to participate in continuing education on sexual assault law and social context, including systematic racism and systematic discrimination.

However, in addition to training—to that training, training will be required on these three new topics: intimate partner violence and coercive control and intimate partner and family relationships, and now, as well, the experience of Indigenous persons and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in the justice system and in our society more generally.

The proposed amendments build upon and expand the existing continuing education undertaking for prospective provincial court judges. The amendments are intended to increase public confidence in the criminal justice system by ensuring that those in 'decision-making' positions have awareness not only about sexual assault law and social context but also the important issues of intimate partner violence, coercive control in intimate partner and family relationships and the experiences of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in the justice system.

The chief judge will continue to have the authority to establish continuing education seminars for judges, and this will now also include additional authority to establish training for judicial justices of the peace. Should the chief justice—sorry, should the chief judge establish seminars on the topics that have been noted, the amendment's directed that the seminars should be established after appropriate consultation. The chief judge will continue to be required to report annually on any seminars held regarding these specified topics.

I want to acknowledge the work of the members of the judiciary, including, of course, the chief judge,

Chief Judge Rolston, for their commitment to judicial education and its continued improvement and enhancement. They've been absolutely wonderful partners, and I know that they will continue to be as we implement these additional resources and additional requirements for the judiciary. We know that they are always committed to ensuring that education is robust, and we feel that these will be additional resources and abilities for them to meet those goals.

We move to introduce this as—this legislation as a government bill, because we also wanted to ensure that funding was provided for continuing the education seminars in other sessions and to ensure that the funding that is provided does not lapse. This change will ensure that core education funding for these sessions can continue uninterrupted and that it ensures that this important education can continue regardless of which fiscal year it takes place.

We know that in the past, funds have lapsed. We know that this will effectively increase the amount of resources available to judges for this training, and so we're happy to make this change to support the important work that they've already undertaken.

I also, though, wanted to take just a moment, honourable Speaker, to directly address members opposite when it comes to this legislation. I want to point out that my critic, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen), referred to passing of the MLA for Tyndall Park's bill as his, quote, priority, in the last session.

But when we went ahead and brought forward this bill, which was, of course, seconded and supported by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) and which, in fact, enhances the work undertaken with regards to education, it was the members opposite who stood up and delayed and refused to expedite its passage in this Legislature.

This was after we heard from families; this was after survivors came to the Legislature to present their heartbreaking stories and their own personal testimonies as part of our public hearings. They heard the words of those survivors: that we needed to move quickly as a Legislature to pass this legislation. And yet members opposite stalled and refused to pass this legislation last fall when they had that opportunity.

So you have to ask yourself, honourable Speaker, what changed? What changed from this being a priority of the member for Brandon West to being something that he refused to even pass when asked by survivors?

Well, I can tell you we strengthened this bill in many ways. But a couple of them are important, we



know, in community and we know that it was important to address the experiences of Indigenous people and the experiences of the LGBTQIA community in this bill.

And so I ask, honourable Speaker, was it those additions? Was it the additions of that consideration of additional communities that gave members opposite pause? Is that the reason why a bill that otherwise is the same, is strengthened, adds more training, adds more resources, but simply addresses other issues that have—are fundamental to who we are as Manitobans—is that the reason that they had a change of heart in the last session?

I hope that's not the case. I'm often criticized for giving the opposition too much credit, but I hope they can right that wrong here today by ensuring a quick passage of this bill. And I implore them to remember the words that we heard from survivors: to put politics aside and to take this chance.

Like the advocates who have championed this legislation, we will continue to push for change. Our public safety strategy outlines numerous actions across our government that will take further support of survivors of gender-based violence, of coercive control, and to ensure that we are advancing reconciliation within the justice system.

I'm committed to working across government with all my colleagues, including the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), who's been such a strong champion on this, to accomplish this, and I thank her for her work.

I look forward to passing this legislation here today with support from all members, and let's ensure that Manitoba's criminal justice system is better able to address the diverse experiences of folks in our communities and to strengthen the important trust that we have in our justice system.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

### Questions

**The Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent 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.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** After that long, erroneous diatribe by this Minister of Justice, I am left with a question. The question is, why did his government not bring this bill to third reading during our last session so that it could have been voted on, made a priority and put forward so that this law could be in place today rather than being in here and debating it once again?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Honourable Speaker, the members opposite delayed, they filibustered, they refused to move this forward when they had the opportunity last fall. I'm surprised the member opposite is taking this track, but I hope this means that he's willing to move forward very quickly right now. We're happy to move this forward past second reading today.

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Knowing how crucial it is for the training of judicial—and judges and people in power that make decisions in the situations where children need extra care, can the member explain what kind of content he will be including in the training for judges and other professionals?

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Wiebe:** Members opposite will know that the independence of the judiciary is paramount in our system. We do not direct judges. We do not tell them how or what to do in terms of the training that they undertake. They are already undertaking a lot of this training.

What we simply are doing with this legislation is providing context about some of the priorities that we know are important in community and ensuring that we're working together with them to make sure they have the resources to provide that training to their members.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I'm just wondering if the minister can share with us or elaborate a little bit more. Has there been consideration to expand the training to include other employees or staff within the court systems?

**Mr. Wiebe:** It's a good question and I appreciate the member for asking it. We do have within the Department of Justice, through our Courts Division, numerous training programs that already apply to various staff and members of the courts.

It is an important topic and it is one that we continue to ensure that they have the tools needed and they have the training necessary to be a part and to be responsive to the needs in community. That's ongoing

training and we're always looking for opportunities to enhance and build on them.

**Mr. Balcaen:** I know my colleague, the member from Tyndall Park, spent hours and hours and hours of consultation on this. It was brought to committee and we listened to survivors who had said to us, pass this bill. The survivors asked us to do that. They said, put politics aside and pass this law.

Why did the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) fail to bring this forward last session so that we could be working within this law today?

**Mr. Wiebe:** I appreciate that in opposition, members can talk out of both sides of their mouth on a regular basis and not get called out on it.

But it was this member, specifically, that denied leave day after day after day when the House leader asked for this to pass in the last session. Then, if he just wants to note the number of this bill; this is Bill 2. In other words, this is the first bill that was then brought in the new session here to—for passage.

Why is he continuing to make—to not be truthful—to be—I understand there are certain words we can't use, honourable Speaker, but I think this member opposite has a lot to answer for.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'd ask that you withdraw that comment and apologize.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I apologize and withdraw the comment.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** My question would be for the member opposite. And I was at the committee meeting where all—everybody came to speak and the women came to speak and it was admirable and so brave of many of them to share their stories.

