



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Justice

Chairpersons
Jelynn Dela Cruz
Constituency of Radisson;
Logan Oxenham
Constituency of Kirkfield Park



Vol. LXXIX No. 3 - 9 a.m., Wednesday, April 30, 2025

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
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Spruce Woods	

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE**

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

TIME – 9 a.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

**CHAIRPERSON – MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson);
Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park) at 1:02 p.m.**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – MLA Shannon Corbett
(Transcona); MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface) at
1:03 p.m.**

ATTENDANCE – 6 QUORUM – 4

Members of the committee present:

Hon. Min. Wiebe

*Mr. Balcaen, MLAs Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz,
Mr. King*

Substitutions:

Mr. Goertzen for Mr. King at 10:56 a.m.

Mr. King for Mr. Balcaen at 11:59 a.m.

Mr. Balcaen for Mr. Goertzen at 12:44 p.m.

Mr. Oxenham for MLA Dela Cruz at 1:01 p.m.

MLA Loiselle for MLA Corbett at 1:01 p.m.

Mr. Blashko for MLA Cross at 1:01 p.m.

APPEARING:

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara, MLA for Union Station

Carrie Hiebert, MLA for Morden-Winkler

PUBLIC PRESENTERS:

Bill 43–The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

Dayne Moyer, private citizen

Lee Ramuscak, private citizen

Dieth de Leon, Bahaghari Pride Manitoba

Lila Asher, private citizen

Jackson Unger, private citizen

Rhiannon Frost, private citizen

Alevtin Pankov, private citizen

Reece Malone, Diversity Essentials

Ashlyn Noble, private citizen

Lauren Bailey, private citizen

Kai Zamora, JusticeTrans

Linda Karn, private citizen

Raymond Lyttle, private citizen

Emersyn Hildebrand, private citizen

Nathan Martindale, Manitoba Teachers' Society

Moon Fast, private citizen

Volin Thiessen, private citizen

Lindsay Brown, private citizen

Chris deBoer, private citizen

Gloria Dignazio, private citizen

Sandra Saint-Cyr, private citizen

Rhonda Forbes, private citizen

Alison Norberg, private citizen

Noreen Stevens, private citizen

*Arlene Macklem, Manitoba Federation of Union
Retirees*

Mandalyn Unger, private citizen

Erica McNabb, private citizen

Aro van Dyck, private citizen

Wren Robertson, private citizen

Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Andrew Kohan, private citizen

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:

Bill 43–The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

Kat Roberts, private citizen

Lorraine Hackenschmidt, private citizen

Amelia Valencia, private citizen

Barbara Young, private citizen

Eric Musick, private citizen

Paulo Gonçalves de Arruda, private citizen

Ashley Dupont, private citizen

Kelly Smith, private citizen

Cassandra Schroeder, private citizen

Debra Schroeder, private citizen

Madeline Dumont, private citizen

Mikayla Patenaude, private citizen

April Penner, private citizen

Isabelle Froese, private citizen

Colleen Giesbrecht, private citizen

Sharon Webb, private citizen

Nettie Kehler, private citizen

Betty Hiebert, private citizen

Mark Harder, private citizen

Justin Jeanson, private citizen

Kendra Fehr, private citizen

Al Dyck, private citizen

Jamie Fehr, private citizen

Milton Garcia, private citizen

Marina Doerksen, private citizen

Massis Sarkes, private citizen

Elizabeth Michnik, private citizen

Anna Madden, private citizen

Eva Krahn, private citizen

Donald Michnik, private citizen

Ruby Warren, private citizen

Brendan Giesbrecht, private citizen

Marcey Waldner, private citizen
Carol Neufeld, private citizen
Jordan Fehr, private citizen
Rhonda Banman, private citizen
Claudia Dyck, private citizen
Catherine Hart, private citizen
Jillian Freund, private citizen
Bryan Sullivant, private citizen
Elizabeth Heide, private citizen
Sondra Sawatzky, private citizen
Gustav Sawatzky, private citizen
Margaret Wiebe, private citizen
Viola Kraemer, private citizen
Cassia Nelson, private citizen
Tahlia Hiebert, private citizen
Indira Pedersen, private citizen
Julianna Dueck, private citizen
Cheryl Enns, private citizen
Brenda Kroeker, private citizen
Robin Janz, private citizen
Helena Peters, private citizen
Nettie Freund, private citizen
Helena Friesen, private citizen
Naomi Bergeron, private citizen
Amy Martens, private citizen
Pam Reimer, private citizen
Colleen Zacharias, private citizen
Victoria Freund, private citizen
Rhonda Rempel, private citizen
Alana Knelsen, private citizen
Alyssa Knelsen, private citizen
Celine Castro, private citizen
Julia Wall, private citizen
Tammy Klassen, private citizen
Danna McDonald, private citizen
Inna Kraemer, private citizen
Rachael Krahn, private citizen
Nicole Winkler, private citizen
Zachary Freund, private citizen
Shirley Sawatzky, private citizen
Nathan Unger, private citizen
Adam Wiebe, private citizen
David Betker, private citizen
Linda Churchill, private citizen
Tracy Friesen, private citizen
Eva Guenter, private citizen
Cynthia Klassen, private citizen
Margie Loewen, private citizen
Margaret Ketler, private citizen
Jessica Dyck, private citizen
Rebecca Waldner, private citizen
Arev Melkon, private citizen
Juan Friesen, private citizen

Bob Hildebrandt, private citizen
Elizabeth Hildebrandt, private citizen
Daniel Laurence, private citizen
Shayna Hart, private citizen
Edward Brost, private citizen
Aasher Kataria, private citizen
Steven Freund, private citizen
Chelsea Hoffman, private citizen
Sarah Wall, private citizen
Cornie Wall, private citizen
Brendalee Reimer, private citizen
Arthur Aidarkhanov, private citizen
Jodi Janzen, private citizen
Rachel Hiebert, private citizen
Andrea Wiebe, private citizen
Helene Engbrecht, private citizen
Vikin Sarkes, private citizen
Irene Bindi, private citizen
Crystal Wall, private citizen
Victor Mondaca, private citizen
Ana Penner, private citizen
Barbara Teichroeb, private citizen
Wilhelm Zacharias, private citizen
Randy Hiebert, private citizen
Vanessa Rodas, private citizen
Mabel Neufeld, private citizen
Judy Betker, private citizen
Esther Wiebe, private citizen
Cheryl Pecus, private citizen
Tanner Fehr, private citizen
Brenda Peters, private citizen
Donna Molberg, private citizen
Jenna Dyck, private citizen
Barb Neudorf, private citizen
Justina Dyck, private citizen
Richard Peters, private citizen
Will Klassen, private citizen
Anna Toews, private citizen
Aaron Zacharias, private citizen
Janelle Colbourne, private citizen
Caleb Waldner, private citizen
Jeremiah Dyck, private citizen
Tammy Harder, private citizen
Julie Wall, private citizen
Peggy Peters, private citizen
Curtis Hildebrand, private citizen
Shirley Watt, private citizen
Diane Falk, private citizen
Sarah Broad, private citizen
Melanie Hildebrand, private citizen
Nicole Wiebe, private citizen
Henry Giesbrecht, private citizen
Lesley Dalrymple, private citizen

Alex Watt, private citizen
Patsy Penner, private citizen
Carol Neisteter, private citizen
Dorothy Giesbrecht, private citizen
Jack Giesbrecht, private citizen
Bonnie Friesen, private citizen
Ron Neisteter, private citizen
Charlotte McCrar, private citizen
Jake Klassen, private citizen
Sharon Schroeder, private citizen
Abe Redekop, private citizen
Myrna Giesbrecht, private citizen
Sharon Nield, private citizen
Esther Hoepfner, private citizen
Pauline Mahmood, private citizen
Carol Fehr, private citizen
Linda Hildebrandt, private citizen
Crystal Driedger, private citizen
Pratima Manuel, private citizen
Irene Letkeman, private citizen
Dario Sidler, private citizen
Brya Enns, private citizen
Maria Neufeld, private citizen
Marge Hoepfner, private citizen
Brenda Wooley, private citizen
Carolyn Klassen, private citizen
Brent Wiebe, private citizen
Mark Warms, private citizen
Janice Thompson, private citizen
Lynn Giesbrecht, private citizen
Jan Wollmann, private citizen
Lorraine Penner, private citizen
Mary Tarka, private citizen
Nicole Thiessen, private citizen
Jonathan Young, private citizen
Stanley Neufeld, private citizen
Lori Wiens, private citizen
Bev Hamm, private citizen
Jennifer Giesbrecht, private citizen
Jake Peters, private citizen
Kathy Bueckert, private citizen
Abe Neufeld, private citizen
Judy Penner, private citizen
Judith Loszchuk, private citizen
Bruce Wooley, private citizen
Shauna Peters, private citizen
L. Grant Morrison, private citizen
Laura Hatfield, private citizen
Caleb Martens, private citizen
Cliff Wiebe, private citizen
Cindy Schulz, private citizen
Reynold Schulz, private citizen
Davey Bonser, private citizen

Teresa Hildebrand, private citizen
Amanda Livingstone, private citizen
Danielle Hart, private citizen
Irma Syganiec, private citizen
Kimbal Hyska, private citizen
Colleen Rogers, private citizen
Lindsey Childs, private citizen
Dan Saul, private citizen
Liz Lylyk, private citizen
Amber Vandenberg, private citizen
Rosanne Loewen, private citizen
Brett Kozak, private citizen
Michael Lesperance, private citizen
Alexis Lam, private citizen
Elaine Burland, private citizen
Raquel Driedger, private citizen
Eliana Dueck, private citizen
Keith Johnson, private citizen
Feng Xu, private citizen
Crystal Johnson, private citizen
David Puranen, private citizen
Leah McDonnell, private citizen
Matthew Schiller, private citizen
Paul Navidad, private citizen
Darren Pawella, private citizen
Logan Wall, private citizen
Chrystal Neault-Lount, private citizen
Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour
Samantha Stevens, private citizen
Lex van Dyck, private citizen
Carey Richards, private citizen
Joey Moore, private citizen
Judy Walker, private citizen
George Friesen, private citizen
Mary Klassen, private citizen
Mikayla Hunter, private citizen

MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Bill 9 – The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (2)

Bill 13 – The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2025

Bill 32 – The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities)

Bill 35 – The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Bill 36 – The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Bill 43 – The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

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Clerk Assistant (Ms. Katerina Tefft): Good morning. Will the Standing Committee on Justice please come to order.

Before the committee can proceed with the business before it, it must elect a Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Yes, I'd like to nominate MLA Dela Cruz.

Clerk Assistant: MLA Dela Cruz has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, MLA Dela Cruz, will you please take the Chair.

The Chairperson: Our next item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Wiebe: I'd like to nominate MLA Corbett.

The Chairperson: MLA Corbett has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, MLA Corbett is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 9, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (2); Bill 13, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2025; Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities); Bill 35, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 36, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act; and Bill 43, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act.

I would like to inform all in attendance of the provisions in our rules regarding the hour of adjournment. The standing—a standing committee meeting is considered—or to consider a bill must not sit past midnight to hear public presentations or to consider clause by clause of a bill, except by unanimous consent of the committee.

I would also like to inform all members of the public gallery of the rules of decorum for standing committees. Please note that any participation from the gallery is not allowed. Specific examples of actions that are not allowed include clapping, cheering or interrupting presentations. Taking photos or video of the meeting is also not allowed. And please set your phones to mute as well.

I thank everyone in advance for their co-operation with these guidelines.

Now, here are some public presentation guidelines. Prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in a committee. In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations with another five minutes allowed for questions from the committee. Questions shall not exceed 45 seconds in length with no time limit for answers. Questions may be addressed to presenters in the following rotation: first, the minister sponsoring the bill or another member of their caucus; second, a member of the official opposition; and third, an independent member.

If a presenter is not in attendance when their name is called, they will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they will be removed from the presenters list.

The proceedings of our meetings are recorded in order to provide a verbatim transcript. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA or a presenter, I first, as the Chair, have to say the person's name. This is the signal for Hansard to record—the Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

On the topic of determining the order of public presentations, I will note that we have out-of-town presenters registered, marked with an asterisk on the list.

With this consideration in mind, in what order does the committee wish to hear the presentations?

Mr. Wiebe: If I can just suggest, because we have, first of all, a presenter for another bill, so if we can consider the bills numerically.

* (09:10)

And then, because there have been some folks both from out of town and who have dropped to the bottom of the list, can I suggest that we simply follow the order as printed by the sheet provided by the clerks?

The Chairperson: Okay, there has been a recommendation from Minister Wiebe that bills be considered numerically as well as presenters numerically.

What is the will of the committee? *[Agreed]*

Thank you for your patience, and now we will proceed with public presentations on Bill 9, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (2).

I will now call upon Shannon Sala.

So Shannon Sala, having not been present once, her name will be dropped from the list.

Bill 43—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

The Chairperson: We will now proceed with presentations on Bill 43, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act.

We'll now call upon Ms. Sonja Stone. Ms. Sonja Stone?

Okay, Ms. Sonja Stone has been called once. Seeing that they are not present, we will drop her down to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Mandalyn Unger, who joins virtually.

We're not seeing Madalyn [*phonetic*] Unger online. We'll be dropping their name down to the bottom of the list.

Next, Erica McNabb? And they joining us online.

Erica McNabb, please proceed with your presentation when you're ready.

Erica McNabb, in order to present, you'll need to accept the promotion to panelist. Erica? Once you're ready, you may proceed with your presentation.

So Erica has left the call and so we will drop her name—their name down to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Mr. Dayne Moyer.

Mr. Moyer, please proceed with your presentation.

Dayne Moyer (Private Citizen): Good morning, everyone.

I am hopeful that I will be able to speak to this amendment today, as I found that at our previous hearing, not much was spoken on the actual meat of the issue.

So this is much ado about nothing. In the history of Commonwealth law, we have created laws; we have found cracks, and we have filled those cracks. Nothing more is happening today. There are no slippery slopes. There's no changing to the act to allow additional investigation in human rights violations. We're simply protecting an identity group that we have found we have not been protecting.

As a transgender man, I feel confident that my identity is protected fully under the Human Rights Commission of Manitoba, under gender identity. I do not believe that the identity of transgender people is up for debate or discussion today; it has been enshrined for years. And I resent that people have

come here today to speak about transgender individuals with ignorance and with, quite frankly, some hatred.

Being said, there have been times in this province where my rights have not been protected under gender expression, specifically during the times that I have been pregnant in this province because I am a man and that is my gender identity and when I am pregnant, my gender expression does not necessarily align because, quite frankly, I'm gestating human—you can tell.

We need to protect gender identity because it does not always align with gender expression, and that is what the experts and the individuals who run the Human Rights Commission have come and told you. I think that needs to be considered deeply.

When I gave birth to my first child in this province, I had life-threatening complications. I had been a parent for one week and I might not have continued to be a parent had I not gone to the hospital and had those interventions. I had some of the best health support that I could've received from an incredible medical team.

And I will never forget that one of the nurses that supported me before a surgery to save my life, an experienced nurse, a well-meaning nurse who wanted to respect my dignity, could not stop shaking. I bet you that she had put an IV in someone's arm more than a thousand times, and she was not afraid of inserting an IV; she was afraid of misgendering me. Not because of what the Conservatives on this side of this table will have you believe, that she thought that she would be persecuted or that a human rights complaint would be filed against her; but because she deeply cared about my dignity.

