



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	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
ROBBINS, Colleen	Spruce Woods	PC
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 6, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business.

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Johnson: Could you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to 'expediate' consideration of bills 203 and 226 as follows:

(1) For the House to immediately resolve into Committee of the Whole for clause-by-clause consideration of bills 203 and 226, with the Chairperson to put all questions necessary to dispose of the bills without debate. The Chairperson is to report back to the House immediately upon the committee concluding the business before it.

(2) Once the report of the committee has been received, the House will then immediately consider concurrence and third reading of bills 203 and 226, with the following provisions: the speaker—the speaking order for each bill will consist of the sponsor

of the bill, one government member, each independent member; speaking times will be made up to a maximum of five minutes; the House will not see the clock at—as 11 until the question has been put on both bills.

The Speaker: Is there leave for the House to 'expediate' consideration of bills 203 and 226 as described by the Official Opposition House Leader?

Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Johnson: Can you please call Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 222—The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act

The Speaker: Been announced we will now resume debate on Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Fort Richmond, who has five minutes remaining.

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for giving me another opportunity to put some more words on this Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act.

Honourable Speaker, every Manitoban deserves to feel safe in their home, workplace and community. But safety cannot come from reactive or divisive measures. It must come from thoughtful, evidence-based investments in public safety and justice that address both the causes and the consequences of crime, and that is exactly what our government is doing.

Since taking office, we have made record investments in law enforcement and community safety. After years of frozen funding under the previous government, we increased funding to all municipal police services by 28 per cent, the largest increase in Manitoba's history. We also introduced a 2 per cent annual escalator

so police forces have stable and predictable funding into the future.

While the former government froze police budgets from 2017 onward and cut 55 police–Winnipeg police positions, our government is rebuilding. When law enforcement is properly supported, communities are safer and more resilient.

Honourable Speaker, our government has also reinstated and expanded the electronic ankle monitoring program that was cancelled in 2017. With a \$2.9-million investment, this program now helps law enforcement monitor offenders and prevent repeat offences. It has been endorsed by police leadership as an effective tool that directly responds to community needs.

Through our public safety strategy, we have invested \$4 million in bail reform, \$500,000 for bail supervision. We have provided \$2 million for the Manitoba Security Rebate Program to help make security equipment more affordable for homeowners and renters. A separate rebate program tailored to small businesses will be launched later this year, which will be helping businesses recover from retail theft and invest in stronger security.

Honourable Speaker, our government's approach to public safety is guided by fairness, prevention and partnership. We believe that protecting property and protecting people must go hand in hand, and that laws must be clear, fair and consistently applied.

Manitobans expect leadership that makes them safer through real action, not symbolic legislation. They want a government that invests in police services, supports communities and strengthens the justice system.

That is the path that we are on: building safer, stronger communities across Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, our commitment is clear. We will continue to provide law enforcement with the resources they need, ensure our courts are fully staffed and effective and create conditions where Manitobans can feel safe in their homes, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Through prevention, accountability and collaboration, we are working every day to build a Manitoba where justice is fair, communities are secure and every person can feel safe and respected.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Konrad Narth (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, could you

please canvass the House to see if there's leave to expedite consideration of bills 203 and 226 as follows:

* (10:10)

(1) For the House to immediately resolve into Committee of the Whole for clause-by-clause consideration of bills 203 and 226, with the Chairperson to put all questions necessary to dispose of the bills without debate. The Chairperson is to report back to the House immediately upon the committee concluding the business before it; and

(2) Once the report of the committee has been received, the House will then immediately consider concurrence and third reading of bills 203 and 226 with the following provisions: the speaking order of each bill will consist of, first, the sponsor of the bill, one government member and then, third, each independent member; speaking times will be up to a maximum of five minutes; and the House will not see the clock at 11 a.m. until the question has been put on both bills.

The Speaker: Is there leave for the House to 'expediate' consideration of bills 203 and 226 as described by the opposition—by the honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth)?

Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

We will now resume debate.

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I'm very pleased to stand today to put some words on the record in respect to Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act.

I want to begin by stating that I really think that this is quite redundant and unnecessary legislation. We have existing laws that already cover trespassing, vandalism and property damage. Manitoba's Petty Trespasses Act and the Criminal Code already provide mechanisms for charges and penalties. Courts can already order restitution. And the bill adds no meaningful public safety value but just increases the potential for conflict and for legal confusion.

What we need is real investments in law enforcement and our justice system, and this is the way to keep communities safe and this is the approach that our government has been taking under the leadership

of our very well-respected Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe). Our government has increased funding to law enforcement, including just recently when we announced \$2 million to expand Manitoba's Operational Communications Centre to strengthen law enforcement's ability to respond to violent crime and critical incidents.

We know that the previous PC government froze funding to police in Manitoba from two—2017 onwards and never increased it once during their time in government. They didn't give the Winnipeg police, the Brandon police or the RCMP the resources they need to do their job, and these actions had consequences for Manitobans, who saw dramatic increases in crime under the former PC government.

But after years of frozen funding under the former PC government, we increased funding by 28 per cent to all municipal police forces, which is record funding after the years of austerity that they experienced under the former PC government under the leadership of Heather Stefanson. We also ensured Manitobans will have a 2 per cent escalator going forward so that law enforcement agencies have the resources they need into the future. This year's budget has a 30 per cent increase over any previous PC budget.

But when crime exploded under the former PC government, they did nothing. In fact, they did the—they did worse than nothing. They scrapped the ankle bracelet monitoring program in 2017 and then they ran billboards and front-page ads paid by taxpayers just before the election. In twenty-eight—for a program that doesn't exist—in 2018, they froze, froze, froze across all parts of government, but staying on this bill, we'll just say particularly in the area of Justice.

In 2019, they looked around and decided that municipal police forces just didn't need their help. In 2020, an increase to funding for municipal law enforcement in—sorry—in 2021, nothing. In 2022, when police forces were asking them for the resources they needed after years of frozen funding, still nothing from the members opposite. And in 2023, as they approached the election, they still decided that police officers weren't worth their time.

What are they bringing forward today? They're bringing forward redundant, unnecessary legislation that they imagine would somehow strengthen the justice system. But what they have missed all along is the importance of the existing laws, having the staffing in place and the law enforcement in place to

be able to keep Manitobans safe under the existing legislation.

So we know what happened in 2023: Manitobans—voters recognized that the PCs were soft on crime and they elected a government that promised to strengthen our justice system while also supporting people to avoid staying out of the justice system. We've taken any number of steps, starting with feeding children—something the members opposite were absolutely against under the previous government.

They did not believe in school meal programs. But what we know is that when children are fed, they're able to learn. When children are able to learn, they're more likely to stay in school. When children stay in school, they're less likely to get pulled into the criminal justice system. And so, actions like feeding children will go much further than this type of legislation.

We've done other things, such—and we're actively working to better adjust the needs of folks who struggle with meth addiction. We're actively working to better address the needs of folks that are homeless, taking all kinds of steps in order to make this a healthier, safer society for all Manitobans and at the same time, ensuring that we have the police resources in order to deal with the crime that does occur in society.

When our government came in, we brought in historic investments to ensure police officers and RCMP are there for Manitobans when they need them. And that's because we're investing in real solutions to improve public safety. We took long-bladed weapons off of store shelves and away from those who used them to commit violent crimes. Members stood in the way of that—members opposite stood in the way of that. We worked with online retailers so people can't get around the law, something that members opposite are pretty clearly jealous that they didn't think of first when they were in government.

We've invested in 36 new Winnipeg police officers, 24 for community policing and 12 for bail enforcement. Twelve more hit the streets in November, 12 more arrived in the spring, 12 more this fall for bail enforcement. And recently we announced \$2 million to expand Manitoba's Operational Communications Centre to strengthen law enforcement's ability to respond to violent and criminal incidents.

The Manitoba's Operational Communications Centre is the intake and dispatch command centre

for all incoming calls for Manitobans to report an emergency to RCMP.

The \$2 million in additional funding will add six new RCMP officers and 10 public servant dispatchers to expand the Operational Communications Centre and allow 24-7 risk management operational support for law enforcement, allowing the RCMP to better connect with Manitobans and ensure their safety quickly.