We also heard from the judicial side of it as well, and they did say that they decided who gets what training they take and what they get to decide to take as education.

So my question would be: How is this going to change anything? How is this going to make them take the training? Because this training is crucial. Women don't—they're not—they don't understand. They don't see the signs of abuse. They don't see the signs of the children getting abused. How is this going to change anything?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, again, we know that this will make a difference. This continues to, you know, spark the conversation and further the conversation when it comes to the kind of training that our judges are getting.

As I said, we're, you know, specifically in this bill, ensuring that the money that's provided isn't lapsed. And, of course, we're providing more money to support our training.

The other element that I'll just note for members opposite is that JJPs are now included in this legislation. They do a lot of this work in practice in our court system, and so by giving them these additional tools for training, we know that this is going to make a difference for survivors.

**Ms. Byram:** I would like to ask the members opposite—we know the time and the investment that the member from Tyndall Park put into her initial bill 209, Keira's Law.

And I'm just wondering—I know she met with lots of stakeholders and victims as well. I'm just wondering if the minister could share with us here in the House who he consulted in his bill.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, again, I do want to give a lot of kudos to the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), who has done incredible work to continue to push this issue forward, and why it was so important for us to listen to the consultations and the work that she had done and then build on that. And so I'm proud to be able to bring Bill 2 here.

Of course, I—as I mentioned, I spoke with Dr. Jennifer Kagan-Viater, who, you know, single-handedly, I would suggest—she might disagree—but I would say her drive, her knowledge and her passion for this has not only made changes at the federal level, but provincially and many jurisdictions, and now here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Balcaen:** Speaking of talking out both sides of your mouth, I actually witnessed some of that back-door talk here in this Chamber when not only the Justice Minister but the Premier (Mr. Kinew) sat back behind me and talked with the member from Tyndall Park and said, you must remove this so that we can advance our agenda on this.

We could have voted on this, and this could be sitting before us right now as law, but the Minister of Justice decided to block that opportunity.

So, will he maybe move the motion to bring back the law that was introduced by the member from Tyndall Park?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, again, Honourable Speaker, we do work across the aisle and, of course, we do work with, in this case, the member for Tyndall Park, who did great work, but saw the value in bringing this forward

as a government bill, because now we can add the funding, we can add the supports and we can broaden out the intent of the bill.

But again, you know, I think it's important to maybe just really focus in on, why does the member opposite now all of a sudden have an issue with this bill and not the other bill? What did we add? Well, of course, we added provisions around support for Indigenous communities and for the LGBTQIA community. And so why all of a sudden does he have a problem with this bill and not the other ones, if those are the two elements that we added?

**Mrs. Hiebert:** So the member opposite mentioned that there will be special dollars earmarked specifically for the training for Keira's Law, now for Bill 2.

How will he be following those dollars? How will he know those dollars are actually being spent for the training for the judges specifically for intimate partner violence and for this cause specifically? And will he be monitoring, will he be following that?

How does he plan to ensure that all of those making the decisions in our children's safety are going to be put first, before reunification and custody, that we start changing the way things have been and making it more safe for children?

**Mr. Wiebe:** No, and it's an important question, an important topic, but just to clarify, again, we as government don't direct how those dollars are spent. That is the decision of the judiciary. We trust in their, of course, expert work in ensuring that the education fund is spent and spent in the priorities of the judiciary.

What I will say is that by allowing the money to not lapse, which is the fundamental change that's happening with this bill, we know that that fund can grow and it can be better used by our judiciary. And so we're very proud to be able to bring that monetary backing.

That's, of course, only something that can be done through a government bill rather than a private member's bill, which again is one of the main reasons why we thought it was important to bring this forward in this way and to get this passed as quickly as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The honourable minister—honourable member for Agassiz.

**Ms. Byram:** Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker, for that title.

I would like to just ask the member opposite, with such sensitive issues and topics involved in Bill 2, I'm just wondering, there's very important components to training, perhaps, and discussing some of these very sensitive issues.

I'm just wondering if he can, if—sorry, if the member can share what content would be covered in some of the required training.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, again, that's very much at the discretion of our judges.

\* (15:40)

What I will say is that there is, of course, public reporting on the work that judges do, and so it's certainly something that I—you know, happy to work along with the member as we continue to see this utilized and this training roll out for judges across the province.

But, you know, this just gives additional tools, additional resources, and that's why it's important, not only move quickly as we said, to support survivors, but to do it in collaboration and conjunction with the important work that our judiciary's already doing when it comes to training.

**Mr. Balcaen:** You know, I just thought I would let the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) know, which I'm sure he's well aware, is I've spent literally thousands of hours with victims of domestic violence, listening to their stories and navigating the system. So I strongly support anything that we can do to help this.

But what troubles me is some of the questions and rhetoric that this minister is putting on the record here when he spent those same thousands of hours as a political junkie understanding how processes work.

So why would he not have just brought these amendments forward? Why would he be not just brought these amendments forward and asked for a change—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I don't know if I'd call myself a political junkie, but I do know the difference between a government bill and a private member's bill.

And what government bills do is that they can allow for additional funding to be allocated for an important topic and that's what we've done in this bill. So the member opposite, hopefully, is learning as he's going along here.

What I would ask him is, if he took—if he could go back to those thousands of hours that he spent and those victims that he's dealt with in his life, and could he answer for why he filibustered, why he blocked, why he refused leave when we asked for this bill to pass quickly in this Legislature? Can he answer to them what he—what would he say to them of why he wouldn't move forward on bills—on a bill that strengthens and enhances support for survivors in our system?

**Mrs. Hiebert:** I just would like to ask the member opposite if he's consulted with the judicial body that was at the committee meeting, and how he has—like, how will he bring about a different rhetoric than that's what's been happening for many years?

In those situations where women are in court and they're not being heard and they're being exhumed, the old ways that many, many—in years past and things have really changed, we know that when it comes to intimate partner violence and—how is he going to make a difference and how is it going to change? Is he willing to work with them to make sure that they and our government and all bodies are on the same page so that we can change the stereotype, the—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, the member opposite is exactly right. It is about working together.

And what I will say is that one of the best, you know—one of the best ways that our system works here in Manitoba is that we do invite the public in, that we do have that public hearing process. And I know that the judiciary, that judges were—as you said, were monitoring and were participating, they heard directly from survivors.

And I—so I think that voice is so important, and that's why it's important to pass this bill. Because we know that, you know, we're listening, we want to act, and by passing this bill, we can actually make a difference and they can listen—continue to listen directly from survivors.