Now, I think it is difficult, if not impossible to create professional development training workshops and to assist the professionals in this province who care about everyone, to learn more about how to protect gender expression if it's not enshrined as a human right. I can only imagine pitching for professional development of saying: We may protect gender expression in the future. Can we do professional development on this?

However, if it is an enshrined human right, it's quite easy to justify working towards our health-care professionals, our teachers, all of the people in this province who want to care for everyone having the opportunity to learn about how to protect everyone's dignity.

Enshrining gender expression not only gives people the opportunity to file a complaint, should that be necessary, but it also sends a message to Manitobans

that we are protecting this identity group and that it is imperative that we train the professionals dealing with the public every day on what it is. We've heard from a lot of folks who I believe are genuinely afraid that they may somehow 'cantervene' this act by not understanding what gender expression is. Creating protections gives us the opportunity to do so.

Furthermore, I am raising two non-binary children, not because that is their gender identity; they are three and 16 months. My oldest's gender identity is female, male and dragon, all in 10 minutes. They do not have a gender identity to protect. But they do have a gender expression that needs protecting under this act. When my child decides to go to daycare in a hockey jersey one day, in a tutu with stick-on earrings the next, they deserve the dignity and care of child-care providers like every other child.

One thing that my child experiences is having their hair elastics removed. I don't see that happening to the biological females in their daycare centre. Is that a human rights violation that should be investigated? It is not. Am I going to file a complaint to the Human Rights Commission that the daycare is not honouring their preferred pronouns when they refer to them as male? I will not.

* (09:20)

But again, when we enshrine gender identity because it is missing—gender expression, sorry—because it is missing currently from this human rights legislation, we give ourselves more power. You enable me to go into my daycare and say, can I come in the next staff meeting and teach these providers what gender expression looks like, help them understand what my child's pronouns are and help them thrive in a setting that they spend, frankly, a significant amount of time in?

I ask us to look at exactly what this bill is. Like I said, we're not changing how complaints are filed. We're not changing who can be investigated. We're not adding prosecution. What we are doing is we are filling a very small crack, which has been identified by the people who run our Human Rights Commission. We have complaints that come in that don't fall under gender identity but do fall under gender expression, which needs to be protected.

With my last moments what I am going to say is, respectfully, watching these conversations last week I did notice that Conservative members, quite frankly, engaged in fear-mongering tactics. I understand that a member today has a police history. Folks asked if they could be prosecuted. That was an opportunity to say

no. If you have a criminal justice experience, you know that they cannot.

Furthermore, there was a member who had questions for every presenter: Are you worried that if we enshrine gender expression that it will change what it takes to be investigated by the Human Rights Commission? Again, we are not changing what it takes to be investigated by the Human Rights Commission. We are protecting a group that is currently not protected.

And so what I'll say is that all esteemed members of this committee have access to the bill, have staffers to help them run through it, and it's everyone's responsibility to ensure that committee members understand the changes and understand the implications of those changes as leaders in this community. As MLAs you have an obligation to help your constituents navigate these laws. If you use these laws to fear monger, if you use these laws to polarize our community, either you are doing it to grow political clout or you are illiterate, and both are bad.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Moyer.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Thank you very much, Dayne, for your presentation. What a way to kick us off. I appreciate that you've educated yourself. You're helping to educate others.

But I also take your point about training, about further, as you said, education more broadly, and I think that's an important point.

So I appreciate your educated point of view and your presentation. Also appreciate your personal experience that you've shared here, and I do think that it helps in shaping the bill. So thank you very much for your time here today.

The Chairperson: Mr. Moyer, would you like to respond?

D. Moyer: Thank you for the time today.

The Chairperson: Any further questions?

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Dayne, thank you for your presentation. I appreciate hearing from you, as we've heard from many Manitobans who have varying opinions on this bill, so I appreciate your presentation today.

D. Moyer: Thank you very much.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Moyer.

Proceeding down the list, next up is Ms. Lee Ramuscak–Ramuscak. Apologize for the pronunciation of your name. How do you pronounce your last name?

Lee Ramuscak (Private Citizen): My last name is pronounced Ramuscak.

The Chairperson: Ramuscak.

Okay, Ms. Lee Ramoshak [*phonetic*]–Ramuscak, please proceed with your presentation.

L. Ramuscak: To all of the members in this committee meeting today, I, myself, am a transgender woman, and this amendment to this—to the Human Rights Commission is not—like the past presenter had stated, is not to attack anyone or go after people who have made mistakes, such as misgendering a person or not necessarily understanding gender expression. It is to protect a minority group, a group that I am a part of that is not yet protected in The Human Rights Code, and that is the group that represents their gender differently than what they might have been assigned at birth, such as myself. I was assigned male at birth, but I express my gender as female, and my gender identity is as a woman.

And—sorry—and, basically, we are not going—with this bill, it is not to go after anyone at all. It is to protect people like me who are expressing their gender differently, so that it ensures that there is education on how to approach asking someone how they identify and ensuring that in workplaces and schools and just in the community that our gender expression is protected throughout our lives to ensure that there is no discrimination based on gender expression solely and to ensure that people are educated on how people can represent their gender.

And my presentation is very short, but I just want to ensure that all of the members in this room, especially the ones who are using tactics such as fear mongering to make people believe that this is a bill to ensure that we can attack people who are not necessarily understanding of gender expression.

But, no, it's not that. It's to simply ensure that people have the opportunity to be educated on the queer community or people who don't necessarily express their gender in a heteronormative way.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Ramuscak.

Any questions from the committee?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Ms. Ramuscak, for your presentation; short but important. So I appreciate you lending your voice.

I heard the word protect a number of times—protecting folks and especially, as you said, a minority group in this case. I think you hit the heart of what this bill is all about, and so I appreciate your perspective. I appreciate you bringing that lens and specifically talking about protection, which I think is so key here.

So thank you, again, for your presentation.

L. Ramuscak: Of course. Yes, protection is such an important thing, and that's exactly what I wanted to talk about, because as someone who has led multiple education movements throughout my lifetime, I was a person who founded a currently nationally recognized podcast that focuses specifically on educating people about the queer community and gender expression, gender identity and all of those important things.

This bill is very important to me, as well, because it ensures that those protections are the law in Manitoba and so that people can be educated and ensure that they are helping to protect a minority group.

The Chairperson: Any further questions? Oh—[*interjection*] sorry. Any further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Thank you for your presentation. I appreciate it.

You mentioned education and the importance of that. And I think—I just want to make it—if I'm understanding, you've already educated people or you've taken the opportunity to educate people on gender expression?

L. Ramuscak: Yes, that is correct.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: So having already educated people or taken the opportunity to educate people, does this take away or remove that right to educate people, having this bill adopted?

L. Ramuscak: No, it does not take away that right at all. In fact, it ensures that that right is protected to be able to educate people about this specific matter and to ensure that there is education, not necessarily by me who is a former high school student at the time, having to take that initiative, but ensuring that lawmakers such as Honourable Minister Wiebe, that there are lawmakers and people in power who are helping to provide that education, and it's not falling on high school students to have to educate the public or private sectors about these matters.

The Chairperson: Are there any further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you, Ms. Ramuscak for your presentation.

* (09:30)

Proceed down the list.

Virtually, we have Ms. Aro van Dyck joining us.

Seeing as they are not online, we'll drop their name down to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Mx. Dieth de Leon who joins us virtually, online.

Mx. de Leon, please feel welcome to begin your presentation when you are ready.

Dieth de Leon (Bahaghari Pride Manitoba): Hello, can you hear me?

The Chairperson: We can hear you loud and clear.

D. de Leon: Thank you so much. Yes, okay, I'm at work right now, so I'm glad I can join virtually. Okay, just let me do something.

Okay, so before I present I would like to thank you all for be-giving me and the community at large an opportunity to present and express our voices and questions regarding this bill.

So, yes, I can start. So, again, my name is Mx. Deith de Leon, I am the founding president of Bahaghari Manitoba, or translated to Rainbow Manitoba and we are the first 2SLGBTQI not-for-profit organization for the Filipino community here in Manitoba.

As the president of Bahaghari Manitoba, I fully support the inclusion of freedom of gender expression in Bill 43, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act. This is not just a symbolic step. It is a necessary protection for the countless Manitobans whose identity and dignity deserve full recognition under the law.

Gender expression is a core part of who we are as a human being, and affirming it through legislation ensures that everyone, especially 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, can live authentically and safely, free from discrimination and harm.

Please let me be clear: advocating for the rights of marginalized communities is not and will never be an attack on freedom of speech. Human rights do not negate civil liberties; they strengthen them. The inclusion of gender expression in our human rights code simply ensures that no one is silenced, excluded or endangered for being who they are.

Freedom of speech must not be distorted as a shield to protect prejudices. Instead, it must be used responsibly in ways that uplift all voices, especially those that have been long silent. Bahaghari Manitoba stands firmly in solidarity with all communities seeking dignity, safety and justice. We urge our leaders to be on the right side of history by enshrining protections that reflect the rich diversity of Manitoba.

To policymakers and the community at large, this is an important step forward for Canada and Manitoba as we witness alarming rollbacks of the 2SLGBTQIA+ rights and human rights in other parts of the continent. We must choose a different path. We must choose inclusion over division, dignity over fear and justice over regression.

Canada and Manitoba must lead with courage, not copy movements that seek to erase identities. Protecting gender expression is our collective future.

Here's my explanation to counter the misleading rhetoric that protecting gender expression somehow threatens the freedom of speech by linking it to a never-ending colonial and fascist ideology. The rhetoric that protecting gender expressing is a threat to freedom of speech, it's not only misleading; it's deeply rooted in colonial mindsets and fascist framework that aims to control identity and suppress diversity.

Colonial system-enforced rigid gender norms and binary identities are stewards of control, replacing Indigenous and non-Western understanding of gender with Eurocentric patriarchal model. This system erases the fluidity and multiplicity of gender identities that existed long before colonization.

In the Philippines, where I came from, for example, identities like *bakla* [*gay person*], *tomboy* and *bayot* [*gay person*], as well as the roles of *babayan* [*shaman*], reflected a rich tapestry of gender diversity that was criminalized or stigmatized under colonial rule. Fascist ideology similarly weaponized freedom of speech to justify oppression. In this framing, the freedom being protected is actually the unchecked ability of dehumanize and erase marginalized people, especially either 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

But true freedom of speech does not include the right to harm others or deny their existence. Protecting gender expression is not censorship; it is liberation. It is truth that everyone, especially those historically silenced, can live and speak their truth without fear. Dismissing this protection as an attack on free speech reveals a desire to maintain a status quo that privileges

certain voices over others, a hallmark of colonial and fascist control.

My only message to those who oppose the protection of gender expression: this is not about silencing you or silencing others. It is about ensuring that all people, including cis and heterosexual individuals, regardless of how they express their identity, are treated with dignity and safety. Protecting gender expression upholds human rights; it does not take them away. Freedom of speech—again, freedom of speech should never be used as a shield of discrimination and prejudice.

Everyone, including everyone in this room and joining us virtually, we invite ourselves to reflect on where these fears come from and whether they are rooted in justice or in a system that have long oppressed differences. Equality for others does not mean less for you; it means more for all of us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mx. de Leon.

We'll proceed to questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, honourable Chair and Mx. de Leon. What an impressive presentation and I appreciate that you're taking time out of work and that you do this in the broader sense, representing the community. I think it's just phenomenal, so thank you for taking that time.

I really appreciate when you talked about choosing a different path, a path not of division but of unity and bringing people together. I think you've hit the—again, some of the important points of this bill and I think it really just helps to educate and helps the other folks to understand a different perspective, bringing in the perspective of the impact of colonialism as well.

Just a phenomenal presentation, I just want to thank you again for taking the time.

The Chairperson: Mx. de Leon, would you like to respond?

D. de Leon: Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

The Chairperson: Further questions from the committee?

* (09:40)

Mr. Balcaen: To the presenter, Mx. de Leon, thank you for your presentation. We appreciate it very much. Gives a good perspective of all sides of this issue, so thank you again for taking the time today, especially away from work to present here.

The Chairperson: Mx. de Leon, would you like to respond?

D. de Leon: Thank you again for this opportunity, and I appreciate you lending an open ear, open heart and open soul. Thank you again so much.

The Chairperson: Thank you again, Mx. De Leon.

Any further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, we will proceed to the next presenter. Next on the list is Mx. Lex van Dyck.

Ms. Lex van Dyck—or Mx. Lex van Dyck?

We'll drop their name down to the bottom of the list. Next we have the virtual note, Lila Asher. Lila Asher will be joining online shortly.

Lila, please feel welcome to begin your presentation.

Lila Asher (Private Citizen): Hi there. Can you all hear me okay?

The Chairperson: Loud and clear.

L. Asher: Okay, great. Thank you.

My presentation today is super brief. Thank you to the committee for allowing me to be here with you and to present virtually.

I'm here to speak in favour of Bill 43. The proposed amendment is a common-sense step to protect people from discrimination, and I thank this government and the Honourable Minister Wiebe for bringing it forward.

I'm only here today because I heard there would be a lot of people speaking against the bill, and I think we saw that in the first round, like the first day of presentations, and people who were speaking against freedom of gender expression and against equality for trans and queer people like me. I'm alarmed by the violence and erasure that my trans siblings south of the border are experiencing, and I don't want to see those dynamics come here to Manitoba.

A lot of people have spoken very eloquently to this bill already, so I'm just here to say that my friends and I all support this bill and we would like to see it proceed smoothly into law.

Thank you, and that's it.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Lila.

Questions from the committee?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Lila, for taking the time to present here today. I think it's important that you do lend your voice, and I do think that you're part of a larger group in Manitoba that really sees the value in protecting everyone—wants to make sure that those

most vulnerable are protected. And by lending your voice, I think you've done a great job in expressing that larger sentiment.

So thank you again for presenting here today.

The Chairperson: Lila, if you would like to respond?

L. Asher: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: More of a comment than a question. Again, thank you, Lila, for your presentation. It's great to see people come out exercising their democratic right to speak at the committee. Manitoba's one of the few places that still has this right. So appreciate you bringing forward your comments.

The Chairperson: Lila, again, if you would like to respond.

L. Asher: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Lila.

Any further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you again, Lila.

We will proceed down the list. Corey Wilson is next.

Seeing that Corey is not joining us online either, we'll drop their name down to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Mr. Jackson Unger. Mr. Jackson Unger will be joining us briefly online.

Mr. Unger, when you are ready to present, please begin.

Jackson Unger (Private Citizen): Hello, can you hear me?

The Chairperson: We can hear you.

J. Unger: All right, thank you very much.

I'm Jackson Unger. I'm committee co-chair for the—for CUPE Manitoba, but I'm speaking today as a private citizen.

Thank you to everyone who has been fighting for this for a long time, and thank you to all who have made their voices heard in defence of this bill.