We've had some really positive responses to this. The president of AMM, Kathy Valentino—someone I respect greatly—had said that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities welcomes the provincial government's investment to strengthen the RCMP's capacity and help ensure a more effective response to crime across Manitoba. With front-line officers dealing with repeat prolific offenders and expanded responsibilities that extend beyond traditional law enforcement, these additional resources are both timely and essential. So certainly our government appreciates that vote of confidence from the AMM.

I mean, across the board we've been so lucky, so privileged to have such a good working relationship with the AMM and so much support for a lot of our legislation and decisions that we've made as government, and this is just one example.

We are getting the work done to protect Manitobans and their property. So, again, I need to underline the redundancy of this proposed legislation.

* (10:20)

You know, part of our public safety strategy has also meant an investment of \$4 million for bail reform, something—a five-point plan that's keeping Manitoba safer after years of inaction from the previous PC government.

I wish I had a dollar for every time I hear members opposite talk about bail reform when they did nothing for seven and a half years. It's like they just woke up—October 7, was it? October whatever, October 2023—and went, bail reform, there's a good idea; let's put that on our colleagues across the House who have now won government.

The last time new Crown bail policies were updated was under an NDP government. We invested a record \$500,000 for data and intelligence sharing, and \$500,000 for bail supervision.

Since we came into government, we've also invested \$2 million in the Manitoba Security Rebate Program, which is helping law enforcement arrest

criminals and recover property. It's also putting money back in Manitobans' pockets after the previous PC government left Manitobans on their own. And just a few weeks ago, we announced the opening of the intake for the second security rebate, so I hope any Manitobans watching this that haven't looked at that and applied will take the time to do so.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I appreciated the opportunity to speak against this bill.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, on House business.

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

Mr. Guenter: Honourable Speaker, could you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to expedite consideration of bills 203 and 226 as follows:

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The Speaker: Is there leave for the House to 'expediate' consideration of bills 203 and 226, as the honourable member for Borderland has just described?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Dear Canadians, google Private Singh. It will take you to a page about soldier Buckam Singh, who fought for Canada during World War I. And this year's Remembrance Day stamp is issued in honour of Sikh soldiers who fought for all of us.

Thank you, Canada. I'm even more proud to be a Canadian today.

The bill on the floor is Bill 222. And, first of all, I want to say thank you to the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) for bringing this forward, because this gives us an opportunity to talk about this important issue that many, many Manitobans are concerned about. It talks about liability, talks about crime, talks about The Limitations Act and talks about trespassing—the criminal trespassers act. There are many details to it.

This bill bars a lawsuit against an occupier for injury or death of a person 12 years or older trespassing for the purpose of committing a crime. And this bill extends the time period for filing a claim until after criminal charges against the occupier have been resolved. And this bill also limits the occupiers' duty of care, expanded to apply to any person 12 or older who enters the premises without permission. But the current provision limits this duty of care in specific circumstances.

So when I look at this bill, I understand that the member from Interlake-Gimli wants to address this liability issue, and rural crime issue as it says in the bill, by passing this bill. At the same time, when this member was part of a team who had a plenty of opportunity to address this issue, they didn't. And the member—I don't know how much he tried in his caucus, in his Cabinet, but they failed to address this issue. But that doesn't mean that this concern is not important. Occupiers need to be protected against any unfair penalties, and those who commit crimes should be liable for their actions.

But the problem sounds simple. However, it's not as simple as it sounds. How do we protect occupiers? That's the first question that comes to my mind. So how do we do that? Let's think. Let's work on it. Is it by changing the criminal trespassers act, or is it by amending The Occupiers' Liability Act, or by amending The Limitations Act, or by ensuring the liability or by going deeper and understanding the root cause of these problems?

Some of us would suggest we need to invest in social programs. This bill would not be on the floor if there was no crime. This bill would not be on the floor if there were no issues that Manitobans faced regarding liability and crime and trespassing. Some would say, let's invest in education. Some would say, let's address addiction and mental health. Did the previous government address these issues? No.

How do we address crime and criminals? By punishing the criminals to a greater extent? Or by fear and threat? Or by shooting them to death? How? How,

my friends? Let's discuss this. Or by addressing their needs? Why do some people go down that path? It's a deep-rooted problem, and we need to understand the problem before we address it. And we need to understand the reasons why are we here debating this bill today.

Sometimes I think that we have to pay for inaction in the past. When we do not take care of the things when we should have taken care of these things, we get to this point where we are today.

When I say we need to address needs, remember, I am focusing on the needs of those people, not their wants. And many of you might have studied Maslow's needs of hierarchy, that tells a lot about human needs and how it impacts our society.

* (10:30)

But, basically, it boils down to the policies. Again, government policies and priorities matter. They do. And government inaction costs billions later, as I said earlier.

So talking about government inaction reminds me about who, any guesses? I repeat, talking about government inaction reminds me about who, any guesses, my friends? Any guesses?

An Honourable Member: The former failed PC government.

Mr. Brar: The former failed PC government. I would say the previous government. I don't want to call them failed. I won't call them callous. I won't call them ineffective or lazy or misled or misguided or anything like that. Election results 2025 said it all, I don't need to say it.

I have seen them govern in this building, in this province, in this Chamber. Did they invest in education—did they invest in education? Did they invest in health care? Did they invest in justice? Did they invest in public service? They did not.

The members who are sitting on the opposite benches, they actually didn't care about the issue that they seem to care about today, this morning. And those members who didn't care about that issue, they are suggesting and proposing brilliant—quote, unquote brilliant—ideas to address this issue. I think they missed their opportunity.

Now our team is in power and we are doing so many things to address justice issues, address rural crime and so on in our wonderful province. And people are appreciating it every single day.

And we would continue the great work that we signed up for.

The only thing that we expect from them is to support us, be a team member and serve Manitobans together.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): What a tough act to follow. The member for Burrows (Mr. Brar) is a class act and really, I think, did a great job of characterizing what this team and what this government is all about, and that's one Manitoba. It's about bringing people together. It's about finding our common interests, our common goals, and finding new ways and innovative ways to work together, to support one another to make good things happen.

And I think that's just such an important contrast right now to the members opposite, as characterized in legislation like they're bringing forward here today, which is really based out of this idea of division, of stoking fears, of putting erroneous facts on the record. And, really, that's all they've been left with. I mean, you know, during the campaign—during the last election campaign, they tried to use these tactics for political advantage to get re-elected and they were thoroughly shut down and denied that right to govern because of their actions, because of the way that they approached these issues.

And yet, you know, it could have been an opportunity for them to reassess and really understand how Manitobans work together and come together on issues like this, but they're continuing to follow the same old patterns. And I think it's doing them a disservice.

When we talk about what's the reality in rural Manitoba, we know that under their watch the Crime Severity Index, one of the tools that we use as government and law enforcement uses to direct resources, that Crime Severity Index went up every single year under their watch. And that's a travesty because it really shows that their inaction, their disregard for law enforcement, for community—again, for bringing people together—had a real-world detrimental effect.

The CSI, the Crime Severity Index, goes up every single year under their watch. They continue to freeze law enforcement funding. They continue to disregard good ideas that are coming from community. There's no investment. There's no real effort to address crime in rural Manitoba. And then that's the result that we see: our communities are less safe.

Now, under our government, we have seen, for the first time in a long time, that the CSI has actually improved, but there is more work to do. *[interjection]* That's right. That's right, there is more work to do. And, of course, if we're just focusing on the solutions, like these kinds of bills that really do not address the real issues, there's a lot to lose for Manitobans as well.

You know, there's a lot to talk about here, Honourable Speaker. I know my colleagues have done a great job of putting some of that on the record. I'll just reiterate or build off of some of what they've talked about.

Again, that partnership with law enforcement that was absent under their government, we've re-established those partnerships. We've now given law enforcement across the province a 30 per cent increase in their funding. So, now, this is after years of flatline, no funding for law enforcement.