**The Deputy Speaker:** And with that, time for debate has come to a close. The floor is now—or, sorry.

Time for questions has come to a close.

### Debate

**The Deputy Speaker:** The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** I appreciate the opportunity to once again get up and speak to a bill that talks about Keira's Law and the fact that we need

this sort of protection for the victims that we have out there.

I will bring forward, honourable Deputy Speaker, that I don't believe that this Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) or this Families Minister or any of the people on that side of the House would agree with that. And if they did, they simply could have voted for this, brought this forward last session, and we wouldn't be here talking about this and debating it once more.

The member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) brought a sound and solid bill forward for consideration. But because of the failed House leader in this—the failed Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), in this not getting the proper work through and because of the ego of the Justice Minister, who wanted to tout his abilities to bring laws forward, they were the ones that blocked the opportunity for us to actually have this law in place today, protecting victims of violence, protecting victims of domestic violence, of coercive control and of all of the different areas that this bill will cover.

It's shameful, honourable Deputy Speaker. It is absolutely shameful, and I'm sure each and every one of them should do some serious soul searching on this and really ask themselves: Why don't we respect the victims? Because that is exactly what happened. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) and Minister of Justice took a very sound legislation, one that was spoken to at committee for a very long time by passionate people, by survivors of domestic violence. They were very strong to come forward and talk about what they had experienced. And now, because this government, the sitting government of today, did not bring that to third reading in this House—every single one of us in this House, I would hope, would've voted yes to that legislation. But instead, no, they blocked it so that the ego of the Minister of Justice could come forward and bring this law into place. It is absolutely shameful.

You know, I have not been in politics my whole life. As a matter of fact, I remained apolitical until I made a run for politics in 2023, and so I've been in here for a very short time, unlike the Minister of Justice who's been embedded in this system for years and years and years.

But, you know, what I've learned very quickly here is that whenever there is a bill that's put forward, then you can ask for an amendment to that bill. So if it was so very important, as the Minister of Justice likes to say—he likes to say how important this was—why did he not just bring forward an amendment to bring in all of these areas and then a new bill to bring

in the financial pieces? That would've been the proper thing to do. That would've been something that, you know, a respectful person would have done to make sure that the victims that we have today are protected.

You know, I spoke many times, many times, with the member from Tyndall Park, and I have absolute respect and admiration for her bringing this forward, the collaborative approach that she took on this, the fact that she consulted with hundreds and hundreds of people. The day she introduced the bill, and I'm looking up in the gallery, she had a large component of victims and advocates here within our Chamber to support her introduction of the bill. When we went to committee, there was heart-wrenching testimony that brought forward by survivors, by victims, by people that had experienced this justice system as well as advocates on the judge and the Law Society side.

So taking this away from a hard-working woman within this Chamber was unbelievable, honourable Deputy Speaker. And, really, it's just taking credit for the hard work that was put into place. It could've been a copy and paste, really, from the member from Tyndall Park's bill into this bill. And, really, the work was done, let's face it, by the member from Tyndall Park. I was very, very proud to second this motion that was introduced in bill 209 at that time. I was very proud to do that and make sure that this got brought forward. But, again, it was blocked by this government.

\* (15:50)

It could have been very simple, honourable Deputy Speaker, to bring this law forward, and again, we wouldn't be here today.

And they talk about wasting government time, they talk about filibustering, and they talk about blocking stuff. Is that not hypocritical? Is that not hypocrisy at its greatest level, when really, this could have been done back in December; this would have been done and on the books, and right now, it's not. And here we are debating it again. We'll have to wait until this becomes law down the road.

And you know what? It's not us that suffers. It's not your political gain for anybody. It's not this minister's ego that suffers. You know what it is? It's the victims; it's the people out there that are victims of this crime that we could have been protecting right now.

But because the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and anybody else that wants to stand in

front of this and not have brought it to third reading in this House, it's shameful. It is absolutely shameful.

You know, when we look at the harm that this has done, I want to talk about, actually, this bill that's brought forward now. And again, I will say publicly, and I will say here in this Chamber, that I support Keira's Law, and I support bringing this forward.

You know, I almost want to say that with all of the work that was done by the member from Tyndall Park and the hours and hours spent, I almost would like to call this Cindy's law just because it is so spectacular that she put in all of this work and efforts and everything else—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

We can't refer to other members by their names. We can refer to them by their ministerial portfolio or their constituency.

**Mr. Balcaen:** I sincerely apologize for that faux pas. I should have said: we should call this the member from Tyndall Park's bill. And it really is, because of all the work that she put into this.

So let's talk about why this is needed. This is needed to protect individuals that are out there that are facing domestic violence, domestic abuse, intimate partner violence—that Manitoba is one of the highest rates of incidence for this crime.

And, really, probably 80 per cent—I believe the statistics are, or greater—people do not report this crime. Why? Because they're embarrassed, because they don't want to go through the court system, because they don't want to face the fact that they have to be revictimized again and again and again.

And that's exactly what is going to happen when this is brought back to committee down the road, is that the victims that came forward—the survivors—will be victimized yet once again, because they will have to bring their voice and their testimony forward. You know, again, shameful because that is one of the things that should be paramount, is protecting the victims when it comes to these laws and for the issues that they face because of intimate partner violence and, specifically, coercive control.

And coercive control, honourable Deputy Speaker, is—really, is an act or a pattern of acts of either an assault or threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm or punish or frighten their victim. Coercive and controlling behaviour is the heart of domestic abuse and intimate partner violence.

And, really, it is extremely difficult for these individuals to go through this. You know, the process that they've already gone through, they've either reported this to a counsellor or a friend or a family member to—pardon me—to make the first steps, and then they'll move forward again to getting the courage and the absolute bravery to come forward and report this to law enforcement, and when it is reported to law enforcement, you know, again they have to retell their story. They have to retell their story again in court, and the presiding judge has to listen to all of the evidence and give his or her decision at the end of this.

So I really support this for the victims that have to go through this, the victims that, you know, have gone through this. And I hope that this bill, when we move forward on it, will actually help future victims and make sure that justice is served for them as they move forward, and that not only is it served for them, but it's seen to have been served by them, because that's a very important aspect when it comes to the law, is justice must not only be served, but it must be seen to have been served.

But one of the things that I've spoke about in this Chamber, honourable Speaker—Deputy Speaker, is that justice delayed is justice denied. And that's worth repeating: Justice delayed is justice denied. And this bill, the bill that was brought forward, bill 209, by member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) could have been in law today. I don't know how many more times I can stress that. It could have been in law today.