The inclusion of gender expression in our Human Rights Code is not and will not be a way to take away anyone else's freedoms. Instead, it is needed for those in environments that are and continue to be heavily discriminatory, often explicitly hateful and toxic to 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Coming from rural Manitoba and leaving due to lack of inclusive support systems while feeling extremely unsafe and alone, if this bill passes and communities are properly informed and supported, then those in similar circumstances now may be given a fighting chance to find and build and sustain 2SLGBTQ+ community resources close to home.

Last year, I spent the summer volunteering to attend a number of rural Prides. Most, if not all, had a number of counter-protestors. Pembina Valley Pride had an influx of harassment. Their food trucks pulled out due to threats of vandalism, and drag queens were—drag queens received death threats. Despite it all, due to our brave community, it was a beautiful, empowering event.

People deserve to be who they are and to explore gender expression on their own terms, not to suit others' comfortability. When doing so, especially those who continue to be in unsafe environments, need a way to ensure their own safety. This bill will give individuals and entire communities a way to fight back when being faced with discrimination or harassment due to gender expression, while seeking basic standards of living, such as housing, employment, food resources and social support.

Let's continue to build resources and safe spaces for those who are forced to hide or flee to larger cities for their own safety.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Unger.

We'll now proceed to questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you very much, Mr. Unger, for your presentation. I really appreciate the efforts that you're taking to support folks in rural Manitoba and to bring that perspective here today. I think that's really key.

And I appreciate that you've highlighted safety as being one of the key points that we're attempting to address here with this bill, give people that safety and give them that assurance that they've got that protection here in Manitoba.

I'll just point out, you know, you spend time in rural—at rural Pride festivals; I'm sure you see it all the time, some of the concerns that the community has, but I appreciate that you are helping to support those efforts and support that safety. So, thank you for presenting here today.

The Chairperson: Mr. Unger, would you like to respond?

J. Unger: Thank you so much. Rural communities are always the top of my mind. It's where my family is and it's where I grew up, so I will always try to be a voice for those in those communities.

The Chairperson: Further questions from the committee?

Mr. Balcaen: Well, thank you very much, Jackson, for your informative presentation. Appreciate the fact that, you know, you've taken the time to deliver your message and the feelings of rural Manitoba. So, thank you for being here today.

The Chairperson: Mr. Unger, if you would like to respond?

J. Unger: Thank you very much.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Unger. Any further questions from the committee?

Seeing no further questions, thank you, again, and we will continue down the list.

Next we have Ms. Rhiannon Frost.

Thank you, Ms. Frost. You may begin your presentation.

Rhiannon Frost (Private Citizen): As we've been saying, we need protection. We've been harassed; we've been told, oh, you're not welcome to this space, we want you to leave, you shouldn't be in the building, you shouldn't be in the store, you shouldn't be in the restaurant, you shouldn't be in—at the festival or whatever.

But that's not right. I've experienced harassment, violence, as a trans person, and believe you me, it's not a pretty sight. I'm sure my sisters and brothers can identify with that.

* (09:50)

I have been harassed most of my life. The last place I lived at, I was harassed. The place I'm living at now, I'm having a problem with some of the males that can't get used to me being in the building, but I'm renting an apartment, so that's their problem. So if I want to express myself a certain way, I should be able to. I'm not stepping on anybody's rights or religion or beliefs.

The other side wants us to believe that it's going to be the end of the world if you give us gender expression, and it won't be the end of the world.

I heard the same rhetoric in the States, and I see it, and it's disgusting. And a gentleman the other night, on Thursday night, Jewish gentleman said that the

Christian church should be ashamed of themselves for prosecuting us for trying to live our lives the way we want to live our lives and express ourselves. We're not bothering you, we're not coming into your church and tipping over your Bibles or your choir books or harassing your kids or whatever, which is a bunch of baloney which some churches want you to believe, and that's not true.

I believe in this bill. I support this bill. I believe this bill is the right thing for the government to do.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Frost.

We will proceed with questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Rhiannon, and thank you for your presentation here today.

You talked about spaces you weren't welcome in, you weren't comfortable in. I hope you feel comfortable here, I hope you feel welcome here. This is the people's building, this is the process that, I think, everyone agrees is so vital to what we do in the democratic process in Manitoba.

I just wanted to thank you. You're giving, I think, a really good perspective on, you know, how you're living your life and you're expressing your gender and how that really is—needs to be protected through this legislation. So I just wanted to thank you for your time.

R. Frost: Where I volunteer—I volunteer at a lot of places, and a lot of festivals. A couple of years ago, somebody said something to me at the comedy festival, I was minding my own business. They said something, I mentioned it to the people that run the comedy festival. The comedy festival put in a protocol, so did the Manitoba royal theatre centre, so did the Manitoba theatre centre for young people, so did the West End Cultural Centre.

And so, I am protected. If I want to use my pronouns, that doesn't 'inhinge' on your rights. That's who I'm supposed to be called. I'm he—I'm she, her, they and them. I'm not what, him, freak, whatever you want to call me. I'm not a cross-dresser. I'm not a drag queen.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Frost.

Further questions from the committee?

Mr. Balcaen: Ms. Frost, thank you very much for your presentation today. It's greatly appreciated to hear from all Manitobans here, and I appreciate hearing your views.

The Chairperson: Ms. Frost? Oh—thank you, Ms. Frost.

Moving along the list, next we have Ms. Lara Rae.

Seeing as they are not present online, we will drop their name to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Wren Robertson.

Wren Robertson?

I'll drop their name to the bottom of the list as well.

Moving along, Carey Richards. Carey has sent their regrets for today.

Next we have Mr. Alevtin Pankov, who joins us online.

Mr. Pankov, please begin your presentation when you are ready.

Alevtin Pankov (Private Citizen): Hello. Hare Krishna for everyone. Today, I'm joining you from work. My sound is good, everybody can hear me?

The Chairperson: We can hear you.

A. Pankov: Awesome. Fantastic. Okay, thank you so much for letting me speak. It's very important, things that I never participated in before. I came from the Ukraine and I have to say that the Canada is something there where we are learning from how to protect the rights and how to be human orientated.

So I am a resident of Manitoba, right now, and I am a spiritual practitioner in the Vaishnava tradition and I'm also a transgender person.

I came here, not like an expert, not as a lawyer, but someone who's lived on the edges, I need to say, of identity, of faith, of public understanding. I want to speak from the heart today, not just about the policy, but about something deeper. It's how we recognize each other as human beings.

Because what's being discussed in the Bill 43, including the recognition of gender identity and gender expression, it isn't abstract for people like me. It's not theory; it's about whether we are seen, whether our safety and dignity and even our existence are accepted as real, and worse, for protection.

I experienced what happens when people don't understand or don't want to understand, let's say, what it means to be trans woman, trans man, non-binary people. But I also experienced kindness, grace and the power of the brain, met with a curiosity and respect instead of judgment.

I want to speak for both of those realities today. As someone who follows a spiritual path, I try to see the world, not in the terms of labels, but through the lens of the soul. In the Bhagavad Gita, an ancient

spiritual text from India, Lord Krishna said: The wise see with equal vision. A learned priest, a cow, an elephant, a dog, even a dog eater, we are all equal.

That might sound poetic but it's also profoundly 'practical.' It means that no matter what someone looks like, where they come from, or how they express their identity, they are first and foremost a soul. And the more our love is reflected, the kind and respect, not just for categories of the people, but for the humans, so the stronger we are as a society.

Bill 43 is a step in that direction. But it must be more than symbolic. It must be lived in policy, in language, in protection, not just for trans people but for anyone whose life doesn't fit in the default assumptions of the majority. Because real human rights, being where comfort ends, when we are willing to protect even what we don't fully understand. That's not weakness. This is maturity, actually.

In my spiritual tradition we say: You cannot serve God if you harm his children. I believe our province can be a place where we not only tolerate differences, we honour them; be where we make room, legally and culturally, for people to live with dignity, safety and spiritual freedom.

Let this bill be more than language. Let it be a step towards something sacred, to understanding that every being deserves to be seen, protected and respected simply because they are alive.

Thank you so much. Hare Krishna.

The Chairperson: Mr. Pankov, thank you.

We will now proceed to questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Mr. Pankov, you started by saying you weren't an expert, but the perspective that you brought I thought was so complex and painted such an interesting tapestry that I would argue with that. I would say you are an expert. You're an expert in bringing that perspective here today.

I also appreciated the—you know, bringing your spirituality into this; your perspective as a newcomer to this country—so many pieces of your presentation I think spoke to really what this is all about: it's bringing people together.

So, just wanted to thank you for taking the time. And especially, stepping directly out of work to do that, so thank you again.

The Chairperson: Mr. Pankov, if you would like to respond?

A. Pankov: Thank you so much. I just appreciate for this opportunity to speak and I deeply appreciate that you sincerely listened from the heart, my speaking. Thank you for every participant today.

The Chairperson: Further questions from the committee?

* (10:00)

Mr. Balcaen: Mr. Pankov, thank you very much for bringing your views forward today, particularly the fact that you're at work today and you took the time out to do that. So it's much appreciated.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: I'm seeing no further questions from the committee.

Thank you again, Mr. Pankov.

Continue further down the list. *[interjection]* Oh, my apologies. Mr. Pankov, would you like to respond to that?

A. Pankov: Oh, no. Just the same. Very appreciated. Have a fantastic day.

The Chairperson: My apologies again. Thank you so much for coming to present.

Next on the list, we have Mr. Reece Malone.

Mr. Malone, please proceed with your presentation.

Reece Malone (Diversity Essentials): Greetings and thank you, honourable members and committee.

My name is Dr. Reece Malone. I'm a certified sexologist and private therapist, specializing in equity and human sexuality. I'm the CEO of Diversity Essentials and serve on the Human Rights Committee of Council for the City of Winnipeg. I was born in Altona, a first-generation Filipino Canadian, a person of faith with a Catholic background, and I'm both an ally and part of the gender- and sexuality-diverse communities.

With over 25 years' experience, I've worked closely with organizations and communities across sectors, faiths and political spheres and have witnessed the profound impact that inclusive or absent legal protections have on people's lives.

Today, I urge you to support the explicit inclusion of gender expression under the Manitoba human rights act, not just to affirm dignity but to uphold the values of equity, fairness and safety of all Manitobans.

Several previous presenters have blurred the distinction between gender identity and gender expression

while also misunderstanding the process and criteria involved in applying human rights legislation. This highlights a presenting need for greater public education, not only to correct misinformation but to prevent the misuse of ignorance and self-interest in defending established rights and, at worse, the dehumanization of already marginalized communities as a means to oppose a vital amendment and obstruct necessary legal progress.

It is imperative to understand gender identity and gender expression intersect but they are not synonymous. Failing to explicitly protect gender expression leaves a dangerous gap with real-life consequences including harassment at work and in schools, denial of services, verbal and physical assault and social ostracism.

Egale Canada reports that over 70 per cent of gender-diverse students experience verbal harassment, and more than 20 per cent face physical assault, often due to how they express themselves, not solely because of their stated gender identity.

The 2015 Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey found unsupported youth are significantly more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. Conversely, a 2020 Journal of Adolescent Health survey showed that youth who were affirmed in their gender expression had 50 per cent lower rates of depression and higher self esteem.

Research shows that rigid gender norms don't only harm transgender or non-binary individuals, they impact cisgender adults too. Studies from Gordon and Meyer and the journal of Gender & Society show that 22 per cent of cisgender men who are emotionally expressive and 35 per cent of cisgender women who are assertive experience discrimination simply for defying traditional gender roles. When people are protected in how they express themselves, they thrive socially, economically and emotionally.

Let's talk about the broader impact because legislation doesn't just protect trans and gender-diverse individuals; it protects all of us, including those who are not two-spirit, transgender and non-binary. Gender expression is universal; it affects every single person every day, from the length of our hair to the clothes that we wear. How we present ourselves is constantly influenced by gendered expectations. These norms affect how we interact at work, at school and in our communities.

As a therapist, I see cisgender clients harmed by these norms. For example, a softer spoken, less boister-

ous man, labelled weak in his male-dominated industry to be further bullied when reported to management—reporting to management—being told to pull up his big-girl panties. A confident woman executive leader in our community called too aggressive compared to her male peers and often assumes the task of ordering lunch when my company delivered a workshop on gender identity. A male dancer or a woman excelling in STEM, both discouraged or driven out of their professions for defying gendered expectations.

Protecting gender expression creates space for everyone to live authentically without fear of ridicule, discrimination or punishment. Through an intersectional lens, the need becomes even more clear and urgent. Discrimination is compounded when gender expression intersects with other identities, such as race, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation and more. This intersection of identities can create layer barriers to safety, opportunity and equity.

For example, a racialized adolescent who is gender non-conforming is more likely to be overpoliced and profiled in public spaces because of implicit racial bias and their gender expression. An Indigenous two-spirit person experiences cultural erasure for their expression and violence rooted in colonial legacies and systemic racism. A person with a disability who expresses an aspect of gender non-conformity facing discrimination in accessing a health-care system that assumes a limited binary view of gender expression and ability. A transgender woman who expresses masculinity denied access to safe housing from a violent partner because she doesn't look feminine enough despite her identity.

In each of these real cases, it is not simply the expression of gender that puts individuals at risk; it is how that expression intersects with other visible or marginalized identities that increase risk, underscoring the imperativeness of legislative change.

Explicit legal recognition is a step to making our systems more responsible, equitable, and more tuned to the full spectrum of the lived realities of Manitobans. If we fail to act, we fail those who experience discrimination most acutely and persistently.

There are public health and economic costs, too. The Mental Health Commission of Canada estimates that mental health challenges cost Canada \$50 billion annually. Psychologically safe workplaces where expression is respected report fewer disability claims, less absenteeism and higher retention. Deloitte's 2022 equity imperative report shows that inclusive workplaces explicitly protecting gender expression see

30 per cent higher team performance, 22 per cent higher productivity and 39 per cent increased employee well-being. These aren't trivial metrics. They represent a—they represent stronger economies and healthier communities.

Some opponents have expressed concern that protecting gender expression may conflict with their religious beliefs or personal convictions—for example, being asked to use affirming pronouns, share a wash-room space or be served by a transgender health-care provider.

It is essential to understand that in Canada, rights are not absolute. No right overrides all others. Our legal framework, guided by both the Charter and human rights law, recognizes that rights sometimes intersect. In those cases, the goal is not to eliminate one right in favour of another but to balance and reconcile them as fully as possible in a way that respects the dignity of all individuals.

The Supreme Court of Canada has been clear: The right to religious belief is fully protected, but the practice of that belief in public or professional settings does not extend to actions that harm others. Refusing to use someone's correct pronouns, denying someone service or objecting to gender-inclusive spaces isn't simply the expression of a belief. It becomes an act of exclusion that undermines another person's right to safety, access and equal treatment.

In Manitoba, belief is protected. Discrimination based on gender expression is not. This amendment does not force anyone to abandon their beliefs. It hasn't with mine. It does not criminalize faith or belief. It does what human rights law is meant to do: uphold dignity and ensure fairness while preventing harm.

* (10:10)

Protecting gender expression is not a zero-sum game. It is a commitment to the kind of society where we all can live, work and exist with equal respect and opportunity. And as we know, Manitoba is behind other Canadian jurisdictions.

Federally, gender expression is protected since 2017, and this means a Manitoban resident may have protection under federal law but not under provincial law in key areas like housing, health care, education, employment, where provincial legislation applies. And this inconsistency creates confusion and allows discrimination to persist.