In fact, I was there when the premier at the time, Heather Stefanson, made an emergency drive out to Brandon, to AMM, to apologize in front of everybody, hundreds of delegates, to say: I'm sorry, we've been freezing you for years and years and years; we're going to scramble, we're going to come up with something. They had nothing, they had no plan. They hadn't gone to Treasury Board or Cabinet, they had no plan. And she went out there and she begged for forgiveness. *[interjection]* The member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) was there, he remembers that time. I saw her scrambling into the Keystone Centre with her head hanging low because she knew her record and she knew exactly what she had done to those municipalities.

So a 30 per cent baseline increase, that's important. But, as I said, what we're doing, not only are we building out our infrastructure for law enforcement across the province, we're also building out some of the important initiatives that law enforcement has been asking government for years, never—they never took action. We're taking action on it.

That includes, of course, G-S-Is. That includes projects going after violent offenders in Thompson. That includes the RCMP initiatives that 'stirectly' address the concerns that are brought forward in Bill 222. And that includes—we've heard about the comms centre which builds out some of the capacity that we have to deploy some of the important infrastructure with law enforcement across the province, but we also know that the RCMP has developed more resources.

And, in fact, we just announced last year that the emergency response team which specifically addresses the rural crime and rural situations, 18 new officers. *[interjection]* And, you know, members opposite, they heckle. They have nothing—they never offered these resources—18 new officers. These are equipped and trained specifically to deal with emergency situations in rural communities.

AMM stood with us. AMM supports us. They never supported members opposite because they knew they didn't have a partner in them.

Now, again, we can go on and on. The ankle bracelet program, it was Heather Stefanson who was—not only was she a terrible premier, she was the first Justice minister under Brian Pallister, and so she was actually sitting in the chair where she made the—took out the Sharpie and made a big black mark through our ankle-monitoring program, our EM program, which at the time was just starting to find that new levels of technology that could really start protecting communities. We brought that back. Members opposite cut that.

We brought in the security rebate, money in people's pockets to protect themselves. And what's great about that—this program, not only does it allow people to protect themselves, but they're now protecting their communities and their neighbours. And people want to be part of the solution. They just need a little bit of help from government, they need a little bit of an affordability bump. And they need to be able to be a part of the solution. *[interjection]*

Member opposite thinks this is a joke. He should go talk to some law enforcement. They say they'd love this tool because it helps them connect the organized crime element; it helps them connect what's happening in community, and now they have that community partnership. And this is important.

* (10:40)

So \$300 may be not a lot to this guy making six figures, Honourable Speaker. But you know what? This guy should go talk to his constituents and to law enforcement—the honourable member sitting opposite, I should say.

Now look, there—again, I can go on and on: 55 new officers cut—or 55 officers cut in—under their watch; 36 new officers here in the city of Winnipeg. We're—we have established a bail unit, right?

Members opposite talk, talk, talk; they never did a thing about bail. First hundred days, they want to

talk about—we brought in the five-point bail plan, \$4 million, the intensified supervision, the data sharing that, you know, member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) sat at those tables with the federal ministers and said bail is an issue and did nothing. We brought in actual, real dollars to make a difference—the MIVOAU, you know, a tactical unit that goes out and apprehends violent offenders.

Honourable Speaker, I have said a lot about the things that we've done and the important work that we're doing to support law enforcement. But I—we need to be clear here. And that is that as tough as we've been as a government on crime and getting tough on those people who are causing chaos and crime in our communities, and we're going to continue to do that, the reality is it's about the root causes of crime. And that's why I'm so proud to be a part of a team that doesn't just have a narrow view, doesn't have a divisive rhetoric-filled, no-solution stance on crime, but really looks at how can we affect—excuse me—the root causes.

And the member from Springfield—I'm glad he finally showed up to the Chamber, you know—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I'd just remind members commenting whether someone's here or not is not allowed by the rules.

Mr. Wiebe: Hey, that's fine, Honourable Speaker. His constituents know exactly what he's all about. And we're going to see in the next election how things go in Springfield.

That being said, Honourable Speaker, what it's about is it's about ensuring that we address those root causes. The work that the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) is doing every single day, the work that the Minister for Education is doing every single day, the work that the Minister for Health, the work that the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness—I can go around this caucus. This is the focus every single day of this team. Because we know we are not going to get our—make our province better by dividing people, by putting false information about what the crime stats show or amping people up with right-wing rhetoric straight out of Donald Trump's playbook. We're not going to make our province better by only doing that.

We're going to make sure that if we focus on the root causes, on helping our kids succeed, helping our families succeed and helping all Manitobans succeed, that's how we're going to make our province safer.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd just remind members that I've given quite a bit of latitude, but every now and again you need to draw it back to the actual piece of legislation we're talking about. But I will continue to give some latitude in that.

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): We are here today to debate Bill 222, The Criminal Trespassers Act and Amendments to The Occupiers' Liability Act, and it's my pleasure to speak up for a Manitoba that is safe, that's fair and that is governed by common sense.

And Honourable Speaker, Manitoba is safer today thanks to the passage of Bill 48. We thank the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe). We thank the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness and we thank the Minister of Justice for what is real leadership on public safety, which is what we are talking about here today.

This bill, Bill 222, brought forward by the opposition—it claims to protect property owners from liability when someone trespasses with criminal intent. On the surface, Honourable Speaker, perhaps that might sound reasonable, but when you look a little bit closer—like most things with the PC caucus, when you look a little bit closer, you see the truth. You see a bill that is quite sweeping, a bill that is vague, a bill that risks undermining the principles of justice and accountability that Manitobans expect from this Chamber and expect from their laws.

Honourable Speaker, this is really a blunt instrument for what is a complex issue. This bill would remove the duty of care from anyone 12 years or older who enters a property without permission, regardless of the circumstances—and circumstances and context is important.

This bill would delay civil claims until criminal charges are resolved and it would shield property owners from liability unless their actions are found to be grossly disproportionate. That's the language of the bill, Honourable Speaker.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I hear the words grossly disproportionate, we have to think about, what does that mean? What is the definition—what's the legal definition? What's the legal standard? What will be the legal interpretation of grossly disproportionate? It is going to be open to a wide berth of interpretation, Honourable Speaker. That's not clarity, that's confusion.

Our government, led by our Minister of Justice, brought forward a real bill that protects people, bill—a bill like Bill 48. Bills that protect not just property owners, but bills that also protect kids, protect our neighbours, protect first responders from unintended harm. That's what Bill 48 is doing today, Honourable Speaker.

Bill 48 passed yesterday despite the ranting denunciation of the leader opposite in-between his attacks on the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz), which were quite also disturbing to witness yesterday. Bill 48 protects people, Honourable Speaker. This bill, Bill 222, that we're here to talk about today, does not do that. Unfortunately, it's a one-size-fits-all—a lazy approach, you could argue—an irresponsible approach on an issue that demands nuance. This is an important issue; our government believes this is an important issue.

Our government has taken action on public safety, but this is an issue that 'demounds'—demands nuance. Public safety and liability—issues as important as public safety and liability demand nuance. They demand it.

We all want—we can all agree, Honourable Speaker, that we want to protect property owners from frivolous lawsuits; certainly, we can all agree. But we also need to protect the public from negligence, from unsafe conditions and from situations where harm could have been prevented. And that's the balance that we need to strike, and that's the balance that we're here to debate about today. I would argue that Bill 222 does not strike this balance.

Honourable Speaker, our government is tough on crime, but we're also tough on the causes of crime. And I'm so very proud as the Minister of Justice just mentioned in his words, I also join him in that pride. I'm so proud to be part of a government that is tough on crime but is also tough on the causes of crime. That is the difference—one of the many differences between our government and the failed government of the opposition.

We don't just talk about public safety, Honourable Speaker, we invest in it. Just recently, we announced \$2 million to expand Manitoba's Operational Communications Centre. That is something that is going to deliver real public safety for Manitobans. That's real support for law enforcement on the ground: boots on the ground, radios in hand. These are going to result in faster response times when Manitobans need help. That is the kind of leadership we need when

we're talking about public safety, and Bill 222 does not do that.

We've increased funding to municipal police forces across the province, Honourable Speaker. That provides public safety after years of a government that failed to invest in police forces; it's shameful. We've also supported the RCMP: \$3.3 million of an investment to support an emergency response team. That is real leadership on public safety.