But because it was delayed, because it was not called forward when we had the opportunity, when we had the opportunity in December to bring this law forward, this government failed to do so. It would've been a unanimous decision across all of this House, and we would've had this law in place right now.

So, you know, it's difficult for me not to keep coming back to that because of the work and the effort that was put in by the member for Tyndall Park and the efforts that she did with—not only in this Chamber, but the consultation process that she took, the hours that she spent, hours and hours having people in here and setting up, having to endure listening to the survivors. And, really, that has impact on people that listen to these stories. And, you know, I will apologize to her on behalf of our team, apology to the member from Tyndall Park that this did not go through, and I want to state publicly and thank her for her work that she did on that and the time that she spent.

You know, I think it should be noted that this was brought forward and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe)

erred on this. It was brought forward first by the member from Tyndall Park before it was brought forward by members from the NDP. So it's important to note that and continue to talk about all of these great items.

So let's talk about the judiciary, honourable Deputy Speaker, and, you know, some of the concerns that were brought forward by the judiciary through their lawyers at committee talked about their issues with putting the independence of the judiciary into disrepute or challenging the independence of the judiciary.

So, if I could talk about—a little bit—a statement that was made by Susan Dawes, who's the Provincial Judges Association of Manitoba—represents them—and in her statement she said: So I'm not here to speak today against judicial education. In fact, quite the contrary.

\* (16:00)

The concerns of PJAM—which is the Provincial Judges Association of Manitoba—about bill 209—which then was the member from Tyndall Park's bill—are these: The principles of judicial independence require that control of judicial education rests with the judicial branch of government. Judicial education is a necessary component of judicial independence, and it must be kept up to the chief judge in consultation with the judiciary as a whole to plan and 'implement'—implement judicial education.

So in speaking to bill 8 back in 2022, we made the point that while the legislation was pre-emptive, in other words in the sense of not directing or requiring the chief judge, the relevant sections nonetheless pose a risk of being misconstrued as a direction. That risk is reinforced when there are additions to the list coming only two years later.

So I must ask, did the Minister of Justice actually listen during this consultation period, during this time when people brought concerns forward, when it said the risk is reinforced when there are additions to this list coming only two years later? Not only were those additions a concern to the judiciary, now we have a number of other requirements cascaded onto this that are not part of the original Keira's Law that has been adopted nationally, in Ontario and in other jurisdictions.

So, my concern is when we add on additional parts to a law that is impacting the judiciary and their independence, that is a concern because we should all be concerned about making sure that in our country, that

we have fair and impartial judges and that their impartiality is not questioned.

So, honourable Deputy Speaker, listening to the victims that brought forward this, they all spoke so eloquently about what they had endured as survivors, what they had gone through. We listened to many, many survivors who brought their stories forward. And, again, I thank you for that. I know from experience how very, very vulnerable you must have made yourselves this day to bring this forward.

And so, you know, I listened with a heart that felt so concerned for the people that brought this forward. And I know there was people within our committee that were moved to tears, and rightfully so, when they listened to this, what individuals had to go through.

And after hearing all of these remarks, I was hopeful and really, you know, I thought that we had moved a bill forward that was going to have significant impact back when we did committee on the member from Tyndall Park's bill, bill 209. And the victims, they said, put politics aside. The people that spoke to us, the ones that said, look it, we've experienced this. We just need this bill passed.

They wanted us to put politics aside and the hypocrisy, today, to listen to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) say that we did not bring this forward. It was a simple fact: it could have been brought forward after committee for third reading, could have received royal assent, and then away we go.

So, again, here we are debating this bill. And I'm happy to put words on the record for the victims and make sure that they understand that this side of the House, our government—I know the leader of the Liberal Party, the MLA for Tyndall Park, sure were willing to vote yea to this, to make sure that bill 209 passed, that it made history in Manitoba and that we were now working under this bill.

But the government of today stopped that process. So the victims need to know that, the ones who asked us at committee, who told us in all sincerity, look, let's cross party lines; let's make sure that, you know, we do what is right—do the right thing for the right reason.

And you know what? I was willing to put party politics aside. The Liberal member was willing to put those aside, but unfortunately, the members opposite just couldn't find it in their hearts to do that and to support the victims of intimate partner violence and those that have suffered so grievously because of acts done by individuals that perpetrate these crimes, honourable Deputy Speaker.

So I know that the members opposite are probably wishing that they would have just come forward and said, let's bring this bill together; let's be non-partisan; and let's make sure that we bring appropriate laws that matter to Manitobans and that protect Manitobans.

But shamelessly, they blocked it, and again, it's because the ego and the politics played a huge role in this. You know, making sure that the member from Tyndall Park withdrew her bill and then, you know, asking her, would you please sponsor this for our side. And, of course, she second it, and rightfully so, because she really wants to see this bill pass. She has spent hours and hours and hours making sure that consultation was done, that the I's were dotted, that the T's were crossed, that this reflected not only national policy but other provincial policies and looking at what was best for Manitoba.

So again, congratulations to the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), who really brought this forward. I would like to give her a round of applause again and thank her for this work.

Again, going back to the judges and the chief judge, they've made it clear that they do not want judicial independence trampled on. And it was made clearer by their lawyer that represents them that adding additional points to look at really could compromise their judicial independence.

And when we look at that compromising stuff, we certainly do not want Manitobans and particularly victims to have to even ever—ever—question judicial independence, because I know how important it is, because they're the tryers of fact. They are the ones that have to listen to the evidence, to absorb everything and then articulately, accurately and judicially make their findings within the court.

So, you know, obviously this was another one of the failed listening tours of this NDP government, listening at committee, because they failed to listen. They failed to listen to what was already asked. And I'm sure now, Ms. Dawes will again have to come back and state the position of the judiciary and say, again, why is this Minister of Justice so determined to trample on judicial independence. Why does he want to insert himself in judicial independence through—he knows he can't do it personally or through that area, but now he's trying to do it through legislation and placing the—democracy in question, making sure that our judiciary is painted into a corner, if you will, honourable Deputy Speaker, and that should never happen.

On this side of the House, we respect law, we respect law enforcement, we respect the judiciary, we respect the whole area of that. And we don't bring forward legislation that will be difficult for people that respect this system, as well, to look at.

\* (16:10)

So, again, let's talk about what happens in some of the stuff that was brought forward by the judiciary. And again, there was a whole area from the Manitoba Bar Association and their representative that spoke to this as well. And I know I only have a very short time left, but again, this will show that justice is to be blind, that this Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) shouldn't be deaf to this.