Inaction sends the wrong message. It signals that Manitoba is not committed to equity. It discourages

talent retention. It defines who belongs in this province and who doesn't.

Inclusion is not a threat to tradition; it complements and strengthens it. It reflects our values. It evolves justice and a reflection of our diversity.

Thank you for your time, your attention and for considering this vital, historic amendment to our province's human rights protections.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Malone.

We will proceed with questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Well thank you very much, Dr. Malone, for your presentation.

Obviously, bringing in research, bringing sort of—from an academic point of view or from a—you know, again, the practice that you are involved with I think is important for the committee.

I also really appreciated that you brought in the idea that this isn't just for folks within the LGBTQIA community, but really for everyone. And I appreciated that cisgender, everyone, you know, are protected by this. So I appreciated that perspective, and thank you for taking the time and adding your voice to this.

The Chairperson: Mr. Malone, would you like to respond?

R. Malone: Thank you.

When I brought this issue to the attention of the Human Rights Commission two years ago, it was with the motivation of the clients that I see when I do professional work as well as when I do private work, and majority of people that I serve actually are heterosexual and cisgender identified.

While my heart is with the 2SLGBT community, I was thinking much more broadly in terms of who is impacted beyond a narrow scope, and the majority of complaints and hurts and discriminations and micro-aggressions that have come to me are in fact from cisgender, heterosexual people who feel harmed and not protected even when they are invited to report their experience of discrimination to management, to then further be discriminated by management.

And so this was part of the motivation why I brought this to the attention.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Thank you, Dr. Malone. Appreciate your presentation and, you know, your wide view on this.

So thank you for attending today in person and taking the time out of your day to present to us.

The Chairperson: Mr. Malone, would you like to respond?

R. Malone: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you, again.

We'll proceed down the list. Next we have Ms. Adrian Cheater.

Seeing as they are not online, we will drop their name down to the bottom of the list.

Next, we have Mx. Ashlyn Noble.

Mx. Noble, please proceed with your presentation.

Ashlyn Noble (Private Citizen): Good morning. My name is Ashlyn Noble. My pronouns are they and she, and I feed people. I make a mutual aid, pay-what-you-can community meal once a week that's open to anybody, but queer people, especially visibly queer people, tend to not be the most food-secure demographic.

So I shove my cooking at them relentlessly, and many weeks I find myself asking: How do I convince more people to take free food when I know that they need it? It's a problem that I have.

Contrary to a lot of what I've heard last week, queer folks aren't out here demanding difficult things left and right. We want to tell people who we are and have that believed and respected in the workplace and while receiving services. Noblewhimsical.com/wfd stands for what's for dinner, if any of my queer folks online need a meal.

This whole thing has been so completely absurd. Of course, we know that the higher suicide and mortality rate for trans folks almost entirely goes away when they are loved and accepted for who they are. We know that when trans people are respected for their equal worth and dignity and the knowledge that they possess about their own identities, they thrive in equal measure.

So many of my fellow citizens this week have whined about having their speech curtailed, of not being able to follow their conscience. Let's be clear: these folks are wishing for a world in which they can freely disrespect people they see as beneath them, in which their perceptions override those people's actual identities. I bet that there are a good number of people who—and other words that they wish that they could still use in public that fell out of fashion for good

reason. Luckily for them, most will never fall under the jurisdiction of this amendment.

This whole thing is so silly. We know that our entire beautiful, diverse province isn't bound by the rules of one ridiculous ancient religion. Other people have told a lot of Bible stories last week related to how this change will impact children, so I'm going to trade a couple of my favourite passages that feature children.

One, of course, the extremely iconic story of Abraham and his son Isaac. You all know where I'm going with this. Abraham is rewarded for unquestioningly attempted—attempting to murder his own son. I don't know about you, but if there was a relationship there, if that was a relationship that I was in, I would leave that guy who talked me into killing my child to prove my loyalty, even if right after, he was like, just kidding.

My absolute favourite Bible story, however, that illustrates how much the Christian god cares for children is 2 Kings 2:23, very conveniently memorisable verse. I'm just going to quote this one in full so you know that I'm not paraphrasing: From there, Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some boys came out of the town and jeered at him. Get out of here, baldy, they said. Get out of here, baldy. He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the Lord. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of the boys, and he went on to Mount Carmel and, from there, returned to Samaria.

That's it. That's the whole story. There's no big moral here. Some kids called him bald, and God sent bears to kill 42 children. So I think we can agree that the Bible is not a great authority when it comes to the question of what should we base our human rights code on.

Most of the other arguments presented last week were also patently ridiculous. My fellow citizens have insisted, with straight faces, that there have only been two genders since the dawn of time—a shock to Indigenous folks everywhere, for one thing.

This is an excellent example about how of all of these issues here are intertwined, intersectional, even interdisciplinary.

We learn in elementary school that the states of matter are solid, gas, liquid, maybe plasma. But if you keep learning after elementary school, you learn about how glass is just a little different than a solid. And then there are superconductors, which are totally unlike anything else, and photonic matter is way weirder. But

they're all states of matter, even if you only learned the simple version when you were 10.

Similarly, sex and gender are so incredibly diverse and strange in nature. There are at least 16 configurations just for our sex chromosomes. Routine chromosome testing or karyotyping reveals otherwise undetectable surprises shockingly often. That's why we don't do genetic testing in university and high school labs anymore.

So there's no genetic or supernatural reason to be a jerk to someone about their gender expression, about what kinds of cloth they drape over their flesh prisons, about what parts of speech they prefer to use for themselves that don't injure anyone else, or about any other silly fragment of joy that we can wrest from our decaying civilization. And we can't let Saskatchewan beat us to getting this on the record.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

As a sidebar, I just want to note: if you take the safety and rights of private citizens speaking up to this committee seriously, as you have repeatedly indicated that you do, I urge you to take a second look at the practice of sharing the full names and email addresses of everyone who has signed up to speak for and against the bill with each other. That seems like a shocking breach of privacy that we were not warned about in advance. And since it has happened twice with both of the times that we have been given the Zoom link, I expect that it is a regular practice that you should stop.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mx. Noble.

We'll proceed with questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Ashlyn, for your presentation. It's—I appreciate you talked about feeding people. Sometimes it's those simple things, right, that can show so much love and support, and so I appreciate that you do that. And likewise, I think presenting at this committee, sharing your view, sharing your thoughts, may be a simple thing—maybe you disagree with me; you had to stand up here and do the presentation—but I think it's so important, and it really does matter. So thank you for your voice and for being here today.

* (10:20)

The Chairperson: Mx. Noble, would you like to respond on the record?

A. Noble: That's all. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Noble, thank you for your presentation. Again, appreciate what you brought forward and your views on this. And again, thank you for taking the time to be here in person.

The Chairperson: Would you like to respond on the record?

A. Noble: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you again, Mx. Noble.

Any further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, we will also take note of the concern that you flagged for us as well. Thank you, again, for your time.

Next, we have Lauren Bailey. Lauren Bailey will be joining us on Zoom shortly.

Lauren, you may begin your presentation when you are ready. Lauren, please proceed with your presentation.

Lauren Bailey (Private Citizen): Thank you very much.

Good morning to the ministers of the committee and to the public. Thank you for hearing us today and last week. And a special thanks to the chairs for handling the volume of presentations as expeditiously as possible.

My name is Lauren Bailey. My pronouns are they and them. And I am here virtually to support Bill 43 as a middle-aged, genderqueer Manitoban. For those unsure, genderqueer falls under the trans umbrella. For those who think me confused, I am more than willing to talk you through my lengthy, years-long discovery process in a more informal setting.

In these hearings, we've had many eloquent people speak on why this bill is important and why gender expression should be enshrined as a protected characteristic. While I cannot hope to match their power or their bravery, I want to present a very small window into my extremely privileged life and why my gender expression is so important to me. I wrote this presentation last Thursday, so some of the references are a little bit outdated, but I will try to catch them as they come by.

I started a new job last week; Thursday, in fact. I am a technical communicator at a provincial Crown corporation, and I work primarily from home for medical reasons. Thank you to CUPE for that right.

For my first day of this new role, I went into the office for the first time in several years, and I met

members, both of my old and new teams. The night previous, I carefully chose my professional clothing, and my wife, who you have just heard, shaved my head into this crest that I have been expressing myself with for over a decade. Based on honest conversations that I've had with my new team before starting, I felt safe presenting myself in my words and expression as me, and it was such a relief. I felt comfortable, focused, confident and ready to do some good work that has impact on every Manitoban.

Meeting the team that I was leaving was different. While they're lovely people, I did get a couple of comments of, why are you still doing that to your hair, and, no offence, but you were so much prettier as a girl; I don't recognize you now. Instant buzzkill.

Validating my expression was such a small thing from members of my new team, but it meant the world for me. I feel seen; I feel like these people that I had just met are safe—safe people for me to be myself around, simply because they quietly validated my gender expression.

I'm not about to frivolously call up the other people to the Human Rights Commission for commenting on my hair. I understand the purpose and mandate of the HRC. But it definitely cemented in my mind that I made the correct choice to leave.

I mention that I am speaking from a place of real privilege. Sadly, so many Manitobans are not afforded the respect or choices that my privilege has afforded me. We humans take our cues on how to treat someone by how they present themselves to the world, whether that's rightly or wrongly how we take those cues.

Enshrining gender expression into our human rights won't stop—and the committee will please excuse me for the language—it won't stop someone calling me a faggot at the bus stop, but it will stop a calculated attack by any future government or special interest group against people like me, the rest of the transgender community, the cisgender community or especially my teenage nibbling who is figuring out who they are in the world and how they can express it.

Manitoba is beautiful and diverse. I say that as a transplant here; been here for 25 years. While opponents of this amendment may ask, why should we edit our Human Rights Code for every special interest group, I ask them to remember that this amendment is for all Manitobans. It gives legal protection for our expression, yes, mine as well as yours.

A presenter last Thursday referenced Mark 12:31 about loving our neighbours as ourselves. I choose to

love my neighbours as themselves and the beautiful, diverse way that they express that to the world, should it align with their gender assigned at birth or should it include mixed-fibre clothing, as forbidden in Leviticus. A lot of us at this hearing may be old enough to remember the three articles-of-clothing laws, most famously in the United States, as a small but very important part of the impetus for the Stonewall Uprising. I'm not saying that without this amendment we're headed back in that direction, but I've listened to some of the opponents of this bill and some of the news coming from our neighbours to the south; I am now beginning to seriously doubt my convictions on that point.

I'm not a malicious person, and the trans people I know are not malicious either. I don't see a line forming to vexatiously weaponize the Human Rights Commission and to waste Manitoban government money against other private citizens. I see this bill as an affirmation of my worth from the people that I helped elect to govern, and also as protection from any malicious actors in the future. We just want to live and to thrive.

I have spent a large chunk of my adult life studying conservative motivations and trying to understand what makes people so scared of those who are different from them and why that fear manifests as hate or a desire to stagnate society into a mould where they are comfortable but no one else is.

My expression is my truth. Your expression is your truth. Our varied and individual truths are beautiful. Enshrining these truths provincially in all of their diversity can help keep our province beautiful and more progressive than Saskatchewan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.

We'll proceed with questions from the committee.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Thank you so much for your presentation. I'm trying to figure out what camera I'm looking at here. Maybe it's that one over—no, right here, all right. Just realized the last committee I was looking at the wrong camera the whole time.

Want to thank you so much for your presentation today, for taking the time to do so and sharing your personal experiences. You know, what you shared today really reinforces not only the importance of this legislation but also of employers doing the work to make sure that their teams are equipped with the tools to

treat everyone with care and respect in their workplaces. So that's also a really good reminder, and thank you so much for lending your voice to this really important conversation today.

And I wish you well in your role and thank you for using your voice here and just generally.

The Chairperson: Lauren, would you like to respond on the record?

L. Bailey: Just thank you, Minister Asagwara.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Lauren.

Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Thank you, Lauren. Appreciate your presentation here virtually and for joining us in that manner and really bringing forward experiences that you've had as well as individuals that you know. So we appreciate the information that we're receiving broadly across this great province of ours.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Lauren, would you like to respond on the record?

L. Bailey: I'd like to thank the minister. Also I was there for six hours last week, but as this is during time where the Province is paying me, I'm using my break today and going right back to work. So that's why I'm presenting virtually.

The Chairperson: Thank you for taking the time, Lauren.

Moving along the list of presenters, we have next Ms. Mary Mikhail.

* (10:30)

Seeing as they are not on Zoom, we'll drop their name down to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Mx. Kai Zamora. Mx. Zamora will be joining us shortly online.

Mx. Zamora, please feel welcome to begin your presentation.

Kai Zamora (JusticeTrans): Hello, can you hear me?

The Chairperson: We can hear you.

K. Zamora: Amazing.

Indigenous language spoken. Translation unavailable.

Hello, everyone, my name is Kai Zamora. I am a mixed Mapuche person from Abya Yala, South America.

Indigenous language spoken. Translation unavailable.

Forever Earth and Kueyen, which means moon, are some of the names that I carry. And I am coming today as the executive director of JusticeTrans.

JusticeTrans is a national charitable non-profit, which aims to improve access to essential legal information and research for two-spirit, Indigiqueer, trans, non-binary and otherwise gender-diverse community members from coast to coast to coast.

I'm here today to express my unreserved support for the inclusion of gender expression in our Manitoba Human Rights Code. I'm here on behalf of my work but I also wish to speak to you as an Indigenous person and also as a trans person. I want to first note that in my work I respond to support requests, and I'm seeing a significant rise in concern regarding trans rights and freedoms over the past year. So, this bill comes late, but at a very important time in our political atmosphere.

Last Wednesday, I was present online for the entire six hours of your first meeting, and I listened for hours to people speaking about their religious beliefs, timeliness, money, reputation and the loss of their freedoms. I listened, and what I heard was fear—fear of being silenced, fear of being forced to behave and speak in ways that feel incongruent with who people see themselves to be, fear so big that, for them, it justifies hate in the name of protecting the self under the guise of still loving others.

I find this ironic because the bill does not and will not cause any of these experiences, but their misplaced fear is a collective experience in our community. We have been silenced. We are taught from a young age to comply to a standard of behaviour that slowly destroys our well-being and our freedoms are limited. For us, the conviction to go against gender norms becomes—comes at a very real cost of relationships, opportunities and care on an ongoing basis.

In 2021, my work conducted a national research survey researching barriers to access to justice in two-spirit, trans, non-binary and gender-diverse communities from an intersectional lens. Our results, which can be found on our website, found that 78 per cent of national respondents experienced harassment based on their gender identity as their No. 1 barrier to experiencing justice. This was prior to the current rise in anti-trans sentiment and changes in rights and bills in this country. In Manitoba, specifically, this was also the first concern. And the fourth biggest concern for trans Manitobans was access to appropriate medical care, something that is under the jurisdiction of this bill.

Last week, it was also implied that explicitly including gender expression is somehow redundant because gender identity is already protected under our code. I feel this demonstrates a fundamental and intentional misunderstanding of how someone is targeted for discrimination. People inherently use their senses to take in information about their surroundings and form conclusions based on their beliefs, socialization, et cetera. This is evidenced by the research of Albert Mehrabian in 1967, which found that only 7 per cent of how we communicate is based on our actual words. The rest are voice and mannerisms; our body language constitutes 93 per cent of how we communicate to others.