We've backed community safety officers in rural Manitoba, northern Manitoba, right here in the city of Winnipeg, on Winnipeg Transit—we have done this consistently. But we know that public safety just doesn't happen by accident; it happens when governments and legislation make public safety the priority. Bill 222 fails to strike that balance. It fails to strike the balance and really keep the public safe.

* (10:50)

So let's compare our record. I just spoke a little bit about the record of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe). There's much, much more I could talk about. Maybe let's talk about that. Let's talk about some other investments in Budget 2025 that shows that our government is being tough on crime, addressing the causes of crime and supporting public safety: \$11.9 million for the Manitoba First Nations Police Service program and the First Nations safety officer program, that is going to produce public safety here in Manitoba, that is going to protect all Manitobans, not just property owners, but all Manitobans; \$5.3-million increase to the fund for the—oh—\$5.3-million increase to the fund for the RCMP Emergency Response Team and Operational Communication Centre, Honourable Speaker, I just spoke about that, incredible investments; \$5 million—another \$5 million to support border security; again, I could go on and on and on.

Let's compare that to the previous PC government and their record on public safety. The members opposite want to bring forward Bill 222, they want to pretend like they care about public safety. Let's talk about their record. From 2017 onward, they froze police funding. How does that protect property owners? They had a time in government. If they really cared about protecting Manitobans and they cared about protecting property owners, why would they freeze police funding year after year after year? Not one year, Honourable Speaker, year after year. Not just the Winnipeg police, not just the Brandon police, not just the RCMP. And what happened, what happened? Manitobans know what happened, crime

went up. Communities were less safe, officers were stretched thin. This affected all Manitobans.

I certainly heard it, Honourable Speaker, on the doorstep in 2023. I heard it from person after person after person. I've lived in the beautiful community of Rossmere my entire life. Many people in our beautiful community have called this community their home for their entire lives. And what I've heard on the doorstep in 2023 was that crime had never been higher in our beautiful community of Rossmere. And that is because of the failed record of the PC government that turned their back on public safety, that turned their back on all Manitobans, certainly turned their back on property owners. They didn't do a thing to make this issue better.

You can't just be tough on crime if you're soft on funding. That's their record. Manitobans know it.

Thank goodness Manitobans now have a Premier (Mr. Kinew), a Minister of Justice, a Minister of Housing and Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith), a Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), a Minister of Health—again, I could go across the board like the Minister of Justice did on the great work that this government is doing, investing in Manitobans, investing in public safety. That's our record.

We believe in protecting property owners, Honourable Speaker. That's what Bill 222 talks about, but we also believe in protecting the public. And that means making sure our laws are fair and that they are balanced and that they are based on evidence and not just ideology, and I am concerned about their ideology. This bill tries to solve a complex issue with a political slogan. It doesn't distinguish between a criminal act and a tragic accident, it doesn't consider the rights of victims or the responsibilities of occupiers and it doesn't reflect the values of fairness and accountability that Manitobans expect from their justice system.

Again, it shows their ideology, Honourable Speaker. The private members' resolution that we're going to be debating in just a few short minutes really shows their hand, really shows their hand. And it shows that we can do better. It shows that Manitobans deserve better. Manitobans have better in this government that is elected today and this government is doing better. We have a better path forward to suggest.

Here's what we propose: let's work with law enforcement and the justice system to protect property owners from frivolous lawsuits without shielding negligence. We're going to do that with law enforcement.

Law enforcement stood beside us yesterday when we passed Bill 48. We will continue to work with them, listen to them. We will continue to work with law enforcement, within their leadership.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 222.

Certainly, I want to thank the member opposite for bringing this forward. You know, these are important conversations for us to have in this House. Talking about public safety and security, the rights of property owners and the concerns that folks rightly have about safety in their communities: these are conversations we should be having on the floor of this House. So I want to thank him for bringing this forward. *[interjection]*

What I will say is that the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) should probably not heckle me as I put words on the record. That member himself has unfortunately chosen to engage in behaviour on social media that amplifies the targeting of people in our communities. So I would encourage him to, while I put my remarks on the record, perhaps stay quiet on that side of the House.

Honourable Speaker, we take very seriously as a government the rights of Manitobans to be safe in their homes, to be safe in their communities. And we also recognize that this isn't just the responsibility of the Minister for Justice. The Minister for Justice and the Attorney General of Manitoba (Mr. Wiebe) has worked tirelessly from day one to take very real, very tangible, very pragmatic steps alongside experts in this province to keep Manitobans safer. And I want to say thank you to our Minister of Justice for his leadership on this very important file for Manitobans.

It's also important to understand, Honourable Speaker, that safety and security and folks being safer in their neighbourhoods is the responsibility of an entire government, which is why I appreciate the Minister of Education highlighting the work and the effort in all departments across government. It is a housing issue, it is a health issue, it is a jobs issue, it is a families issue, it is a women and gender issue.

It is an issue that our government takes with the highest level of seriousness, which is why you see in our government make investments to address the root causes of violence across our communities. It's why

we are tough on crime, but yes, of course, we are tough on the causes of crime.

And Bill 222 certainly, I do believe that there's an element of ideological sort of amplification here. They're trying to cater to a certain rhetoric and narrative to get people riled up without having any real substance in this legislation that would fundamentally do the work of protecting Manitobans. And I think that that is actually a bit of a disservice in this legislation. I think we all agree that Manitobans should be safer in their communities.

I think where we differ here is that our government believes that the work to keep people safer requires partnership, requires collaboration, requires listening to the experts and requires working with the folks who are out in our communities day in and day out, keeping people safe. Which is why, under the previous PC government, including the member who brought this forward, we saw the PCs cut dozens of police officers from our communities. We saw them cut health services and social services, all of which contribute to our communities being less safe.

And in contrast you see under our administration investments in nearly 60 new police officers being in our communities, millions of dollars invested in health and social services and investments in jobs and training opportunities that are seeing people who are struggling, people who would previously have gone without the tools they need to thrive, doing better in our communities—which is why you see the stats that our Minister of Justice has brought forward—improving.

And we also recognize that after seven and a half years of a previous government that did everything they possibly could to make our communities less safe, it's taking us time, effort, sustained effort and partnership to turn those numbers in a better direction. Which is why when I talk to Manitobans, when I sit down and have conversations with folks in our communities—and I represent Union Station, a community where oftentimes cuts to these services like we saw under the PCs—we see the impacts of that really amplified in this particular community.

You see it when you walk out on Broadway, you see it on Main Street, you see it on Sherbrook and Maryland, you see it on Furby and Langside. The cuts the previous government made are amplified and very visible in the neighbourhood that I represent and that I love dearly. And so when I sit and I talk to people in my constituency, and we talk about what does safety and security mean to you, what folks tell me is well,

(1) first and foremost, it's a government that has compassion, it's a government that listens, it's a government that actually invests in the communities that keep our kids safe, that puts activities and opportunities into our neighbourhoods and that works with our partners in law enforcement to do what is necessary proactively to keep people safer.

So, Honourable Speaker, I just want to say that our government takes this very seriously. We're going to keep doing this work. We recognize that this is a conversation that's very alive for Manitobans and we're going to continue to be a part of it with our partners.

* (11:00)

The Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable minister will have five minutes remaining.

DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

Res. 23—Right to Defend Your Home and Family

The Speaker: The hour being 11 o'clock, we will now move on to private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is resolution No. 23, the Right to Defend Your Home and Family, and it's standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Innovation and New Technology, who has eight minutes remaining.

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): I rise again today to continue my comments on the opposition resolution, sponsored by the member from Borderland, with a disappointingly dog-whistle title, the Right to Defend Your Home and Family.

And I view it that way, Honourable Speaker, for a number of reasons. Firstly, because everyone in this Chamber, regardless of the seat that they occupy, agrees that all Manitobans have a right to feel safe in their homes and that governments have a responsibility to not only ensure that they do, but to see that they are.

Unfortunately, this resolution does absolutely nothing to make Manitobans safer. In fact, I would argue it does quite the opposite. Its tone of shoot first, ask questions later, and the arguments of the opposition members who've been defending it, actually contribute to the amplification of an atmosphere of fear and mistrust in communities, that make us all less safe. Stoking fear, telling vulnerable people how

unsafe they are, how much more dangerous the world has become, is not a recipe for safer communities.