So, here is what the Manitoba Bar Association legal representative had to say: An independent judiciary is fundamental to maintaining a public confidence in the judicial system. And I'm here to address bill 209, which of course was the member from Tyndall Park's most excellent bill that was brought forward in this House last session, that we could actually have in law today had the right thing been done.

It goes on to continue saying: and the concerns that the Manitoba Bar Association has about the impact it'll have on the independence of the judiciary and public confidence in the administration of justice. There's three specific areas that I intend to address: the first is judicial education, and she goes on to say, I know Ms. Dawes has previously and aptly addressed that, so I'll be very short with respect to that particularly-particular area. I will note that such education is already provided by the courts to judges and justices of the peace.

Our position is that it is unwarranted to require the courts to use the limited court resources available for education and training to put more emphasis on specific areas of the law when some judges may already be experts or have considerable experience in those areas, but yet, are required more training perhaps in other areas.

So with this, honourable Deputy Speaker, once again, it's called upon to make sure that we don't overload our judiciary and to put them in a seemingly non-win situation as we move forward through this law.

So now the judicial independence has been spoken to twice at committee, and I'll note that the Minister of Justice I'm sure was well aware of what was said because he was at that committee and he spoke about—or, sorry—and he would have heard all of these issues

that were brought forward by the individuals that spoke at committee.

So, tone deaf to what's required in the judiciary as well as deaf to what justice requires.

I'm going to end this, once more thanking the member from Tyndall Park for bringing this forward, and really, I'm happy to support her bill, although it is now a government bill.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** On House business?

**The Deputy Speaker:** On House business.

**MLA Pankratz:** Honourable Deputy Speaker, could you please canvass the House for leave to include a list of names in today's Hansard immediately following the member's statement made today by the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin)?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I'm here to speak this morning—or this afternoon, sorry—on a very serious matter. I appreciate the opportunity to speak and share, to bring awareness on Keira's Law and now Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

Intimate partner violence is a serious, widespread issue in Canada and Manitoba, affecting individuals across all demographics. Intimate partner violence includes physical, emotional and psychological abuse, often with devastating long-term consequences for victims.

In Manitoba, rates of domestic violence remain alarmingly high, with many individuals, especially women and children, suffering in silence. The impact of intimate partner violence extends beyond immediate harm, leading to long-term physical and mental health challenges and can create generational cycles of trauma.

I want to thank the member from Tyndall Park for being the first to bring this law forward in Manitoba. I'm very honoured to have her as a colleague. During committee process for Keira's Law, we listened to many parents, mothers, sharing their difficult experiences, and the member from Tyndall Park was at the table.

Thank you for each one of you that shared that day. That was brave, and we heard you.

We also listened to other organizations' leaders involving—involved in partner—intimate partner violence.



We also heard from Keira's mother. She shared her tragic story and the loss of her daughter and how she is now fighting to bring about change so no other parents or child needs to go through the things that her and her daughter, Keira, have had to go through, in the end losing her daughter to traumatic intimate partner violence. She explained how important this legislation is, educating judges and those making decisions on children's welfare.

Canada has made strides in addressing intimate partner violence through policies, support services and awareness campaigns, but there is still so much work to be done. Efforts must include increased support for victims, better access to resources like shelters and counselling and stronger legal protections for those at risk. That's why we're here today, to try to protect those at risk.

*Mr. Logan Oxenham, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Moreover, we need to challenge societal norms that perpetuate violence. We need to educate the public and ensure that law enforcement and judicial systems are equipped to protect survivors effectively.

Only through concerted effort can we hope to reduce intimate partner violence and create safer communities and to protect our children and have their safety come first before reunification of families and custody battles.

Keira was a young girl whose tragic death highlighted the urgent need for changes in how the judicial system handles domestic violence in child custody cases. Keira's mother, whom she lived with, was a survivor of intimate partner violence. And despite the clear history of abuse, Keira's safety was not prioritized in custodial decisions. Keira's mother, deeply impacted by her daughter's loss, has since become a powerful advocate for change, supporting the introduction of Keira's Law.

This proposed legislation aims—and Bill 2—this proposed legislation aims to ensure that any history of domestic violence is carefully considered in custody and access cases, protecting children from potential dangerous situations. Keira's mother's bravery and commitment to justice have inspired the push for this law, with the goal of preventing other children from facing the same tragic fate.

Keira's Law and Bill 2—now called Bill 2 in Manitoba—is a proposed piece of legislation aimed at preventing domestic violence and ensuring the safety of children during custodial and access arrangements. It was named in memory of Keira. Keira's—whose life with

tragic death, highlighted the devastating consequences of domestic violence and abuse being overlooked in child-care custody cases.

\* (16:20)

The law focuses on ensuring that any history of domestic violence is thoroughly considered in every situation. Those making the decisions—what happens with our children—that they can be educated and know and be able to pick out and see a situation that could be damaging and possibly take the life of a child or a mother.

Prioritizing safety and well-being of children over other factors. We need Keira's law, Bill 2, because far too often children's safety is compromised in custody disputes when domestic violence is not properly considered. Many children have been put in situations where they are exposed to ongoing abuse or even harm because of court's failure to assess the danger posed by an abusive parent. The law would require that any history at all be reported and taken into account, that that child will not be put in harm's way, and the mother as well.

This law is crucial because it recognizes the severe impact domestic violence can have on children. It calls for protective member—'measures' be put in place, allowing children to grow up in safe, supportive environments, free from trauma and abuse. This law will help shift the focus in custody cases from simple parental disputes to the vital issue of safety for children.

Ensuring no child is put at risk in any family situation, no—or, sorry—in the name of reunification or access to rights. In essence, Keira's Law is an essential step protecting vulnerable children, making sure their safety is always a top priority. And I will say that throughout my whole speech today: children need to be—children's safety needs to always be a top priority.

*The Speaker in the Chair*

To input it—to implement Keira's Law, or Bill 2, in Manitoba, we must first focus on creating a clear and structured framework for law—for the law's goals. Keira's Law aims to ensure that all children and families in the province are protected, especially children.

The first step would be to raise awareness among lawmakers, social services and the general public about the importance of this law and the specific issues it addresses. Education on domestic violence and its impact on children is crucial, as well as

ensuring professionals understand how to identify signs of abuse and intervene appropriately. We need to educate. We need to educate so they know the warning signs and they can intervene.