This means that our gender expression is powerful and important to enshrine and to protect. I'll give you a very serious example from our history which was first expressed to me by Elder Dr. Albert McLeod. As many of you know, Indigenous nations on Turtle Island had diverse ways to express and identify gender and sexuality prior to colonization. During the years of residential and day schools, two-spirit and Indigiqueer youth were often the first to be targeted for—and reprimanded and abused. And the reason for this is because the way they acted, dressed and engaged with others; it stood out as different from colonial expectations. In other words, because they freely expressed their gender based on their cultural understandings.

Targeting children with differences and expression was a way to set an example that all must conform, which, after years of indoctrination, translated into internalization of rigid gender expression and norms. So this bill not only aims to protect but also is a step toward reconciliation. We would not need to enshrine gender expression if we were still in alignment with Indigenous ways of being and knowing. If there had not been, and continues to be, cultural genocide in this aspect.

How we express ourselves has power because it is representation. The ability to safely present ourselves in ways that question a dominant narrative of how we should be and how we should act is essential to freedom, not only for the trans community but for everyone. A more neutral example of this is the way that punks and goths dress. It might be jarring to some, but their ability to dress in ways that are shocking allows us the ability and creativity to question and to develop broader understandings of what can be beautiful of, what can be powerful of, different ways to engage in this life.

In my own experience, I had a partner, an ex now, who is Catholic, and when I was with them, I joined the Catholic Church when I had not been to churches before then—not regularly anyway. And at that time, I was fresh out of escaping an abusive situation, I was in survival mode; I had not had any time or space or capacity to question the ways in which I presented myself, to engage with whether or not my gender identity was something that was cis or diverse.

And I only began to be able to question these things when I had a co-worker who started at my work who is trans, and who uses they/them pronouns. And that representation gave me a safe space to be able to start questioning how I felt. And I realized that I had physical reactions, physical pain to being misgendered as a woman.

This led me to start changing my gender expression because that was my first line, my first ability of something that I had control and power over: my own body, my own autonomy. I shaved the side of my head, I coloured my hair, I started wearing black lipstick to church. I taught Sunday school and I was in the choir. And before I started changing my expression, people came up to me all the time, enthusiastic to converse with me, to thank me for the work that I was doing, to congratulate me on my singing voice, and as soon as I changed my expression, there was an immediate difference.

* (10:40)

People stopped looking at me, stopped talking to me, avoided me, misgendered me. They abandoned me because I dared to do something that felt uncomfortable for them. And I invite everyone here today who's not already done so to reflect on how it might feel for you, for you to be ostracized in such a way, to lose opportunities, to receive poor medical treatment just because you decided that you wanted to grow out your beard or wear a cardigan that seems more fem if you're masculine, to wear pants or be a tomboy. This is not acceptable.

The Chairperson: Mx. Zamora, just to notify you, the time for the presentation has expired; though, if you have any final remarks, please feel welcome to weave that into the responses to any questions.

We're opening up to questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I wanted to thank you, Kai, for your presentation here today. I wanted to thank you for your patience as well. You mentioned you were here at committee the other evening. I know you sat patiently and listened to a lot of different perspectives. To be

able to have the strength now to come back and continue to present is admirable.

I also wanted to just thank you. You've been at the forefront of this work over so many years. I know that we've fallen behind in Manitoba with regards to protections in The Human Rights Code. I'm glad that we're updating and getting back in line here with other provinces.

I just wanted to thank you for your work, and thank you for presenting here today.

The Chairperson: Mx. Zamora, if you would like to respond.

K. Zamora: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Mx. Zamora, thank you for taking the time today to present to us at committee, especially after being here last week as well, and knowing that we went to midnight that night and coming back today to present.

So appreciate your time here today.

The Chairperson: Mx. Zamora, if you would like to respond on the record?

K. Zamora: Thank you for hearing me and also just want to make mention quickly that I would love—I appreciate that Manitoba's one of the few places that still has this process. And also, I welcome the committee to consider accessibility accommodations for taking part in this process, as I know that many folks were present in person last week and had to leave because their own accessibility needs were not met.

So I invite you to consider that.

The Chairperson: Thank you for that consideration, Mx. Zamora. We'll take that under consideration here.

Thank you, again, for taking the time.

Moving along the list, we also have Linda Karn. Linda Karn, you may proceed with your presentation.

Linda Karn (Private Citizen): Thank you.

Last Thursday, dozens of citizens presented their opinions on Bill 43. I would like—

The Chairperson: Just one moment—sorry—we'll just make sure that your microphone is on.

L. Karn: It's good. Yes.

The Chairperson: Please proceed.

L. Karn: Last Thursday, dozens of citizens presented their opinions on Bill 43. I would like to extend my thanks to those of you who stuck it out for six hours of listening on both sides of the table—I recognize several faces—and those who also popped in and out during the presentations.

There sure was a wide amount of concern over this bill. Yes, there were those who support it, but those who oppose it have many questions that weren't answered, and there's a lot of vagueness to the bill.

Will we face a tribunal and potential fine for misgendering someone? Are you placing the rights of one person above rights of another person? If a woman goes to a doctor for a Pap smear and the doctor coming into the room is a trans person, should that woman worry that she will become the victim of a human rights tribunal if she asks for a doctor to be a biological female with two X chromosomes?

It seems that the crux of the speakers who were not in favour of Bill 43 is in regard to freedom of speech. It is felt that they would be compelled to use particular pronouns when talking to certain people. Forcing people to speak in a particular manner is not freedom. Galatians 5:1 tells us that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Bill 43 seems to be a yoke of slavery. Everyone in this room should be concerned with any infringement on our right to express ourselves through speech. One of last week's speakers said that division will come from this bill. Perhaps those who are opposed to the bill will just stop talking to those who are in favour of it out of fear of saying or doing something wrong and getting into trouble for it.

Another speaker rightfully mentioned that understanding each other—other's opposing viewpoints needs to go two ways. For instance, some of us don't appreciate being referred to as cisgender. As a believer in our glorious lord Jesus Christ, I believe that we should show proper respect to everyone as we are commanded in 1 Peter 2:17. So I'm not in favour of disrespecting any person for their culture or their lifestyle, but want to maintain the rights and freedoms of all people based on conscience and religious beliefs.

We toss around buzzwords such as diversity, equity and inclusion these days. We're a country of diverse people from many nations, cultures and religions, having a variety of lifestyles. Galatians 3:28 says: there's neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free,

nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.

If we want to treat everyone equitably, then we shouldn't be making laws that favour any one group over another. Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms uses the phrases everyone, every citizen, every individual and anyone, and that means all people. Everyone in this room, whatever your religion is or not, and wherever you come from, whatever your sexuality or gender is.

The first line of our Charter is: Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law. I cannot possibly look at a man and call him a she or a her. I've been so programmed for over 60 years. Genesis 1:27 says: God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them, male and female He created them. That's what I've believed my whole life, and I can't just change that. How is—how am I supposed to remember all the different pronouns of everyone as well as their names?

Is it right to put children in the driver's seat over adults by telling mom and dad that they've changed their names and pronouns, and compelling the parents to go along with it? If a parent doesn't use a child's preferred pronouns, are they going to be called a child abuser? Telling children the truth is not abuse.

Does this bill open wide the door to allowing biological men into women's private spaces, such as change rooms and sports teams? Is it right to make a ruling that gives special privilege to one group of people at the expense of others? How is that equitable and inclusive? Romans 2:11 says that God shows no favouritism, so therefore neither should we.

Personally, I don't attend—identify with being Italian, and biologically speaking, I don't have a drop of Italian blood in my body. However, for much of my life, people have looked at me and assumed that I was Italian. This microaggression towards me has happened hundreds upon hundreds of times. Someone is always going to spell our names wrong or pronounce it incorrectly. Again, more microaggressions.

Wrong pronouns, spelling mistakes, incorrect pronunciation of names and guessing someone's background incorrectly are all really small things. Yes, feelings get hurt in these instances, and everyone's feelings matter. As individuals, I truly believe that we all need to have the strength of character such that small offences don't cause us to crumble inside. Politicians, for instance, you guys hear a lot of negativity from people

all day long, yet you got to endure it for four years, and so you all need the character to deal with that, get through each day.

So we need to build up our resilience such that when we experience microaggressions, we have a coping mechanism. Take a deep breath, put the incident aside and move on with our day.

My youngest daughter was a tomboy. She would only ever wear blue jeans and plain shirts in dark colours. She was very active, loved sports and mostly played with boys. As a child, the only thing that clearly demonstrates she was a girl was her long hair. Well, one day at around age 10, she wanted a haircut, which turned out to be a very, very short haircut. For several months, anybody that didn't know her assumed that she was a boy, especially since her nickname was Sam [*phonetic*].

* (10:50)

But in no way did she ever consider herself to be anything but a girl. We would go into clothing stores and ask for the blue jeans section. Clerks took us to the boys' side of the store. Yes, that was a micro-aggression that my child suffered many times.

As a parent, it was my right and duty to affirm to her that she was a girl who just happened to fit the appearance of what society has deemed a boy for thousands of years. As a parent, I was helping her to build resilient character so she would be able to handle future microaggressions that come along in her life.

I've been a law-abiding citizen all of my life, so now how is it right and fair that a law can be made that could 'pentially' have me been punished or fined simply for continuing on living my life in the same way I've been doing so for over 60 years, practising my faith and using pronouns that I choose to be most fitting for a situation?

We stand at a defining moment where the principles enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, freedoms of expression, individual liberty and the rule of law are under threat. The proposed amendments to our provincial Human Rights Code, which would make the intention to misgender an individual a violation, is a dangerous overreach that violates the Charter and jeopardizes our democratic society.

Let us reaffirm the cornerstone of our democracy: freedom of expression, guaranteed under section 2(b) of the Charter. This right protects our ability to express ideas, even those that offend, as a bedrock of a free society. Changing The Human Rights Code

directly infringes on this fundamental freedom. It compels Canadians to conform to state-mandated language under threat of punishment, creating a chilling effect where individuals need to self-centre in order to avoid prosecution.

The Supreme Court has consistently held that only extreme speech, like direct incitement to violence, justifies restriction. Misgendering, even if intentional, does not meet this threshold.

Bill 43's focus on intention also undermines section 7 of the charter which guarantees the right to liberty and security of a person. By targeting subjective motives, the bill introduces vague and overly broad criteria that threaten individual liberty. How do we prove intent? A careless remark, a philosophical disagreement or a heated exchange could be misconstrued as intentional 'misendering'. This vagueness risks arbitrary enforcement where personal grudges or ideological differences could be weaponized under the guise of human rights.

To those who support this bill, I recognize your desire to protect vulnerable individuals, and that is a noble aim. But harm cannot be eradicated by violating the Charter, creating new inequities. Discrimination and harassment are already addressed under existing laws that respect constitutional limits. We must uphold the Charter's guarantees of freedom and fairness to all.

Compelled speech is not free speech. This goes against what every Canadian soldier fought for in World War II. We may not have to risk our lives today like they did, but the least we can do is honour those soldiers by speaking up for the freedoms we can enjoy today, as they fought for. Galatians 5:1 says: it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Let us protect human rights for all, by defending the right to speak, to question and to live free under the Charter, flawed, diverse and united. Please reject this bill and join me in the fight for a freer, fairer Canada.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Okay. We are proceeding now to questions from the committee.

Thank you, Linda.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Linda, for your presentation.

I think you hit on a few key points, specifically around freedom. Freedom is the reason why we have these protections within The Humans Rights Code,

and I think one of the other presenters characterized this as a not a zero-sum game; in other words, we are adding protections, we're not taking any away and, of course, the freedom of expression of your religious beliefs is protected already in The Human Rights Code. We want to continue to build on that, continue to protect folks.

Just to be clear, this isn't about microaggressions, this isn't about some of the other issues that you've mentioned. This is specifically about discrimination around housing, employment and delivery of social services. That's what the bill protects, and we want to make sure that nobody could be discriminated in any of those areas based on the way that they express their gender.

So thank you for your presentation. I think it's helpful to have your voice at the table here today.

The Chairperson: Linda, would you like to respond?

L. Karn: Thank you for saying that this is not about microaggressions, but I think there's vagueness in The Human Rights Code and in the bill that—and that's why there's a lot of concern from people, and I guess it'd be a request to maybe modify the wording of the bill to make that clearer, that it's about discrimination and not about microaggressions.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Thank you, Linda, for your presentation. That's very much appreciated, hearing the views from Manitobans and taking your right to be here at committee and bringing those views forward.

You expressed some concerns that you have, but what concerns do you have regarding your freedom of expression on this?

L. Karn: Yes, like, using pronouns was—is one example of, you know, if I call someone a he but they want to be called a she, and then they want to, you know, have a human rights complaint and I have to go to a tribunal and force—and face—these are very lengthy tribunals. A lot of, you know, emotional—a lot of emotions are—or let's just say, a lot of psychological impacts, negatively, upon people occur through human rights tribunals and can result in fines, simply for using wrong pronouns or, you know, it's just concerns that—we don't know, there's a lot of unknowns. That's the main concern here.

The Chairperson: Further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you, Linda.

Committee Substitution

The Chairperson: Before I acknowledge the next presenter, I'd like to inform the committee that under rule 84(2) the following membership substitution has been made for this committee, effective immediately: Mr. Goertzen for Mr. King.

Thank you, everybody.

* * *

The Chairperson: Another presenter that was on our list, Judy Walker, has provided a written submission for the committee as well. Seeing such, we will move along to Mr. Raymond Lyttle.

Thank you for joining us, Mr. Raymond Lyttle. Please be—feel welcome to begin your presentation.

Raymond Lyttle (Private Citizen): Thank you very much, ministers. You can hear me well?

Thank you, and to both the ministers and the members of the public, especially those of you who are harmed by many of the preceding statements from the previous day. As with others, I was here until midnight and I appreciate the persistence in your listening.

So I'd like to clarify a couple of understandings, before we begin. First, my understanding is that this code, this adjustment to the code, does not open the door to persecution for rudeness or disrespect on any grounds. It better defines who receives the protections that already exist.

Second, I would like to pre-emptively note that I'm not concerned about what it will take to get someone investigated by the Human Rights Tribunal.

Third, it is my understanding that religion and freedom of expression are both thoroughly protected and that protection would not be in any capacity undermined by this adjustment.

Fourth, I understand that this government does not consider the laws or policies or opinions related to any religion when developing new legislation.

Fifth, my understanding is that any member of the public receiving health-care services of any nature can always request a change in practitioner and this does not affect the rights of private citizens, but rather of those who are under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. If, when I broke my ankle, I wanted a different practitioner, I could ask. I would not be asked why.

And sixth, Minister Goertzen had mentioned previously an instance in which he depicted a case

where someone was fined \$18,000 for misgendering a co-worker. This is a misunderstanding of the case, the case being *Bilac v. Abbey v. Currie and NCTS Inc.*, as seen in 2024. This was a case of workplace harassment and there was the context of the plaintiff's gender. The harassment created an unsafe work environment. These included questions relating to the presence of hair on intimate body parts of the plaintiff and request for a display of intimate body parts to a co-worker and other exceedingly inappropriate lines of questioning and touching. This was in addition to extensive misgendering, including to revealing personal data to strangers. So the description of it being for misgendering was inaccurate and misinformation. I like to have that come from private citizens and not my government.