This resolution tells Manitobans that the best way to deal with crime is to deal with it yourself—with violence, if you think that's necessary. What Manitobans are actually asking for is more trained officers, faster response times, smarter monitoring and fewer guns and gangs, not a free rein as incentive for confrontations on front yards and farmyards.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

What's more, honourable Speaker, this resolution isn't even necessary. Canadians have long held the legal right to use reasonable force to defend themselves, their families and their homes. Now, I know that members opposite today will argue that the current concept of reasonableness, the test of reasonableness as it's currently laid out, is too restrictive and too complicated and that it prevents individuals from defending themselves.

I disagree, and I'm not alone in that disagreement, nor is it limited to members who sit on this side of the Chamber. Community leaders disagree. Law enforcement disagrees. The judicial system disagrees.

In fact, one of the leading proponents of the current framework is former Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper. I know he disagrees because it was his government who introduced it in 2013 in the form of Bill C-26. He made it clear at the time that the bill's intention was to modernize and simplify the laws surrounding self-defence, which he had previously described as confusing and outdated—the very thing the member from Borderland says he wants to do with this resolution.

Now, honourable deputy Speaker, I'm pretty confident that my colleagues in the opposition benches know who Stephen Harper is. In fact, I seem to recall some fairly gushing fanboy photos recently posted by some of them after meeting him at events in both Winnipeg and Saskatoon; great photos, they all look like they're having a wonderful time.

So, yes, it was that guy, the one you had your photo taken with, who brought into force the current legal framework. He didn't view it as too restrictive. He didn't see it as preventing Canadians from defending themselves, their homes or their families.

But now, the opposition does. What possible motivation would there be for them to break ranks with Mr. Harper? When we debated this resolution last week, we tried to get some clarity around that.

And we asked a number of questions regarding their time in government and what they did to make Manitobans safer.

They didn't really want to talk about that, and I can see why. Their record during their time in office was one of cuts and inaction. Let me give you some examples of their track record. In 2022, crime rose under the PC government: a 44 per cent increase in attempted murders; a 40 per cent increase in homicides; a 39 per cent increase in robberies; an 8 per cent increase in sexual assaults; a 19 per cent increase in breaking and entering and a 13 per cent increase in fraud.

How did they respond to that? How did they respond to the crisis that was facing Manitobans? Well, certainly not by putting more law enforcement officers on the street. In fact, we suffered a net loss of 55 officers in Winnipeg alone. Certainly not by increasing the police budgets for municipalities; those were frozen.

The reality, honourable deputy Speaker, is that the opposition doesn't want to solve crime; certainly didn't as government. Didn't want to address the root causes of crime. What they want to do is campaign on crime. That's the motivation for this. There's no need for it, no need for the resolution. There is clarity around the situation, what people can and can't do. And it's disappointing that the members opposite would take this tactic.

Not only did they cut funding for municipalities and for police, they cut funding to community safety programs: \$2.6 million, cutting valuable funding for crime prevention, Community Corrections and the Family Resolution Service.

Additionally, they refused to support restorative justice, choosing to eliminate the Restorative Resolutions program, preventing Manitoba offenders from pursuing alternatives that would have allowed them a second chance at success.

When approached by stakeholders about holding a public safety summit, the former minister of Justice called the idea a get-together with coffee and doughnuts. And here I'm quoting from Hansard, November 28, 2019: Instead of listening to community organizations and those struggling to support Manitobans, the previous government ignored the request to create safe consumption sites, questioning their effectiveness.

Our government believes that every Manitoban deserves to feel safe in their home.

Thank you.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): It's an honour to rise in this House today to speak in strong support of this common sense resolution brought forward by the strong common sense MLA for Borderland.

This resolution calls on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to protect the rights of Manitobans to defend themselves, their loved ones and their homes.

Honourable Speaker, I don't want to take much time because it's important that this resolution is passed today unanimously by both sides of this House. But I'd like to get a few words on the record. Over the past year, we have seen an alarming rise in violent crime across Manitoba. Home invasions, assaults and random acts of violence that have left many families shaken and fearful in their very own homes.

*(11:10)

From the tragic home invasions that left Winnipeg seniors hospitalized, to the recent attack on a couple in Thompson, these incidents have shaken our sense of safety and security.

And the sad reality, honourable Speaker, is that under the soft-on-crime approach of this NDP government and their federal Liberal allies, it's the same story over and over again: repeat violent offenders are arrested, released on bail and reoffend without hours or days. Meanwhile, the law-abiding citizens—the victims—are left living in fear. That's not justice; that's not safety, and that is not the Manitoba I believe in.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans have a simple, common sense expectation that when someone breaks into their home in the dead of night, uninvited, unlawfully, they have every right to do what is necessary to protect themselves and their families.

This resolution does not call on US-style, shoot-first-ask-questions-later approach. We know that's nonsense, and we won't let the NDP distract Manitobans with that kind of fear mongering. What we're calling for is clarity, fairness and common sense. We're saying that when a criminal decides to break into your home, they assume the risk of what happens next, not the law-abiding homeowner who is simply defending their family.

Honourable Speaker, this is not an abstract debate for rural Manitobans. In many community—in many of our communities, law enforcement response times can be measured not in minutes but in hours. In La Vérendrye, my constituency, we know that when something happens on a remote farm or rural property,

help isn't always seconds away. Manitobans deserve to know that if they're ever faced with that nightmare scenario, someone breaking into their home in the middle of the night, the law will be on their side, not stacked against them.

Honourable Speaker, I also want to take this opportunity to talk about a couple examples that I've lived first-hand, and we're seeing it time and time again. We're also getting mixed messages from this Premier (Mr. Kinew), a premier that comments that certain criminals should have no justice system but instead be buried under the prison walls. Also, this Premier mentioned that criminals of his choice should be let out and let the prisons deal with them; whether they be killed within that situation or not, that should be up to the prisoners themselves to decide the justice.

So we're getting a lot of mixed messages. Then we see the soft-on-crime approach, where criminals are let out the very next day. And we're seeing this not only in downtown, not along Main Street; as we saw this morning in the member for River Heights (MLA Moroz), who spoke just before me, we're seeing it in his community—River Heights, which was once an upscale, safe neighbourhood, we're seeing a rampage of violent crime, vandalism overnight. That's this morning.

We're seeing the effects of the soft-on-crime approach of this government. Those people that live in those homes in what used to be a safe neighbourhood are scared this morning seeing that there was weapon-wielding members of the community right in their backyards, vandalizing their cars, vandalizing their property, not knowing what could have been if one of those criminals had knocked on the door. People are scared in their own homes.

Honourable Speaker, I'll share with you an example that I've experienced myself in rural Manitoba. Just last year, I came upon a neighbouring farmer's stolen vehicle, followed that vehicle while I was on the phone with the RCMP. The RCMP weren't too interested because they know the system. They know that they arrest, they reoffend, but I needed to know that this vehicle would be abandoned so that my friend, the neighbour, would be able to get it back. This is a vehicle that they need to create a living for themselves and their families.

I followed this vehicle, not in a violent fashion, thinking that I'd follow to see who was driving the vehicle and, hopefully, during that time that I'd keep an eye on the vehicle and on the criminal, the RCMP would be able to come and intervene. I had my

five-year-old son with me and the vehicle stopped on the highway, and to my surprise the criminal exited the vehicle and came towards mine holding a gun, pointing a gun right at my vehicle—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

I would just like to remind the member we're currently discussing resolution 23, entitled Right to Defend Your Home and Family, so if you wouldn't mind just drawing it back to home.

Mr. Narth: That's exactly right; this is proof. When we have criminals that once had been just committing property crime, it escalates. It escalates to the point that now people that are stealing cars, people that are committing property crime, are approaching these properties now weaponized. They're coming with guns and they're threatening people's lives.

This was an example of mine where I wanted to keep an eye on the vehicle and I was approached with a gun. That's me, the MLA for the community, was approached with a gun. These are people that were in the backyard of my neighbour. That family was shaken because they didn't know who was on the yard stealing their vehicle. It turned out that it was someone with a gun.