Next, we need to work with local authorities, including law enforcement and the judiciary and child-welfare agencies, to create training programs that focus on Keira's Law principles. These professionals must be equipped to screen for abuse in custody disputes and make decisions that prioritize the safety of children above all else. If they don't know what they're looking for, how can they help those children and know that they're in a dangerous position?

Bill 2 is so crucial to implementation of the desperately needed education for those influential positions of judges and law enforcement. I can't say that often enough where children and family are concerned.

Additionally, we must push for the establishment of support systems for families, including resources for both victims of domestic violence and the accused as well, ensuring the process is fair but uncompromising when it comes to child safety. It's important that all parties involved understand that the best interest is—of the child is paramount.

We also need to push for the law's enforcement, ensuring that Keira's Law is not just passed but actively upheld, with penalties for non-compliance. And I did ask this—the member opposite how they would be taking and dealing with, and he didn't have an answer for me.

But, again, I'm going to say this again, that we need to make sure that the education is upheld with penalties of non-compliance. If we don't stand behind the changes that we make here in this room, how are we going to make sure that we—that it gets implemented out there in the world around us and in our province?

By implementing steps, we can work towards a Manitoba where children's safety is a—prioritized and families are given the support they need to break free from the cycle of abuse.

We need to continue to do better. We need to continue to bring awareness, and we need to increase supports for women's shelters, increase education for the younger generations coming and to stop—and the other—everybody needs to be educated—to stop the cycle of intimate partner violence. We need to stop it.

We need to stop it in our province of Manitoba and across our country.

In Manitoba, shelters and support services for women and girls experiencing intimate partner violence are vital resources for those fleeing abusive relationships. For many women, these services offer a safe haven where they can find shelter, support and hope for rebuilding their lives.

However, when it comes to Indigenous women and girls, there are unique challenges that require a tailored approach. Indigenous women face disproportionately high rates of intimate partner violence. We need to look at this and make a change. Shelters for Indigenous women and girls in Manitoba must provide culturally appropriate services, recognizing the need for healing that honours traditional practices and community-based approaches.

Many Indigenous women feel more comfortable accessing services that reflect their cultural values, offering a blend of modern support with elements of Indigenous healing, such as ceremonies and cultural teachings. We need to set them up for success. We need to support those programs. Indigenous-led shelters such as one located in Winnipeg are an example of how culturally safe spaces can provide much-needed support.

For all women in Manitoba, shelters offer essential services, including emergency housing, counselling, legal advice, advocacy and the assistance of transitional—transitioning into dependent living. These services help women regain control of their lives, providing a pathway to safety and security, which then helps their children to have that same pathway of safety and security.

And that's why we're here today, because we want to ensure the safety of children. However, despite the invaluable role shelters play, there is still much work to be done to ensure that these services are accessible, adequately funded and equipped to meet the diverse needs of all women, particularly Indigenous women and women in rural communities.

We have a beautiful shelter in some rural communities, and many, many of those beds, there's no way—there's no space in those beds for those women. They're full every night. We're not doing enough. We're not doing enough. We need—this needs to change and we need to do better.

To truly address intimate partner violence in Manitoba, we must continue to invest in shelters and support systems that offer not only protection but also

the resources needed for healing and empowerment of these women so that they can have safe and—homes for their children.

We must ensure these services are—sorry, accessible, culturally appropriate and inclusive of all women and girls so they can live free from violence and fear.

I want to take a moment to talk about a specific shelter in my community. I want to talk a moment about Genesis House, a vital resource for women and children in rural Manitoba who are fleeing—sorry, fleeing domestic violence.

Genesis House is more than just a shelter. It's a lifeline for many individuals who are seeking safety, support and the opportunity to rebuild their lives. Located in Manitoba, Genesis House provides a safe haven for women and their children who are experiencing intimate partner violence or abuse, offer them a secure environment where they can heal and regain control of their lives.

\* (16:30)

Their beds, they've got 11—sorry, they've got five beds for women and 11 beds for children in Genesis House, and currently they are full every night. And there's women coming from all over the province to Genesis House. We don't have enough. We need more shelter beds for women that need to escape violent homes. We can do better. We can do better for our children and we can do better for the women that are in these situations.

Last year—or, sorry—last year, there was a tragic—tragic—situation that happened in Carman, which is very close by where we live and Genesis House is. And in talking with the organizers from Genesis House, they said they had never received so many phone calls from women needing a place to go because it showed them the dangers of their possibility of this happening, this tragedy happening to them. And women need that confidence to know that if they are in a place where they need to escape quickly, there is a place for them. And, currently, there's no place for them; the beds are full.

Genesis House founded with the understanding that domestic violence affects not only individuals who are directly targeted, but their children, their families and their communities. Its mission is to support women and children who are escaping abusive relationships by offering them a safe place to stay as well as a range of services that help them address emotional, psychological, physical effects of abuse that they'd experienced.

I would like to encourage the current government to consult with Genesis House and those that work there and that help those women every day, to consult with them, talk to them so that you can know—so those that are making decisions for these mothers and children in the judicial system—so that they can know what to look for in a situation.

When the mother's begging and pleading for help in a courtroom, how—like, what kind of things do they need to look for so that they can see that this is urgent and it could be life or death for this woman and her children? I'd encourage that. People who specialize in helping women that need these help—this help in these shelters, that you would consult with them because they're the ones who work with these women and children every day. We need to make sure that we protect them.

The shelter's work goes beyond providing roof over their heads. It's about offering them hope and a future from violence. One of the core services Genesis House offers is emergency shelter, which we discussed. When women and children leave an abusive relationship, they often find themselves in a vulnerable and precarious situation, often going back to where they were because they have no place to go. Genesis House provides a secure environment where they can stay without fear of their abuser finding them.

The shelter is staffed by professionals who are trained to offer support and assistance tailored to each individual's needs. They provide a variety of resources, including access to food, clothing and personal-care items, ensuring that women and children who come to Genesis House have their basic needs met while they focus on rebuilding their lives.

In addition to emergency shelter, Genesis House offers counselling services, mental health support. Many women who have experienced domestic violence carry deep emotional and psychological scars. Genesis House provides counselling to help them address the trauma they've endured, regain their sense of self-worth and build the strength they need to move forward. The shelter also offers group therapy, giving women the chance to connect with others who have experienced similar situations, share their stories and offer mutual support.

That's one thing I want to just comment on. During committee, when we had all these women that were just so brave and sharing their stories, you could just see the support with each other. You could just see how encouraged they were by having other women around them that were going through similar situa-

tions and sharing similar situations, so that they know that they're not alone, that they know that there's others as well.