So putting those understandings on the table so you know where I'm coming from, on the matter of protecting gender expression, as a legally enshrined human right in addition to gender identity, I'm going to set aside the facts and evidence which support the 'validity'—validity of trans and two-spirit identity and focus more on how this actually rolls through. Those are undisputable.

* (11:00)

So one's expression of gender is made up of variations in movement, speech, tone, grooming, clothing and endless other minutiae, as discussed previously. These vary between cultures and also individual preference. The perception of one's gender, though, is filtered through context and the perceiver's belief.

So, for example, I'm a man, but when I'm more like—I'm more likely to be read as a woman or non-binary when I'm working in youth education, which is a gendered field. For me, these are largely inconsequential. I make a correction, we move on, it's a great day. We're playing with cardboard, mostly. That rocks.

But this is not always the case. There—in the case of employment, education, health care, housing and any number of circumstances with an inherent power dynamic, the biases of the person holding power can impact the treatment of the person without.

If, as has been the case with the Salvation Army housing shelters, a woman like Jodielynn Wiley in 2014 is seeking shelter and may be deemed too masculine; she was denied shelter which she was in desperate need of. So without protection, the personal opinions of someone in power were prioritized, and the woman seeking shelter was denied.

The impact on racialized groups is greater. Historically, Black women have been racially

stereotyped as more masculine. Indigenous women face similar prejudice. Only this year, Kayala [phonetic] Morton was confronted by Tuscon [phonetic] police in a Walmart washroom after a fellow customer assumed her presence in the washroom was inappropriate based on her short hair and masculine style preferences. Morton is a 19-year-old Black woman, and this contributes to how she is perceived by others. Morton is also not trans, if that helps anyone to feel empathy towards her.

Without protecting gender expression, these racial prejudices were prioritized. This is to say, when gender expression is not protected, the expectation and norms of those holding power are. This impacts two-spirit and transgender people most severely, but still, it does impact everyone. We may be the canaries, but no one will escape the gas leak.

Without protecting gender expression, any deviation from a narrow scope of presentation can impact one's access to standard services and rights. Historically, this has taken the form of laws mandating gender-specific dress codes. Notably, women were prevented from wearing pants. And I think that'd be a problem for a number of us. As beautifully illustrated by the portraits surrounding us, the format of—and the format of this discussion, this province is founded in colonial British values, and the expectations of gender follow suit.

Ministers, I hope you will see—agree that Manitoba has progressed beyond the point of limiting a person's access to safe work, housing, education and so on based on their expression of gender.

Here, I'd like to take a moment to discuss the positive impact of supporting self-determined gender expression. On a personal level, I've benefitted enormously from the ability to express my own gender and make the informed medical choices related to this presentation. Prior to coming out as a man, my mental health was extraordinarily poor. I attempted to modify my body via starvation. This worked to negate the effects of puberty for several years, and at 15, I was unable to fully brush my teeth in one go due to muscle loss. I weighed under 90 pounds. And that lasted for more than a year. This has fundamentally changed my body.

Today, I can bike to Birds Hill without fainting. I could help my 97-year-old grandfather down stairs. I helped my friends with a new baby move a couch. And I helped my friend with a significant physical disability enjoy the sun on a long walk. I am able to make enough—I am able to make friends because I am well

enough to do so, and my life centres around helping my community thrive.

I am lucky enough to work with a wide range of ages, including youth. I have seen youth begin to fall into the—that distress that I barely survived, and they have responded—if they are well supported—by treating themselves with compassion and curiosity instead. Some of these children have shared a new name, upgraded their pronouns or—updated, rather, their pronouns, or changed their gendered presentation in a tangible way. But not all of them. Sometimes it's just nice to be curious about the person you're becoming.

Regardless of their findings, their ability to engage in—with the interaction of identity and expression has been empowering and healing for these students, regardless of their gender. And when they have the opportunity to express themselves in a genuine way, I see them more content with themselves. I do not see them looking to shrink. I hear them laugh and see them smile in ways that we cannot when we are hiding. I don't worry that they are going to kill themselves.

Both as youth and adults, the ability to express our gender in a manner we deem appropriate in our workplaces, health-care settings, housing and so on and to see others as their authentic selves is critical to our ability to access these services and thus to our well-being.

In its most simple form, ministers, this—our responsibility—your responsibility as ministers is to ensure that each Manitoban can access the services regulated by our Province in an equitable capacity. It is your responsibility to amend and improve those legal conventions which prevent access to these services. This aligns with your commitments to reconciliation and to the needs of the Manitobans you serve. Each individual person is the foremost expert in their own identity and experience and the expression thereof. This is not the jurisdiction of any government.

The protection of gender expression, determined by each individual for themselves, is simply your responsibility. I thank you for your time, for your curiosity and for your commitment to the well-being and freedom of Manitobans by voting to affirm this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Lyttle.

We'll proceed with questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Lyttle. What a great presentation. I love how you started by dispelling many of the misconceptions or myths. I

think that was helpful. I actually saw that as building off of the work of Ms. Sharma the other night, our human rights commissioner, who's obviously helped to set the record the straight.

But I also thought that your presentation was comprehensive because it talked a little bit about your experience, but also sort of the case law and where we're at in Canada.

So I just wanted to thank you and thank you for taking the time to inform the committee like this.

The Chairperson: Mr. Lyttle, if you'd like to respond.

R. Lyttle: That comparison is an absolute honour. I appreciate that endlessly and I am also grateful for your compassion while interacting with some forms of misunderstanding throughout this process as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Thank you for the presentation and being very articulate and respectful in your comments.

I did cite a Human Rights Commission finding and, just to repeat, as I said there were various factors involved in that complaint, but the Human Rights Commission stated, and I'm quoting: That misgendering and deadnaming individuals specifically is a discriminatory practice that is contrary to the Canadian Human Rights Code. This particular amendment is based upon that amendment in The Human Rights Code, so my point stands. But thank you for raising that because I wanted to get clarity and to quote the Human Rights Commission into the record.

So thank you.

The Chairperson: Mr. Lyttle, if you'd like to respond.

R. Lyttle: I would. Thank you.

You may be correct that misgendering was one element, but portraying it as a fine of \$18,000 for misgendering without elaborating on the nuance is inaccurate and misleading.

The full fine of \$18,000 covered multiple violations of the human rights of the individual, and to not mention those much more severe violations give the incorrect impression to members of the public. It was not \$18,000 for misgendering.

It was \$18,000 for multiple count violations, which included misgendering but also sexual harassment, and those would not be imposed to a private citizen. It was

imposed to the person who was regulating the workplace standards, which were also the standards of housing for the individual who was forced to leave their job. For anyone curious, the cost of losing that job and relocating was greater than \$18,000.

So while you are technically correct that misgendering was one of the elements, it was a minor element and your depiction of it was misleading.

MLA Asagwara: Thank you for your presentation and for your approach. Elected officials have a responsibility to be very thoughtful in how we present information to the public, especially when we exist in a time where political influence is great and has a lot of harm or it can be really positive.

So I want to thank you for articulating some really key points in your presentation for sharing your own personal experiences, and I want to take this time to encourage folks who are here today or who were here last week to really go back and look at Ms. Sharma, who you've done well to build on that incredible presentation today, as the executive director of the Human Rights Commission, answered a number of questions that have continued to be posed and included—including addressing something that was brought forward by the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and corrected the record on something he said.

Thank you for your presentation. Thank you for your time today.

The Chairperson: Mr. Lyttle, would you like to respond?

R. Lyttle: I would, thank you.

I appreciate that immensely and I would also encourage other people to access the online resources for education from the Human Rights Commission. They are numerous. They are accessible to you, and if you are concerned about your rights I recommend that you look into them in your own time.

As we often say, none of us are free until all of us are free. This is because if the opportunity exists to discriminate against one group, it is only a matter of scale until others are impacted as well.

So if you're concerned about your own freedom of expression being limited in terms of being able to be rude or disrespectful to another individual, look at the limitations that already exist on your community members on the grounds of gender, which is currently the scapegoat, and know that if expression is limited in one capacity it can be in others.

We can be allies and we should be, and I hope that my work and the work of the ministers here are in line with creating allyship between groups who otherwise haven't had a lot of kind words for each other this session.

* (11:10)

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you again for your presentation and bringing clarity to this issue, in particular, that the Human Rights Commission did specifically outline in their ruling that misgendering is a form of discrimination. And—

The Chairperson: Time for questions has expired. *[interjection]*

Order. Order. Order.

Time for questions has expired.

Mr. Balcaen: Is there leave to have the question and answer move forward?

The Chairperson: There is a request for leave from Mr. Balcaen to have this question answered.

Is there leave from the committee?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

An Honourable Member: Absolutely not.

The Chairperson: Leave has been denied.

Thank you, again, Mr. Lyttle.

An Honourable Member: Point of order, honourable Chair.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: Minister Wiebe, on a point of order.

Mr. Wiebe: There might have been some confusion in the point of—or, sorry, the leave request that was just proposed. If the suggestion is to allow the presenter to respond to the question, I would agree with that and I think most committee members were, so if we could just ask for leave to allow the presenter some time to respond to the question posed by Mr. Goertzen.

An Honourable Member: On the same point of order.

The Chairperson: Mr. Goertzen, on the same point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: On the same point of order, I think the challenge was that the honourable Minister of Health was shouting down my comment, so if we're not allowed

to ask questions, then I guess we can't really hear answers.

The Chairperson: Apologies, Mr. Lyttle.

This is not a point of order.

* * *

The Chairperson: Unfortunately, though we would like to ask once more if there is leave from the committee to allow Mr. Lyttle to respond.

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Chairperson: Leave has been denied.

Thank you, Mr. Lyttle, for joining us today.

We'll move on to the next presenters.

Okay. Next is Mr. Jean-Paul Lapointe. Mr. Jean-Paul Lapointe. Their name will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Next up, Ms. Amanda Murphy. That name is also being dropped down to the bottom of the list.

Next we have Ms. Emersyn Hildebrand. Ms. Hildebrand, please continue with your presentation.

Emersyn Hildebrand (Private Citizen): It's a little-known fact that hops used in beer brewing can contain pretty high levels of phytoestrogens. It all started with double-ice-cold double IPAs and heavily dry-hopped amber ales, just a guy having beers with the boys, and then, bam, now I'm a trans woman. There's a bunch of great craft breweries in Winnipeg, so consume responsibly. Couldn't argue for a better spot to get to cut some tension, so thank you for that.

I am not an educator, politician or social scientist. I am simply a poet and a person that has wrestled with gender dysphoria and the strife that comes with it. I am an example of why gender identity and expression need to be protected as separate issues. I lost my job because of how I chose to express my gender.

I come from the Pembina Valley, Portage-Lisgar. I come from a very religiously entrenched area, and my position that I lost was very tied to the religious community. The day after I came out and I announced myself, I received a text message from my employer that operations would be shut down, and I have since been unemployed.

I am here to speak not so much directly to Bill 43; instead to the human element it pertains to. After all,

the protections for the human against unaccommodating ideologies is the whole point of the human rights protections, is it not?

It has been argued here that current protections under the verbiage gender identity are adequate. That may be the case in most cases. However, adding gender expression is a clarifier. We have a backlog in processing human rights investigations; I believe that clarifying what is and is not protected affords us greater efficiency in processing legitimate claims and dismissing frivolous ones.

As a transgender individual, especially one coming out later in life, I can attest to how difficult and, at times, clumsy it can be to get one's gender expression figured out. This can be a very vulnerable and fragile time for the transgender experience. We need the assurance that this amendment offers, that we are able to navigate this journey freely as we figure out how to alchemize our invisible, internal selves into a visible, outward expression that looks like our genuine self.

If you could spend five minutes in a comment section of one of my TikTok livestreams, any continued denial of the need for legal protection of gender expression would be willfully ignorant, arguably malicious and undeniably complicit.

The public discourse today is truly terrifying to anyone that carries a sense of self that sits outside the male/female binary. There is an insidious nature and powder keg potential when the fuse of deeply held ideological convictions is lit, struck by the match of social and political power, as demonstrated by the current climate in the United States, where even an elected politician has become so emboldened to publicly and unabashedly say the words tranny, tranny, quote, in the face of a young genderqueer constituent, on camera.

This is a potential that we are trying to avoid in the true north, strong and free. This is why we need protections in place now, so we never get to that point. I refuse to concede that Canada has lost the capacity for kindness and decency, especially in the absence of understanding across cultural and ideological lines.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that we are edging close—unfortunately, I do believe that we are edging close to the true slippery slope: a complete and total failure of empathy. Precarious precipice may be a more apt description.

The amendment via Bill 43 adds clarification to the protections for those of us that have had to hide ourselves away from ourselves, our families and our

communities due to fear instilled in us by existing within deeply ideological social structures that do not allow for us to freely exist within them. While comparatively superficial compared to actually experiencing what I am about to describe, my true hope is that the following words are able to reach past barriers and plant just a small seed of empathy, as seeds seem to be able to grow in even the most inhospitable of places.

As a father, I have been questioned on my transition in a way that essentially boils down to, isn't this a little selfish? And I understand why they ask. It is a long-winded and nuanced thing to explain, but as I have always been, I am an open book, with pages tattered, earmarked and used. So, let's see if I can cover everything within my remaining time. Apologize if I'm speaking a little bit quick; I have a lot to say.

Because no person can ever truly understand the exact experience of another, I would usually turn the question around so it's more relatable and real. So to the committee, the gallery, and to anyone else that seeks understanding, permit my reality a stand-in, as you place your feet in my shoes.

You have a realization about yourself on a visceral and innate level that shatters your sense of self as you have always known it. You recognize that you are not actually living your life; instead role-playing the character you thought you were expected to. But you have a whole life built around this character, and people in your life that rely on you filling the role that you thought you were required to. Now knowing that you are not that person, and deeply desiring to finally be the person that you actually are, you've—you still fight against it. You fight like hell against it so you can hold your life together and protect those around you, particularly those in your care.

* (11:20)

You begin to tire. You begin slipping deeper and deeper into depression, anxiety and dissociative episodes, all becoming too much. The longer you hold out, the deeper it gets, and you can't help but to withdraw from those around you, turning evermore inward and getting lost in the chaos and torment within.

Eventually, despite your efforts to persevere for the sake of those you love and want to be there for, and to maintain the safety and normalcy of the life you had already built, but your battle has destroyed that person and that life anyway. There is no life left in that body, and the relationships you tried to protect have suffered anyway. Reluctantly, you recognize this is a

battle that you will not win. The inevitability becomes undeniable.

You finally face down two options. And this is the one choice we as trans people actually make for ourselves: either embrace the change and hope that there is a light on the other side and that when the dust settles, the relationships are in a state that they might be mended. The other option is to keep fighting despite its clear futility until the inevitability comes that your hope has been spent and you finally do what you have shamefully pined for all this time: for it to finally and finitely end.