If my neighbour had come out to approach the thief, they would have been presented with the gun. If I was visiting and had my five-year-old son with me visiting the neighbour and had come across the criminal with a gun, I would have been approached with a weapon that could have taken my life or my son's life.

This is concerning. Manitobans in that case need to know that they will not be the criminal if they defend their family. If I defend my son, if my neighbour defends his family, they need to know that the police are not coming into their home and arresting them, but they are supporting them for defending their family.

That's what this resolution is about, honourable Speaker. Both sides of the House need to support this common sense call on the federal government to respect property owners, homeowners and lives of all Canadians, but in Manitoba, especially Manitobans that are in communities like River Heights, a safe, upscale neighbourhood that wake up this morning with the reality that weapon-wielding criminals were on their properties, in their front yards, in their backyards, vandalizing their properties, unknowing of what could have happened if one of those community

members would have walked outside last night. That's what this resolution is about.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Each and every day that I come into this Chamber, I am grateful for the privilege, and I recognize the importance of people like me, a mom, being part of this discourse, being part of this debate, because I don't share the sentiments of the members opposite who are excited to grab a gun and do things that as a Canadian I don't believe is part of who we are.

* (11:20)

Day after day, they come to this Chamber and encourage Manitobans to be afraid of their neighbours, encourage Manitobans to not talk to one another, encourage Manitobans to be further and further apart. Honourable deputy Speaker, I am proud to be in a community where I know my neighbours. I work hard to know my neighbours. I work hard to be a part of my community and to bring people in and give them a sense of belonging because that's how I know we build safer communities. And they're going to heckle and say that I'm soft on crime and 'blah-de-da,' but I'm watching what's happening in the United States of America and this is not what I want for us in Canada. This is not what I want.

I don't want the same kind of attitude about who has access to what, who we should be afraid of. The dog-whistle nonsense that shows up in this House each and every day has to stop, honourable deputy Speaker. This PMR is nothing but an opportunity for the members opposite to stand up and, once again, instill fear in Manitobans, to encourage Manitobans to be afraid of the people that live down the road and to encourage Manitobans to engage in vigilante behaviour.

Honourable deputy Speaker, we don't believe in that. We're not on side with that. We've seen what happens with folks like Colten Boushie, we've seen what happens when people decide that they ought to take the law into their own hands. And I can tell you that I will never support a resolution like this. This is not who we are and this is simply lip service to be able to get some quick social media shots so they can be in line with their federal cousins who tout out tag lines about being tough on crime while doing nothing about it.

Honourable deputy Speaker, we know that being tough on crime means investing in our front-line forces.

It also means investing in the root causes of crime: poverty, addiction, mental health challenges, housing. This is actually how we deal with the root causes of crime. And it is so frustrating to come in here and hear these very superficial, simple slogans to make it sound like this is an easy thing to achieve.

Honourable deputy Speaker, I can assure you that every single member on this side of the House understands the complexity of crime, understands the complexity of poverty. And we're working on all fronts to help change the channel. And last year, we actually saw a decrease in severe crimes for the first time. Violent crime, a decrease in Manitoba. And you know what? They don't want to hear that because it makes it pretty hard to go out there and say: be afraid of your neighbours, be afraid of the folks that are having trouble finding shelter, be afraid of the folks who have mental health challenges.

Because, honourable deputy Speaker, if you follow the path down, if you follow their logic and what we ought to be doing as Manitobans, at the end of the day we're each living on an island alone. And that is not the society that I want to live in at all.

This PMR, which is completely built on the stand-your-ground mindset, which we know who is disproportionately affected by these kinds of laws. It is folks who are struggling. And I have many, many friends and family who—the members opposite cite, you know, rural areas, we have guns—and most of my family actually still lives in rural Manitoba. Many of them have guns. And I can tell you, honourable deputy Speaker, that nobody would consider running to their garage to grab a gun if they saw somebody in their yard.

And you want to know why? Because they don't think the worst of every human that isn't them. They don't think that every person out there is out to get them. They see neighbours as neighbours. They recognize that life happens all around us. And if we come to this life, to this world, every day with the mindset that somebody's out to get me and somebody's here to steal my stuff, imagine how incredibly miserable that life is, honourable deputy Speaker.

The irony of these folks coming into this Chamber to talk about being tough on crime while under their watch they fire 55 police officers in Winnipeg—55, honourable deputy Speaker. Those are 55 officers that aren't patrolling the streets, and these are 55 officers that weren't helping victims of crime and 55 officers who weren't helping to serve the public good any longer.

So we've invested in police officers, not just in Winnipeg but in the city of Brandon. In many rural areas, we have additional supports. And I am so proud of this government that, again, understands the complexities around crime.

As a parent, I will never ever be in a place where I am going to stand and vote in favour of condoning violence. I just never will. So the member opposite said he can't wait for this resolution to pass unanimously—never going to happen.

Honourable deputy Speaker, I know that it doesn't feel natural to think about the impacts on community or our neighbours or our children when we're just worried about our stuff. But at the end of the day, I know that our role here in this place is to take care of every Manitoban, and that includes folks that we might not know—they're not friends yet—but we certainly cannot come in this place and support vigilante behaviour that would put community members at risk. I—*[interjection]*—it's—bless you.

We can never forget the human cost when we prioritize property over people. And again, I understand that the members opposite are very concerned about stuff. But I know that the value of this life is to build community, to take care of one another, to leave the world better than we found it, and that really has nothing to do with things.

And, honourable deputy Speaker, this resolution does nothing to speak of preventing crime, at all. It talks about reacting to the potential of something happening, reacting in a way that has the potential of leaving people hurt, injured and, in horrible cases, dead.

And I know that the folks on this side of the House understand the value of humanity, and we will continue to stand up for the best interests of all Manitobans, and it will not include any proposal that advocates for violence against folks in our communities, against our neighbours or against our children.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): It's really great to get a chance to stand up here in the Chamber and talk about important things. And I was really concerned to see this resolution come across, you know, the Progressive Conservative shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later bill.

* (11:30)

You know, this PMR really encourages the confrontational stand-your-ground attitude that prioritizes violence; relying on individual action instead of law enforcement, it undermines community safety. Trained professionals are better equipped to handle any potentially volatile situation.

Honourable deputy Speaker, I'd like to little—dive into a little bit of historical context on crime surge under the PCs. Under the failed PC government, Manitoba witnessed a considerable increase in crime rates. The Crime Severity Index rose 14 per cent. This significantly increases—this significant increase reflects poorly on their ability to maintain public safety during their governance.

An Honourable Member: Speaker.

The Acting Chairperson (Rachelle Schott): Member for Borderland.

Point of Order

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member for Borderland, on a point of order.

Mr. Guenter: Speaker, it's frankly nauseating to hear the champagne socialists across the way, in their ivory towers, so disconnected from the realities of Manitobans, going on and on and on.

You have the member for River Heights (MLA Moroz), spends eight minutes but fails to talk about the crime that happened in his own constituency just this morning. You have members across the way—a minister talking about their failed record on crime. But they're not talking about the resolution, which is about the principle that when you are attacked in your own home, you ought to have the right to defend yourself and your loved ones.

They're making it very clear that what they would do, which is cowardice—they would comply with the criminals, okay? But it's absolutely unreasonable for them to expect Manitobans to do the same. They ought to speak to the principle of the resolution. They need to be relevant.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Once again, we see in—again, we see this day after day, members opposite get up in the Chamber and use procedural tools to waste everybody's time.

You know, we're debating this resolution that the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) has brought forward in a very thoughtful, intentional way. The member opposite may not like what members opposite on this side are saying, but the comments that our members on this side are saying are educated. They are thoughtful, they are based in experience. They're based in human rights and they're based in, you know, moving away from what the member for Borderland, in his, like, MAGA baby ideology, is trying to put forward in this Chamber.

We know that the member for Borderland, during COVID, you know, stood in solidarity with people that were—with truckers and anti-vaxxers and convoy people. I think he brought them tea and crumpets; I'm not sure. But we know that he is, like, MAGA 2.0 for southern Manitoba here and it upsets him that members here are thoughtful and intentional with what we bring forward. And the fact that we don't want to see a divided Manitoba; we want a Manitoba that everybody has equal rights, equal opportunities and we're doing just that in government.