And part of that knowledge and sharing of their situations together helps get rid of the stigma, because many women don't want to be addressed or known that that's what their life has been like. It's an—it's a shameful thing; we—women think—we think it's a shameful thing, I should say, as a woman. But it's not. It's not a shameful thing. It is something that happens to women across this country, in every community.

And we just need to know that we are—I want every woman to know that we're here to support you. Cry out for help, and we will—I encourage everybody just to hear that cry and know that cry and step into that position of help and support for anybody who needs that help.

In addition to the emergency shelters and the counselling services, another crucial service provided by Genesis House is advocacy, which is what we're doing today. We're advocating for women and children who need that support. We're advocating for extra education for judicial bodies, for judges.

And I want to encourage anyone who's making those decisions where children are concerned and there's custody and there's different situations like that, I encourage you to educate yourself. Step out and take initiative to do that. Don't wait for you—don't wait to be told you have to, but do it because you know it's the right thing to do and because we have an—a problem; it's an issue, it's widespread across our country and across our province. We need to stop intimate partner violence now.

Navigating the legal system, especially in situations leaving—involving domestic violence, that's one of the big things that Genesis House does. And it can be overwhelming and 'intimidating' for women and with children especially. They're busy, they're running around, they're feeling nobody's hearing them and they don't feel safe. There's—they're hopeless. We need to change that, and Genesis House advocates for those women.

Genesis House offers advocacy services to help women with legal matters, such as restraining orders, child custody issues and navigating complexities of the justice system. The goal is to empower these women, giving them the tools the need to stand up for themselves and their children.

I don't know if anybody else here has had to go through that, but I personally have had to go through

custody battles with my children when they were little. I've gone through situations where there was dangerous situations for me and my children. It is not an easy place to be. We need to make it easier for women to access the supports they need and to be heard by everybody. They deserve to be heard and respected.

Genesis House also provides long-term support for women and children transitioning into independent living. The journey doesn't end once they leave the shelter. Many survivors of domestic violence need ongoing support to ensure that they are rebuild—able to rebuild their lives in a safe and stable environment.

Shelters provide programming that help them find housing, secure employment and access to further counselling and educational services to help them start to rebuild their lives. These programs are designed to offer long-term solutions and help survivors regain their independence, giving them the opportunity to thrive and not just survive.

One of the most important aspects of shelters' work is the commitment to addressing the needs of the children who have witnessed and experienced domestic violence. The trauma of witnessing abuse can have long-term effects on children's health, both mentally and emotionally. Shelters have a job to do and they do so much, and I just want to say thank you to all front-line workers who work in shelters with women.

I want to just shout out everybody because I know this is a big, big scope of people helping women, and I just want to say thank you. Your work is so incredibly crucial and important to every single woman and child.

The trauma of witnessing abuse can have long-term effects on children. We need to address that, we need to protect children from that. Programs specializing for children, including counselling, recreational activities and educational supports, help these children to process trauma they have experienced, build resilience, and regain a sense of stability and safety.

\* (16:40)

That is why the education of those that are making these decisions in court—and judges—that's why it's so important for them to know and see and know what the triggers are and can see that—the actual—what's really happening, because those children will have to go back and live through those traumas over and over again, and no child should ever have to do that. It's time for us to step in and make a change.

While Genesis House has made significant strides women and children in—for women and children in Manitoba, the work is not over; it's far from over. Domestic violence continues to be a pervasive issue, and there is more women and children that need support than we have supports available.

That's why shelters who play an active role in advocating for policy changes, why legislators like the member from Tyndall Park, are stepping out for—to try to bring policy forward because we have a desire, and we know it needs to change; we know this needs to change, and we're all on the same page across the aisle. We all support this.

That's why we—they—we have an active role in advocating for policy changes and increased funding, and we need to increase funding for services that address domestic violence by raising our voices. We are—all need to work together to ensure that all survivors have access to support they need to live free of abuse.

I want to say thank you to everybody in this room because this is such a desperate, desperate situation across our country. And I know we talk about it, we bring it up, but we need to do more than just talk. We need to act. And I'm going to challenge every single legislator across our country, in our province of Manitoba, we need to act. We need to change the situation. We need to make tangible, real changes.

And I want to encourage anybody who wants to learn more about what they can do to make a change: reach out to your local shelter, volunteer, donate. Do whatever you can, but this needs to be changed, and we need to make a difference, and each one of us has a responsibility to do that.

In conclusion, I just want to say that providing life-saving support and services for women and children affected by domestic violence is so important, and nothing will change until we start making a change and taking this more seriously.

As a community, we must continue to support organizations like Genesis House, like all the different organizations in our province, to ensure that survivors from domestic violence have resources and opportunities to rebuild their lives. Together, we can work towards a future where no woman or child has to live in fear and where support and compassion are always available to all who need it and that we all take responsibility for our part in making this change happen across our province. For every woman down the

street, our neighbours, our daughters—it's all of our responsibility.

And I want to challenge all of those making decisions in judicial arenas: It starts with you. You can see first-hand what's happening in front of you, and I want to encourage you to have faith and step out and learn and educate yourself as much as you can because we need to support women and children in these situations.

And I support this bill, and I thank the member from Tyndall Park for bringing it forward, and I thank the government for bringing forward Bill 2, because it's just—we need to get this done today, and I just appreciate the support that we're going to get this done today.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** If there are no further—oh.

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I want to ensure that Keira's Law moves on here this afternoon, so I'm going to keep my remarks short and just summarize the bill in process.

Bill 2, Keira's Law, is named after Keira Kagan, a four-year-old little girl who was found dead next to her father at the bottom of an Ontario cliff in 2020. This was after her father was granted permission, even with 53 court orders being issued against him for unpredictable and violent behaviour, to have access to Keira.

Bill 209, the original bill, was about providing judges and judicial justices of the peace with ongoing education on intimate partner violence, coercive control and sexual assault law. This legislation was supported and enacted by all political parties in different provinces as well as nationally.

I had the honour of first introducing the legislation here in Manitoba almost a year ago, on April 3, 2024. It was seconded by the member from Brandon West, who I also consulted throughout the process of moving the bill forward. People and organizations all over the province had contributed to this legislation, many of whom are incredibly brave individuals who have personally been affected.

By the time we got to October 10, 2024, it had passed through committee. Honourable Speaker, this would have been the point in time where amendments could have been brought forward, however none were.

I requested leave of the House to allow bill 209 to go for a vote, but it continued to be denied by this gov-

ernment, even though all political parties in the House speaking to it were speaking in support of it. And Honourable Speaker, it should be noted that Manitoba has one of the highest rates of intimate partner violence and the government continued to actively shut down this legislation.