I, like so many others that struggle with their own queerness, found myself at that very crossroads. In that moment, as I caught a fractal of hope, it seemed obvious to me that those in my care or company would be far better off with a trans me than a dead me. The poetic truth, though, painfully and ironically so, is that I had already died, my struggle having long left me a withered, empty husk, brittle and crumbling away.

The initial shock for some in my life has passed, though there are those that have expressed for now they would prefer not to have me in their lives. I struggled with this deeply, and if it weren't for poetry writing, there have been multiple nights I had full intentions of being no more. Thankfully, I still am being—that and so much more. I have been becoming, becoming kinder, more loving, more empathetic, more resilient and more me.

People have autonomy, are generally intelligent, though often not empathetic, and are capable of making decisions about what they want their lives to look like. I believe that in general, society will eventually come around. In the meantime, I have come to terms with the fact that I need to let them. I have no control over their thoughts, opinions and desires. I have also come to terms with my own need to let myself: let myself rest, heal, let myself morph, transcend and emerge a renewed and beautiful new creation.

As trans people, from this vantage point of being free to express our authentic selves as we innately and inherently understand ourselves to be, we see that amidst our struggle, we haven't become that brittle and emptied husk; we escaped it—a necessary chrysalis having served its purpose of its design that kept us safe while we were radically changed and ready to emerge. We have to let ourselves be happy, even amidst profound struggle and loss, perhaps in spite of it.

Bill 43 ensures that society, regardless of ideological pushback, lets us, without fear of rejection,

oppression, expressions of disdain and intentionally targeted and harmful criticism. No one is taking you to the Human Rights Tribunal for a slip-up.

It has never been our responsibility to justify ourselves to those that refuse to permit us to express our identities. We know that we will never—

The Chairperson: Ms. Hildebrand. Time has expired.

Is there leave to allow them to complete their thought? *[Agreed]*

E. Hildebrand: Okay. Thank you. I'm almost finished here.

It has never been our responsibility to justify ourselves to those that refuse to permit us to express our identities. We know that we will never receive validation from those that plainly see us as invalid. The only thing we truly have in our control is to ensure that we have done the inner work to heal, to grow, to transform and to glow.

Queer joy is undeniable. It is undeniable regardless of what others think. It is undeniable regardless of whether or not we continue to be marginalized or whether or not society decides to step up for one of the smallest and most vulnerable demographics in their care. It is undeniable despite their judgments of your circumstances, your choices of your appearance, your truth. Queer joy is resilient, pervasive and utterly immutable.

In closing, to the trans individuals, especially to those still hiding in fear and isolation, hold your queer joy high. Never let your arms down. Raise it above your heads as a beacon of hope and as a signal to those still yet to emerge as their authentic selves that it is worth it to persevere through the pains of birthing one's self into an often cold and uncaring world that will likely never understand them.

The queer community seems to defy human nature, evidenced by the contrasting environment of an ever more polarized world.

The explanation for this is simple, and I believe that every queer survivor here will find themselves somewhere in this poem which will serve as my closing statement.

I have suffered myself to be sufficiently broken, then healed myself strong to share in the weight that burdens your soul. As I suffered, you suffer, we suffer the same. Your eyes, they move me. They stir my convictions and chill my bones cold. So I will offer my wisdom in words softly spoken, holding space as—

holding space open as your story unfolds to find myself worthy to watch you glow old.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Hildebrand.

And now on to questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Ms. Hildebrand, thank you so much for the presentation. I was quite shocked to hear specifically about how you lost your job because of your gender expression. And I think that speaks directly to what we're doing here today, so I thought that was very helpful.

I also wanted to just—you know, I think you've identified there's a lot of loud voices around this issue and—but I also think that there's a lot of maybe silent support, maybe if I can characterize it that way.

Certainly you have support of everyone on this side of the table, but I think generally in Manitoba, you find that there's a lot more support and empathy for some of the things that you've endured. So just wanted to thank you for your time.

The Chairperson: Ms. Hildebrand, if you would like to respond.

E. Hildebrand: One thing. I would just say thank you and—to the whole committee for the—offering me the extension in time to finish. Really appreciate it.

And I would also like to just add some context on the—my personal job loss scenario. Obviously, life is life, and there's complications and nuances to every scenario. My situation was not explicitly malicious, but it is very much tied to my expression, so.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Well, thank you very much for your presentation. Again, it's appreciated when people come and share their views and personal experiences, so I would like to thank you for your information that you provided today to this committee.

The Chairperson: Ms. Hildebrand, if you would like to reply.

E. Hildebrand: I guess I would just say thank you to those on the opposing side that there has been a notable—notably improved environment of listening as opposed to some moments last week. So I appreciate that.

The Chairperson: Any further questions from the committee?

Seeing none, thank you again for taking the time.

We'll move on to the next presenter, Mr. Nathan Martindale.

Mr. Martindale, please proceed with your presentation.

Nathan Martindale (Manitoba Teachers' Society): Hello. My name is Nathan Martindale, and I'm the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, representing 16,600 public school educators province wide.

I am pleased to speak to you today on Bill 43, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act. We live in highly volatile times provincially, nationally and internationally. The strength of human rights legislation has never been more crucial, laying the groundwork as it does in protecting the rights and freedoms of all human beings regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability and age, just to name a few.

I want to be clear that defending human rights for marginalized or vulnerable persons, including the right to gender expression, does not in any way infringe on anyone else's human rights. That's not the way it works. In fact, I would argue that the more protected marginalized or vulnerable folks are, the more each and every one of us will benefit from a safer, kinder and more peaceful society.

According to Egale Canada, a noted and highly credible source of information on issues of gender and equality, gender expression is defined as the way gender is presented and communicated to the world through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice and/or the emphasis or de-emphasize of body characteristics and behaviours.

* (11:30)

Bill 43 is essential. It is essential for parents and caregivers who want to send their children to safe and supportive schools free of harassment and bullying that are far too often—that far too often have lifelong physical and emotional impacts. Schools grow citizens who are prepared to stand up for both themselves and others. This is especially important in the case of those who are vulnerable to discrimination and hate.

Bill 43 is essential for parents of children who are not marginalized, shaping communities in which those have power and voice are governed by kindness, understanding and a commitment to belonging and also security guaranteed for all.

Bill 43 is essential for workplaces, giving them a North Star in developing organizational cultures that welcome, support and learn from their colleagues.

Bill 43 is essential for our communities who are the beneficiaries of the diverse, vibrant, lived experiences of their citizens, enriching us all with a world view that values each and every human being. And, of course, Bill 43 is essential for those among us who are most vulnerable, who are counting on us to stand up for them, to speak out for them, and today is honour and privilege to do so.

Diversity is a beautiful thing, not something to be watered down at best or violently squashed at worst. No person, young or old, should be subjected to violence, harassment or be compelled to take their own life because we have stood by in silence. When each of us are free to express who we are, to show up as the unique being that we are, knowing that we are safe to do so, we create a pathway to peace in our cities and towns, provinces and our nation.

Strengthening human rights is essential because the most important work—and perhaps the most important work of any government. Rolling back those rights, on the other hand, is a deeply frightening possibility. And while the federal government passed bill C-16 in 2017, adding gender identity and expression to Charter rights, similar protections do not exist in some provinces, Manitoba included. This leaves gaps for discrimination in such areas as health care, education, criminal—and criminal justice because these systems are governed by provincial human rights law.

To be human is to have a heart, and we are all human. We are hard-wired for connection and belonging. We crave a feeling of community, acceptance and love. No matter how we dress, no matter if we wear make-up, no matter if we dye our hair or way—wear it in ways some might find non-traditional, we are all human, and we all have the right to safety and security.

The safety and security enshrined in human rights makes us all stronger, better and more compassionate. Why would we not support something that helps us toward that ideal?

Bill 43 is a crucial step in that direction, prioritizing and protecting human rights, rooted in love and compassion for oneself and for everyone in one's community. And if that isn't enough, consider this: ensuring the right to gender expression aligns with broader goals of equality and justice that serve us all and reinforce other vital anti-discrimination laws and public policies.

Look at me and you'll see someone who has been granted all the privileges imaginable. I'm here because I'm privileged. I'm here because I'm a parent. I'm here

because I'm a teacher, and I'm here because I'm a union leader. With my privilege comes the responsibility to speak up in favour of Bill 43, not just for me and not just for the members I represent, but for all Manitobans.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Martindale.

We will now proceed to questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, thank you, Mr. Martindale, for your presentation. I love how you ended that as a—coming as a teacher, as a parent and as a leader for all workers. So I just really appreciate your adding your voice here.

I also appreciate that you really have highlighted that this is adding protections. This is building on what's already protected in Manitoba, and how, you know, really, when it comes to kids, we're always looking for new ways to help protect them and protect their best interests.

So I just wanted to thank you for sticking it out. I think you were on our list from last week already, so you've really put in the time here on behalf of your members, and I want to thank you.

The Chairperson: Mr. Martindale, if you'd like to respond.

N. Martindale: Yes. In response, thank you, Minister Wiebe, and just so you know, there are, of course, a lot of teachers, my colleagues across the province, who would love to come, either virtually or in person, to present as private citizens, but they can't. They're in the schools teaching, and so I'm here to represent those voices.

And what you said, Minister Wiebe, also reminded me that the work that the Manitoba Teachers' Society has done over the past few years and will continue to do when it comes to safe and inclusive schools for all students, and that's important work, and we will continue to do that work. My time as society president is coming to an end, but my ongoing journey of being an ally will continue after I leave that role, and to be always speaking up and standing out and pushing back against hate.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Goertzen: Just to pick up on your last point, thank you for your service in that role. Had different times to interact with you in that and you've always been a passionate and very strong representative for those who you are speaking on behalf of, even collectively or individually.

So all the best as you go on to do other things, or if you just have more time to do the things that you choose to do.

The Chairperson: Mr. Martindale, if you'd like to respond.

N. Martindale: Yes. Thank you. I looking—I look forward to spending more time with my partner and my children.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Martindale, for your presentation.

We will now move on to Mx. Moon Fast. They were here.

Mx. Fast, when you are ready to begin your presentation, you may.

Moon Fast (Private Citizen): Thank you. I was originally going to start with a joke about binders, but I didn't wear one today because it's probably going to be a long day as well.

The Vice-Chairperson in the Chair

Yes. It's very scary to be up here, and I have ADHD, so if I'm a bit sporadic in my speaking style, that is why. But good morning, everyone. I hope everyone is doing well. I'm here to talk about why this amendment must happen from the perspective of a trans youth.

Hello. My name is Moon, and I'm 19 years old, a non-binary person who uses they/them and ze/zem pronouns. I'm in my second year of university studying religion and anthropology and have a cat named Hiccup.

So trans rights are under attack. The UK Supreme Court has ruled that trans women are not women last week. Trans people are no longer exist in the U-X—I'm being sarcastic here.

In Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Alberta, they've already passed laws against trans kids using their names and pronouns in school without their parents' consent. Alberta, I believe, no longer allows kids under 16 to get puberty blockers or hormones. Trans kids across Canada are terrified for their safety, health and survival.

Bill 43 will show trans youth that Manitoba believes them and wants to protect them from potential anti-trans laws.

As a trans youth, I deserve not to have my—to lose my housing for things related to my pronouns and presentation without warning. I deserve not to have professors spend classes about how they/them pronouns are not grammatically correct, and when I try to report it, nothing happens.

I deserve not to have other queer—sorry, thank you—I deserve not to have to hide my pronouns when applying for scholarships and jobs. I deserve not to have to dress womanly to go to a job interview or visit my family. I deserve not to go—I deserve not to be in over \$20,000 of debt at 19 in order to survive. I deserve not to be misgendered by a person who diagnosed me with gender dysphoria, and I deserve not to have a bunch of people in suits determine if my pronouns and gender presentation are worthy of human rights. But all those things have happened.

* (11:40)

According to the Canadian mortgage and housing corporation and the article called 2LGBTQIA+ Housing Needs and Challenges, published in 2022, it is estimated that between 25 to 40 per cent of homeless youth are queer. And we make up only around 10 per cent of the general population—that's specifically queer people.

That would be a very few—10 per cent of the population is queer, sorry. There are very few resources for us and frankly, the government of Manitoba has not done enough to show their support for trans people, especially trans youth.

While this bill will not address the main problem that trans youth face, it will be also show that Manitoba is trying. This bill will not just help trans and gender-diverse youth, but cis and straight people. It will help butch lesbians be protected in how they present. It will help straight women be protected from discrimination for having short hair or for wearing pants. It will help men who wear pink. It will help people who are exploring their gender expression regardless if they're trans or queer.

While this bill is directed to protect trans and queer people, it will help everybody.

Gender expression saved my life. I am more confident, happy and less suicidal now that I consistently dress in my way and people use my pronouns—well, most people. Gender expression is a part of gender-affirming care and gender-affirming care saves lives. I'm not a victim of transgenderism, the woke mob or the gay agenda, but a person doing what makes them happy.

My body is not yours to debate about. My gender is not the result of the devil. I am more than my transness. A person's freedom to speak hate is not worth more than my life and my freedom to live free of discrimination. Trans people die from hate crimes and suicide, while a bigot receives a fine and maybe a couple of months in jail. Our struggles are not the same.

This discussion should not be happening. I should not have to know how to speak to a legislator because I'm a teenager. I deserve to be a kid, but I can't because the usuals are debating whether or not I should be protected.

I hope that hearing me speak you will realize this bill is not about whether you approve of trans people or pronouns or a presentation, but if the government of Manitoba believes that we deserve rights. I don't agree if there is a God, but I believe that religious people deserve to have the right and freedom to express themselves. How is this bill any different?

Trans people are human and trans issues are human issues. So here I stand in a group of people older than me, crying and begging to receive human rights because that's all I can do.

Please vote for this bill for me and all the other trans youth who do not have the same number of privileges as me. Vote for the two-spirit, queer and trans people of colour and the hundreds of trans people who died for hate crimes last year.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Mx. Fast, for your very powerful presentation. It's not easy. It's not easy for anyone to come up and do this but I really appreciate that you have.

You're helping to educate us, you know, the older generation who are just trying to learn more from you as a young person. But we need to do our part to support you, and so that's why this bill is so very important.

So I just wanted to thank you. It takes tons of courage and you just did so well, so thank you for being here today.

The Vice-Chairperson: Sorry—Mx. Fast.

M. Fast: Thank you so much. Yes, I admire that you proposed this bill and I really hope that I wasn't speaking too fast.

The Vice-Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr. Balcaen: Well, thank you for your presentation today. It's well received and certainly appreciate the view from the youth perspective as I don't think we've heard a whole lot during this committee from Manitoba youth, so thank you for bringing that forward.

M. Fast: Yes, thank you. I did notice that. I think I'm the only teenager or younger who is presenting, though a lot of people like to talk about us.

The Vice-Chairperson: Thank you.

Any other questions?

Seeing none, thank you, Mx. Fast.

I now call upon Mrs. Volin Thiessen.

Mrs. Thiessen, please proceed when you're ready.

Volin Thiessen (Private Citizen): Hello, I'm here to speak in favour of the amendment of The Human Rights Code.

I am a transgender woman who's been—who came out within the past five years. I have had the experience of being a closeted, unhappy person, and while I was closeted, I did not face any discrimination in my employment or in my housing.