So the member opposite can continue with his MAGA 2.0 all he wants. Nobody listens, nobody cares, nobody likes him. I would just encourage him to just do his job as an MLA here for Manitobans, for all Manitobans.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Anyone else speaking to this point of order?

Okay. Speakers and presiding officers give a certain amount of latitude for a member to build their argument or point in debate. However, I will ask that all members tie their comments to the resolution before us.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham) can continue.

Mr. Oxenham: I understand the opposition doesn't like to hear the words that I am saying right now but it's truth telling and sometimes the truth hurts, you know.

So I was talking about the Crime Severity Index, how it rose 14 per cent, you know, and this contributes to folks' fears. And these folks on the opposite side try to exploit that consistently. Inadequate policing resources, honourable deputy Speaker, play a role. And during the PCs' administration, there was a net loss of 55 WPS officers.

And this reduction in law enforcement personnel, it directly correlates with rising community insecurity. There is hiring freezes, honourable deputy Speaker. I was working at the Winnipeg Remand Centre and I worked in the admissions department for almost five years. And in that time, while the PCs were in charge, we saw our admission numbers going up and up. And I continued to see police officers who would come into admissions with somebody and they were very frustrated at the lack of support that they received from the government at the time. And it was very frustrating because, you know, they need backup and they didn't have that backup.

The hiring freezes: I know that, you know, in corrections, we faced those hiring freezes and it really affected our ability to do our jobs properly. I mean, they did cut restorative justice programming, things that help people stay out of trouble. Why would you do that? You want your communities to be safe; why would you cut things that help people get on a better path? It just doesn't make any sense.

The Speaker in the Chair

It's misguided resource allocations. You know, the PCs froze funding and the choice reflects a fundamental disregard for community safety needs. It was a failure in budget management concerning public safety priorities. We talk about the root causes of crime and that's really important. We're talking about people here who've experienced a lot of trauma in their life. And this PMR does not at all address the underlying issues contributing to crime, such as poverty and mental health.

The fact that the former failed PC government wilfully ignored these factors, it just proves their incompetent understanding of law enforcement and community well-being. So we've seen an escalation of racially charged incidents. You know, empowering property owners to confront perceived threats increases the risk of racially motivated violence, especially against minority communities, Honourable Speaker.

Undermining trust in law enforcement, Honourable Speaker: You know this resolution, it fosters a culture where individuals feel empowered to take law enforcement into their own hands, eroding public trust in police forces.

I'll maybe share an incident, Honourable Speaker, that I experienced, and it relates to this private members' resolution. I used to live just outside of Winnipeg in a little farmhouse for about 10 years. And it was on an

acreage so it didn't have too many neighbours. And in the middle of the night—could have been really early in the morning; it was raining. I remember that—and there was frantic knocking at my door.

And so, I got up to see what was happening. And I could hear, hello, hello, from outside. So naturally, you don't have a lot of action out in the country. Your back is up. You're like, who's at my back door? Who could this be? And I turned the light on. It was two women. Turns out their car hit the ditch just down the road from my house.

Now, what if I was someone who absorbed all of this rhetoric: the violent shoot-first-ask-questions-later kind of attitude? I think the result would have been tragic, Honourable Speaker. And thankfully, you know, I had the wherewithal to not have those thoughts and motivations and to help folks. You never know who shows up at your door sometimes. Maybe it's someone who's needing help.

* (11:40)

You know, it's this consistent fear mongering that really, I think, Manitobans can see through. And Manitobans understand, you know, that they have a government now who is really addressing the root causes of crime and the social determinants of crime, which ultimately impacts our community and makes us all safer.

So disregarding, you know, successful crime reduction strategies, Honourable Speaker, we've seen what the PCs do with evidence-backed science and strategy initiatives. In fact, they throw it on the floor and they disregard it, the evidence that's right before their eyes. Our government has introduced crime reduction initiatives that has led to a 5 per cent reduction in violent crime in Winnipeg. That's significant; that should be celebrated. And we should be working as a whole towards that and celebrating those things.

But no, we have a fear-mongering, lazy, violent-thirsty PC Party that continues to show the failure to continue any effective strategy that would prioritize community safety over punitive measures—you know, again, working in law enforcement, working in corrections, working with folks who are in conflict with the law and are at various stages in their journey in life. And it's really important that we have the tools—law enforcement has the tools—to truly help folks, setting them on the right path, giving them the resources so that they can make informed decisions about how they're going to re-enter society and contribute to society. And that's only fair, Honourable Speaker.

I'm very grateful to be on this team and to watch the work of our Justice Minister, and I'm really proud to stand here today and celebrate, you know, the wins that we have and also recognize that there's a lot of work to do. But I believe, Honourable Speaker, that we're on the right path, and, you know, having laws that encourage people to resort to violence, it's just not good for Manitobans. It's dangerous and, quite frankly, could be racist, and it's too big of a risk for us to take.

So I appreciate your time, Honourable Speaker. Thank you very much.

Point of Order

The Speaker: Just before I recognize the next speaker, I need to clarify that the matter that was raised by the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) was not a point of order.

* * *

The Speaker: The honourable member for McPhillips.

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): Technically, it's their turn.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Riding Mountain.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I'm pleased to rise in the House today in support of this resolution that calls upon the government of Canada to amend the Criminal Code, to strengthen and clarify the rights of Canadians to defend themselves, their loved ones and their homes from violent intruders.

Honourable Speaker, over the past two years, Manitobans have watched with growing concern as violent crime has spread across the province. The tragic reality is that many people, especially our seniors and low—those living in rural and northern communities, no longer feel safe in their own homes.

Time and again, we hear about another violent break-in or home invasion. We see the devastating impact it leaves behind: the fear, the trauma, the loss of security. And all too often, we also see that the same individuals responsible for these crimes were already out on bail, already known to police and already given far too many chances. That is not justice, Honourable Speaker; that is failure.

It is failure by a federal government whose soft on crime laws have allowed violent repeat offenders to walk free within hours. And it is a failure by a provincial NDP government that has chosen to follow the same path, one that prioritizes the rights of offenders over the rights of victims.

The member for Borderland's (Mr. Guenter) resolution is rooted in a simple but profound principle: that a person's home is their castle. Every Manitoban, every Canadian should have the unquestioned right to feel safe in their own dwelling.

The idea that one's home is a place of refuge and safety is as old as civilization itself. In English common law, it was said that a man's home is his castle. That principle recognized that within one's home, a person has both the right and the duty to protect those inside from unlawful harm.

Yet under Canada's current legal framework, that right has been clouded by complexity. Sections 34 and 35 of the Criminal Code set out the conditions under which force may be used in self-defence. But in practice, these provisions are convoluted and difficult to apply, especially in the moment of crisis when an 'intruder' has broken in and a person must make a split-second, life-or-death decision.

Honourable Speaker, as law—the law as written effectively requires an individual to weigh nine separate legal considerations before acting. These include questions about the proportionality of the response, the imminence of the threat, the history of the relationship between the parties and even whether the act of force used was in response to a lawful threat.

Now, Honourable Speaker, in a calm setting—in a courtroom or a classroom—these may be reasonable questions. But in the middle of the night when a criminal kicks in your door, they are completely unrealistic. No person in that situation has the luxury of legal contemplation. They only have seconds to react to protect themselves and their family. And yet, too often the person who defends their home is the one who ends up facing criminal charges while the true offender, the person who created the danger, walks free.

That is why this resolution is so important: it calls for clarity, for balance and for common sense. It calls for a clear recognition in law that when someone unlawfully enters or attempts to enter your home and you reasonably believe that you or your family are in danger, you are justified in using reasonable force—including deadly force if necessary—to stop that threat.

This resolution does not call for reckless action, it does not call for an American-style stand-your-ground law and it does not open the door to vigilantism. What it does is reaffirm that the innocent should never be

treated as criminals for defending themselves against real criminals.

Honourable Speaker, in many of our rural and remote communities, police response times can be lengthy, not for lack of dedication or professionalism, but simply because of distance. When minutes or even hours stand between a 911 call and help arriving, the reality is clear: sometimes a person must be their own first responder.