If we fast-forward just a couple of weeks through many conversations and meetings, the Justice Minister and I were able to come to a deal. I was advised that if I withdrew my bill, the government would introduce theirs. I agreed because we need this legislation.

So on October 30, 2024, I withdrew bill 209 and the government replaced it with Bill 41, now Bill 42, The Provincial Court Amendment Act. And I want to be clear because a lot has been put on record here this afternoon, that although I don't agree with how this all went down, the political games and holding up of legislation, I do mean it sincerely when I say that I'm grateful that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) allowed for me to second this legislation.

And I agree that the bill is stronger as they added a couple more clauses about recognition and financial support, so thank you to the Minister of Justice.

In closing, Honourable Speaker, I want to thank everyone who contributed to this legislation. Jennifer, Kayla, all the organizations, groups, health-care professionals and individuals. I really appreciate the member from Morden-Winkler and her kind heart, and the reminder that we need to do better at supporting each other. It can be done. We're seeing that here this afternoon.

And I want to thank the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen) in particular, as he has had my back throughout this entire process. He's allowed for me to pick his brain and trust me, I picked his brain a lot with his background in Justice, Honourable Speaker. And he has been an exceptionally strong advocate for Keira's Law through all the tribulation.

And as he always says, justice delayed is justice denied. I look forward to having this bill move along before 5 p.m. today.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I am pleased to stand here today and speak to Bill 2, an act to amend the provincial court act.

This bill represents a crucial step forward in our ongoing commitment to enhancing the judiciary's understanding and handling of sensitive issues, parti-

cularly those surrounding partner violence and coercive control.

This bill builds upon the foundation laid by the previous private member bill, bill 209, which was introduced by MLA for Tyndall Park. It is informally known as Keira's Law, in memory of a young girl whose tragic story highlights the urgent need for reform in how we address domestic violence within our courts.

As we know, the NDP government is notorious for taking the initiative and the work from others and then morphing it into something that they want to call their own. We see that with announcements they've done in the past and this bill in particular. You know, we heard that from the member from Tyndall Park just moments ago.

\* (16:50)

We've all seen and heard and, you know, many of us may be impacted by too many heartbreaking acts of domestic violence here across our province over the last year. Just think about what we have heard, but think about the many situations that we haven't heard.

Many women, children, live in an environment of fear that we don't always see, hear or necessarily talk about. The province has seen many lives lost, and nothing stands out more than the horrific tragedies in the towns of Carman and McCreary—lives lost and taken away by domestic violence.

I want to send thoughts and prayers to those families whose lives have been changed forever and impacted in such a tragic way. No words can ever express the heartache that families feel, and I can't imagine the journeys that families face moving forward with such tragic loss.

So many acts of violence, whether it's domestic, random, religious-based or political, we need to take steps forward in an effort to change this violent climate and prevent further harm to those who face such acts against them. As our world changes, our people change, some for the better and some not. But it is our duty, in this Chamber, as elected officials, to work together to make our province a better and safer place for all Manitobans.

Like the member from Tyndall Park mentioned, Manitoba is one of the highest rates of intimate partner violence. And, again, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the in-depth work done by the MLA for Tyndall Park. She was passionate about this, and she was invested to see bill 209 go to committee and get passed.

I know she worked tirelessly with the families and stakeholders to gather information and facts for this important legislation. Her work and compassion are appreciated, and for that I say thank you.

The stakes are high and the impact, like we've already discussed, is devastating and far-reaching. The tragic story of Keira, the young girl whose life was cut short due to a custody battle where her mother's concerns were ignored, should serve as a haunting reminder that there needs to be change. It's a poignant reminder of the urgent need to reform.

I know bill 209 went to committee, and again thank you to the MLA for Tyndall Park for getting it to that stage. Although I was not at committee to see and hear the presenters, I did take a look through Hansard and read through some of the material from the presentations. I must commend those who were brave, bold and had the courage to share their stories and their journeys through the justice and the legal system, and share the challenges they had navigating through that and the outcome they are now living. With the personal testimonies, it gives a full scope of what many go through.

These were heart-wrenching stories about abuse, loss, mental health and the many kinds of abuse that exist in our world today; some of which we don't see outside closed doors. What these stories also provided was a phenomenal amount of courage and strength, determination and demonstrated ability to work through one of the biggest challenges that one might go through.

I want to highlight the importance of collaboration on such work as we've done here today and on this bill. Again, thank you to the member from Tyndall Park. This will resonate with families, children and realities faced by those—by intimate partner violence, coercive control and sexual abuse.

Let us work together to truly honour the memory of those who have suffered and work towards a society where every individual can live free from violence, coercive control and fear. Let's work together on this.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** No other members wishing to speak?

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

All those in favour, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

### **Bill 5—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures)**

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy), that Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

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

**The Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** I'm pleased to introduce Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures) to the Legislature. The bill amends The Highway Traffic Act to impose new and stronger licensing consequences for drivers convicted of impaired operation-related offences and refusal offences that cause or result in bodily harm or death.

The amendments will increase the length of the automatic driver's licence suspension following a second conviction within 10 years for these offences. These suspensions—this suspension will increase from 10 years to a lifetime suspension.

The amendments will also require that all drivers convicted of this time of offence will be prohibited from driving with any alcohol in their blood—zero per cent blood alcohol concentration. For a first conviction, the length of this prohibition would be seven years. For a second conviction, it would be a lifetime conviction.

A driver who breaches their alcohol prohibition would be subject to licence suspension, financial administrative penalties and their licence—their vehicle—sorry—would be impounded. These sanctions escalate

with subsequent breaches and include being required to participate in an impaired driving assessment or ignition interlock program.

I am pleased to present the bill to the House for its consideration.

Thank you.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent 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 member. No question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Honourable Speaker, it's important to note that the spark for this bill was brought forward because of our resolution on

justice for Jordyn, and we certainly want to make sure that that isn't forgotten, that that resolution was talked out and not supported by this government and by this Minister of Justice.

So with that said, I'm wondering if he could explain why he refused to support the resolution yet brought forward some of the legislation in this House.

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** The member opposite is just wrong. He should know that, of course, I'd been meeting with the Reimer family long before he was ever a member of this Chamber. In opposition, as minister: I've met with them multiple times. I continue to meet with families and victims of impaired driving.

This is part of our government's commitment to get tough on impaired driving. We'll continue to do—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is next before the House, there'll be 14 minutes remaining in the question period.

The time now being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 13, 2025

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**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**