In that moment, they should not have to second guess whether the law will punish them for doing what any reasonable person would do: protect themselves and those they love.

The castle law principle places responsibility where it belongs: on the intruder, not the victim. When someone chooses to unlawfully enter another person's home, they accept the risks and consequences that come with that criminal act.

Honourable Speaker, the member for Borderland has said it well: this resolution is about restoring fairness and common sense. It is about ensuring that Manitobans who act reasonably in defence of their own homes are not criminalized for it.

We have seen too many tragic examples across this country where people who defended themselves or their property were dragged through the courts, forced to spend thousands of dollars in legal fees and have their reputations destroyed. For many, the emotional toll—the fear, the anxiety, the loss of peace—lingers long after the event itself.

That is not the kind of justice system Canadians expect or deserve. Canadian juries, when faced with these cases, have shown that ordinary citizens understand what is fair. Again and again, they have acquitted homeowners who acted in genuine self-defence. That is because Canadians instinctively understand that the right to defend one's home and family is fundamental.

Honourable Speaker, this resolution is a measured and reasonable call for reform. It seeks to simplify and clarify the law, to remove the duty to retreat and to provide immunity from civil or criminal liability for those who act lawfully and in good faith to defend their homes.

* (11:50)

No one here on this side of the House is advocating violence. No one is suggesting that people take the law into their own hands. What we are saying is that when law-abiding citizens are faced with

immediate danger in their own homes, the law should be on their side, not stacked against them.

This is not a partisan issue. This is about standing with Manitobans who want to feel safe, secure and protected in the place they should feel safest of all—their homes.

Honourable Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), for bringing forward this thoughtful and timely resolution. It reflects the concerns we are hearing from Manitobans every day; from seniors in small towns, from families in our cities, and from farmers and ranchers across rural Manitoba. People are frightened, and they deserve to know that their government will stand with them.

I urge every member of this House, regardless of party, to support this common sense resolution. Let us send a united message to Ottawa that Manitoba stands with the victims, not with the criminals, that we stand for fairness, safety and justice.

Honourable Speaker, a home is more than four walls. It is a place of family, of rest, of belonging. It is where Manitobans should always be safe. Let us affirm today that every Manitoban, every Canadian, has the right to feel safe and to be safe in their own home.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Devgan: Honourable Speaker, before I get into my remarks this morning I just want to—it's a day late and I didn't get the opportunity to say this yesterday, but I want to send out my best wishes to the Sikh diaspora here in Manitoba who celebrated the birth date of the founder of the Sikh faith yesterday.

Gurpurab [*Anniversary of*], Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

My heartiest of congratulations to the entire community on behalf of our colleagues on this side of the House.

And, Honourable Speaker, if you'll indulge me a little bit, I had a chance last night to attend the Sikh Society of Manitoba after session, leaving the Leg. and heading right down there. And I just wanted to celebrate with the community and went to the Sikh Society of Manitoba and it was, of course, a packed house. A lot of folks were there taking time out of their day to celebrate and it was really nice to celebrate with the community, and it was all the more special to be driving on a newly freshly paved Mollard Road—

The Speaker: Order, please. I was willing to give the member some latitude, but he's gone on a little too long now.

MLA Devgan: Honourable Speaker, I appreciate your generosity. But, anyway, I just wanted to express that to the Sikh community and just say that it's nice to get out in the community and celebrate these important dates.

But, speaking to the PMR this morning, this is already on the books. We already have this law in Canada. Stephen Harper, as my colleague from River Heights mentioned, is the one who brought this into law here.

So, hypothetically, as a Manitoban, as a Canadian, if somebody breaks into your home, you can defend yourself with reasonable force. You have that right. To suggest that you don't, to suggest that you have a duty to vacate your premise is complete fallacy. So you have the right to defend your home with reasonable force.

What we're hearing from the opposition this morning, though, is that you should be able to use so much force that it may end up costing the life of somebody else. That's actually verbatim what this PMR says—verbatim.

Despite what the members opposite have been trying to massage their messaging this morning, that is what they're asking for here, and they're implying to Manitobans listening that we don't have such rules, that if you were to have somebody access your property illegally or uninvited, that you would just have to throw up your hands, and they've gone so far this morning to suggest that police don't respond, the police aren't there to make it in time.

So it's very revealing to hear the PC opposition talk so negatively about law enforcement, and it's a little bit ironic they're talking about arrival times for police when you call 911 and how that's taking some time.

Well, you know, when you cut police, when you cut 55 police officers from the Winnipeg police force, you're going to have some knock-on effects down the road. They did that. They're the ones who cut the police, Honourable Speaker. But we already have rules in the book to defend your own property, so I'm not understanding why the members opposite, why the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) felt very whipped up into a frenzy this morning to bring this forward when something like this already exists.

Honourable Speaker, I'll tell you why. It speaks to where conservatism in Canada stands today. It is primarily about whipping people into a frenzy, scaring the daylights out of people: that there's a bogeyman under every bed, that there's a criminal outside your door ready to break in and attack you right now.

They're ready to just scare Canadians so much. They don't want to actually do the work of passing good legislation in this Chamber. They want to now heckle and—I know I'm not allowed to do this, I'll take my lumps here—they could only muster up five members this morning to come defend this PMR. It's a charade.

They just want to get people angry, they want to get people whipped up. They want to call—they want to use names in this Chamber. But the reality is they don't want to do the work here. For the better part of several weeks, they've been holding up a bill that would actually make streets safer in Manitoba, that would get people who are high on meth off our streets, people who don't know what they're doing, high on drugs, on meth psychosis off our streets.

They spend the better part of several weeks stalling that bill, making our streets more unsafe. So they don't give a hoot about public safety. They just want to come here and play politics. They want to clip their two-minute speech and scare the bejesus out of grandma. And come in here and do this whole act but not actually do the work of legislation.

So, Honourable Speaker, I think it's important for Manitobans to understand that this is not the case—we don't live in a lawless land here. We are a civilized society. We are a civilized society of rules and laws. And the rules and laws of this country dictate that if somebody illegally, uninvited, accesses your property, you have the right to defend yourself within—with reasonable force.

What they want is what we have in the United States. And when I was reading this PMR, I kept on thinking about Trayvon Martin. And I remember watching that on TV and thinking, man that—like, I sometimes pull a hood over my head at night and I could picture myself going to a convenience store, buying candy, having my hands in my pockets and walking home. And if I was in Florida at the time, somebody could have shot me on the sidewalk.

What this PMR does is it opens a door to a lot of unintended consequences, the type of things that we

hear that happen in the United States and say, how could this happen? This is horrible. We shouldn't be trying to actively to create a violent environment.

But this is what the PMR wants, this is the intention of the PMR. This is what the Conservatives want. They want societal decay, they want chaos because it makes their politics a little bit easier. They don't actually want to do the work of improving society.

You saw it in their campaign in 2023, pitting people against people. Now it's about scaring you, about scaring whose—what you can and can't do when people enter your property. But, like I said, when they had the chance to try to make our streets safer by passing Bill 48, they twiddled their thumbs, stared up into the ceiling and wished for the best.

All that commotion just to end up going out there and saying, oh we support the bill but we want to do minor tweaks: minor tweaks that, by the way, would have rendered the bill completely useless. But this is what they're about. It's just all politics on the other side.

This is the defund the police PCs, the ones who cut 55 police officers from the Winnipeg Police Service. This is their record. They're soft on crime; they don't care. They don't care about keeping you safe. They don't care about the well-being of Manitobans. It's all politics about them. They want to get up on a point of order, in a frenzy, get their little clip, but they don't actually want to do the work. That's the reality.

We are actually doing the work to keep you safe. That bill that passed yesterday, it's a monumental bill for Manitoba—hugely, hugely important, that they did everything they could to try to prevent. So whatever they go out and tell the media, when the Leader of the Opposition goes out there and spews fallacy in the media, Manitobans need to know they didn't want that bill to pass. They wanted unsafe streets. They wanted you to be in danger because it helps them politically. That's—

The Speaker: Order, please.

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

The hour being 12 o'clock, this House is recessed and is recessed until 1:30 this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 6, 2025

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