After coming out, I spent about four years struggling to find employment that would hire me and give me full-time work. I spent over a year being completely unemployed while searching for work, and during this time, through dozens and dozens of interviews, I have been denied positions that I am over-qualified for, that I have worked in previously. I have also been in—over the course of interviews—over the course of one interview, I was called a slur and was let—I was made aware that the reason I wasn't receiving the position was because my voice does not align with how the person perceived my gender.

I told them that I was a woman and that I would be working and asking that they treat me as a woman, and in the course of that interview, I was told I do not sound like a woman and that would be very confusing for clients and so I would not be receiving that position.

The Chairperson in the Chair

While searching—while seeking justice for this is not something that I'm looking to do because I do not think it would serve myself nor the clients that would

have been supported in my role had I received that position, I am making it very clear that this is an act of gender—of discrimination based on gender expression.

Gender expression alone—gender identity alone is not enough as a protected characteristic. Gender expression, as well, must be protected. I might be able to identify as a woman. I might be able to go and be—and expect to receive fair treatment as a transgender identified woman, but that still means that people have space, especially if, say, the human right—pardon me—the Human Rights Tribunal is, say, not being led by people like it is today who we trust and who we expect to take our needs and rights seriously. If there is a change in appointment and bad actors choose to manipulate the code to prevent us from having our rights respected, gender expression is a form of—is a loophole that they can exploit.

I am also here today—pardon me, I'm a little nervous—I'm also here today to explain that, like, while this bill does affect trans people, it is not just for trans people. This bill affects anybody who has any kind of gender expression. This affects straight men, cis men; this affects cis women; this affects anybody who dresses a way that does not align with a colonized standard for—a colonial and patriarchal standard for gender expression.

This also has been explained quite well by previous presenters that the way gender expression is perceived by the other is how we get measured. We do not get measured by how we express ourselves; we get measured by how others see us.

This also means that folks who are Black, Indigenous or other—people who are racialized often get perceived as being more masculine, based off of being a racialized group. This leads to further discrimination when trying to use gendered spaces, accessing gender in health. Folks who need safety from women's shelters will be denied access, not because they're transgender but because they are cisgender and do not express their gender in accordance with how folks believe gender must be expressed.

Folks get harassed for using gendered spaces like washrooms, even though those spaces are not enforced spaces. The only reason why those spaces are enforced at all is through the perception of other people's gender expression, and then we charge people with trespass after the fact.

I'd also like to clarify—there's been a lot of questioning about what would constitute being investigated by the Human Rights Tribunal for misgendering somebody

or whatever. We have to be very clear: The Human Rights Code covers housing, access to, like, being sold from a realtor, housing access from a landlord to request rental of a place. This is to prevent people from removing us from housing, as has been stated previously.

* (11:50)

Thank you, Mx. Moon Fast, for mentioning this stat: 40 per cent of homeless youth are trans. This is a significant increase from the amount of actual trans youth there are. Access to housing is something that we are prevented from accessing.

Trans people are also prevented from accessing employment, which this Human Rights Code covers. This Human Rights Code is not here to hold private citizens to account, typically. It's here to prevent systems from oppressing us and preventing us from having access to our needs. Those with power over us, those who have things that we need, are often preventing us from accessing resources that keep us alive.

Being unemployed for—being, like—being unemployed is a form of violence. It means that we do not have access to food, housing, the medication that we need, whether it's hormone treatment or insulin, the basic things that we need to, like, survive and make our bodies function. This also prevents discrimination—sorry. Yes.

I'm going to conclude. I stand by this change to The Human Rights Code. I am here in support of the amendment. It is also necessary to state this amendment is a small step towards fair treatment of trans people as well as the general public.

We still need improvements to our health-care system, increased funding to health care, specifically trans health care but not just trans health care. Everybody need—deserves to have shorter wait times. Everybody deserves to get their treatment as soon as possible, to prevent further harm to their bodies. A cut to waiting times—sorry.

Access to social housing is also a must. Housing is a human right, and we are not exercising that human right. The fact that there are people who are homeless and unhoused is an example of us failing to meet that human right.

House trans people, fund health care for all people, and free Palestine.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mrs. Thiessen.

We'll proceed to questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes. Thank you, Ms. Thiessen, for your presentation here today.

I thought it was—you did a good job of both dispelling some myths, adding some additional context. But, again, I think it's your personal lived experience that really helps us understand better what—how this can impact people.

So I just wanted to thank you; I thought you did a great job. It's not easy presenting at any time, but especially on an issue like this. So well done.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Mrs. Thiessen, would you like to respond?

V. Thiessen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Wiebe. Yes.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Balcaen: Again, thank you for the presentation. Appreciate hearing from many Manitobans on this bill and being able to present here in person and bringing your personal experiences forward.

So thank you.

The Chairperson: Mrs. Thiessen, would you like to respond?

V. Thiessen: No, thank you.

The Chairperson: Okay. Well, thank you, again, for making the time to present to us today.

Seeing no further questions, we'll move on to the next presenter.

The next presenter is Mr. Jon Bettner. Mr. Jon Bettner?

We'll drop his name down to the bottom of the list. Next we have Lindsay Brown.

Thank you for joining us, Lindsay. Please feel welcome to begin your presentation.

Lindsay Brown (Private Citizen): Wonderful. Thanks.

Thanks very much for the opportunity to speak to you folks here today. I always enjoy, as much as one can, coming to speak to these things. So thanks for the chance.

My name is Lindsay Brown. My pronouns are they/them. I am a resident of Winnipeg, born here, lived here my whole life. And I identify as a queer non-binary person. And I'm also an educator.

So I've worked in the K-to-12 public system for just close to 20 years. And what I'll present here today

is influenced by that lens through which I see the world.

So I'd prepared a speech, but conveniently, as happens, this morning, I had an experience that gave me the push to just speak from the heart.

So I did teach this morning. I have the privilege to work with a number of students in the Seven Oaks School Division, and I'm currently working with a group of grade 12 students in a university English course. And so students were giving their seminars this morning, and I'll be speaking to that in a second.

But I'll start just by reflecting briefly on what I saw and heard when I attended committee on Thursday last week.

I could say many things, but what I'll hone in on is simply that there was a fundamental misunderstanding in people's interpretations of what is being proposed here today. I was disheartened but not surprised that many of the folks speaking seem to have a fundamental misunderstanding of the difference between gender identity and gender expression, and that many seem to not realize that gender identity is already a protected characteristic in Manitoba and nationally, including those folks that claim to have done extensive research and felt compelled to note that people like me should not be educators. They didn't take note of, you know, the fact that gender identity is already protected.

So what I would like to draw attention to is that I feel this amendment is simply going to make everyone more free to express themselves, less constrained by expectations and stereotypes that are not simply the way things are, but rather require constant policing and regulation. So this will allow for alignment with a more open and fluid understanding of how one should look, dress, speak or behave, which is also in line with many different ways of seeing the world in many different cultures.

So, to be clear, everyone deserves the right to express themselves. However, we can't overlook, as has been mentioned here, the markedly larger impact that discrimination and violence based on gender expression has on transgender and non-binary people, as well as any folks who defy gender stereotypes and expectations. So just to be clear on that.

And now I hope that the story I'll share will make clear that everyone benefits, including people of all genders, if this amendment were to move forward.

So my students were presenting a seminar on Thomas King's short story *Borders*; if you haven't read it, please take a look, it's great. And the story essentially focuses on a group of—an Indigenous family who's looking to cross from Canada into America, and so it brings up a lot of conversations around regulation and borders and why they exist in the way that they do, both in terms of geography and in terms of sort of a policing of people.

And what really struck me from their presentation was how they transitioned this presentation into a conversation about borders and boxes, and how being placed in a box is something that no one should have to experience. I was really struck by how fundamentally they understood this, and how they could speak to their experiences regarding all the different ways that they had been expected to be one way, whether it was how they behaved, how they looked, the sports they participated in.

And they just had such wisdom that really made me—literally made me cry at the end of their presentation. They were like: I'm so sorry; we didn't mean to make you cry.

And I said: no, these are good tears, tears of pride that the young folks that I get a chance to work with really understand this at the core, that everyone should have the right to be who they are, publicly, in the workplace, when it comes to applying for jobs, without feeling as though they need to either be someone they're not, or they need to conform to someone's idea of what they should, quote, unquote, be, based on assumptions that other people make of them.

So my students get it. They really fundamentally understand why gender expression is a human right and why it should be protected under the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

I could talk about my students forever, but I will cede the remaining five minutes of my time by just encouraging you folks to vote in favour of this amendment, because everyone benefits when we are not confined to boxes.

So thanks very much for your time this morning.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Lindsay.

Committee Substitution

The Chairperson: Before we proceed to questions from the committee, I'd like to inform the committee that under our rule 84(2), the following membership substitution has been made for this committee effective immediately: Mr. King for Mr. Balcaen.

Thank you.

* * *

The Chairperson: Questions?

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, thank you, Lindsay, for the presentation. Pretty cool to be coming straight from the classroom, like literally straight from the classroom to the committee. That's a great perspective.

I also made a note here how you were respectful of the other presenters, other viewpoints, and I think, actually, that speaks—it's an interesting way to maybe position it, but it speaks to how you are also respectful of other perspectives as well, and I think that hits exactly the core. We want to be respectful and we want to, of course, you know, protect people, which is what you do every day in your job.

* (12:00)

So just wanted to thank you for the presentation. Really well done.

The Chairperson: Lindsay, if you'd like to respond?

L. Brown: Sure, thanks very much. It's not always easy to be respectful, and I'm happy I had a little bit of time between Thursday and today to sit with that.

And, yes, it was great to come from class; my students will be very excited that they got a shout-out when I show them the YouTube stream. And they told me to drive safe, so we're in good hands.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you for the presentation. I see Mr. Martindale was sort of beaming with pride through the presentation as well, so you've made a couple of people happy in the room, and I'm sure your students will look forward to seeing the presentation as well. So thank you, again, for being here.

The Chairperson: Lindsay, if you'd like to respond?

L. Brown: Thanks.

The Chairperson: Seeing no further questions from the committee, thank you again, and we'll move along the list here.

The next presenter on our list is Ms. Mikayla Hunter. I've been advised that Ms. Hunter is making a written submission in lieu.

Next on the list is Mx. Em Boyko. Mx. Boyko will be dropping down to the bottom of the list.

Next is Ms. Tabitha Thomas. We'll be dropping Ms. Thomas down to the bottom of the list.

Next is Kate Kehler. We'll be dropping Kate Kehler down to the bottom of the list.

Mrs. Zeljana Nikolic. Okay. We'll be dropping Mrs. Nikolic down to the bottom of the list.

Next is Mr. Andrew Kohan. Mr. Kohan will be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Mrs. Erin Robin. Mrs. Robin will also be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Mr. Junbin Shi. Mr. Shi will also be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Chyrel Young. We'll also drop their name down to the bottom of the list.

Kevin Rebeck. I've been advised that Kevin Rebeck is unavailable. He will be making a written submission.

Next we have Mr. Chris deBoy [*phonetic*]. Chris deBoer. Mr. deBoer, please proceed with your presentation.

Chris deBoer (Private Citizen): Yes, dear members of the committee. I want to begin by expressing thankfulness to you that you have agreed to host another session of public comments regarding Bill 43.

I also want to affirm my heartfelt conviction that I have my truest identity in my saviour Jesus Christ, and I believe that all human beings are created in the image of God and, therefore, have inherent worth and value and must be treated with dignity and respect.

In preparing for today's presentation, I was struck by the inherent inconsistencies within The Human Rights Code itself, and as I explored the matter further, I am increasingly concerned with the discriminatory nature of the code and its application.

Let me explain. When I opened The Human Rights Code, I noticed that right at the beginning there is an emphasis on equality of opportunity. The code recognizes that in order to protect the right of all individuals to be treated in all matters solely on the basis of their personal merits and to be accorded equality of opportunity with all other individuals, it is

necessary to restrict unreasonable discrimination against individuals, including discrimination based on stereotypes or generalizations.

I would personally argue that it is not unreasonable discrimination to insist that individuals be treated according to their biological sexuality rather than their subjective view of reality.

I am concerned, however, with what I read in part C of the very beginnings of The Human Rights Code where the argument is made in view of the fact that past discrimination against certain groups has resulted in serious disadvantage to members of those groups and therefore it is important to provide for affirmative action programs and other special programs designed to overcome this historic advantage, that we are repeating the mistakes of history to correct the mistakes of history.

So The Human Rights Code, as it's called, is not truly there for the protection of all human rights, but rather for the advancement of social justice for members of previous, or current—truly or perceived—disadvantaged groups at the cost of individuals who may be part of a perceived privileged group. There is an assumption built into The Human Rights Code that because I was born as a white male that I already have unfair advantages and, therefore, in order to level the playing field, we have to give others a leg up.

We are not focused on an equality of opportunity, but we are seeking to create equality of outcomes. One of the challenges that I perceive is that there is no recognition of any kind of suffering that may exist within a perceived advantaged group. You don't know my story, but it is as though you don't want to know my story because I am perceived to have had the advantages, simply by birth.

When I look at the job opportunities for the government of Manitoba, I regularly see that quote: the Manitoba government support equitable employment practices and promote representation of designated groups: women, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, visible minorities. That's everyone except for me and people like me. Because I am a white male and express myself as cisgendered, whatever my personal history is with regards to being bullied or harassed or treated unfairly, I receive no assistance to help me achieve personal goals. I find this fundamentally unfair, and I would encourage this committee to consider whether The Human Rights Code is actually for the benefit of all citizens or, in fact, is itself discriminatory against some.

As I was preparing my presentation, I also took a look at what's going on in other provinces and learned that the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, in the case entitled *NB v. Ottawa-Carleton School Board*, includes a recognition that everyone has a gender identity but is not applied in the same way. Specifically, the protections of a code for cisgendered persons are not the same as for transgender individuals. And that was a quotation.

This was commented on further on a lawyer's blog as she spoke about a cisgendered man who brought a claim against a clean-shaven policy at his workplace on the basis that his beard was part of his gender expression. So long story short, quote, the tribunal has determined that although these grounds apply to everyone—cisgender is a gender identity—the purpose of the grounds, i.e., the expression also through facial hair, are to protect queer and trans people, end quote. I confess that I struggle with the fundamental unfairness inherent in the affirmative action and applications within The Human Rights Code.

Now, I want to express two main arguments against adding gender expression and against retaining gender identity in The Human Rights Code. Built into The Human Rights Code is what we might call favourable discrimination for the benefits of remedying past discrimination. This means that there are some reasons where you would discriminate based on gender or race. There is a conviction that there's a greater goal being attempted through the so-called positive discrimination or affirmative action that permits us to discriminate against even some protected categories or characteristics. So remedying past wrongs is a justification for exercising current discrimination.

Well, I would argue that we should also consider two additional important elements when considering gender expression, and the first is safety. When biological men express themselves as female or women, do they then have a human right to make use of cisgendered female washrooms or workout spaces or hockey teams or rugby teams or volleyball teams?

* (12:10)

Because we allow any individual expression of gender to dictate where one may find access to previously closed places, we also open up our safe spaces not only to those who are genuinely struggling with the tension between their sexual biology and their gender identity, but we also invite bad actors to take advantage of this new concept by feigning the struggle and entering what should be safe places.

So I would argue that one's gender expression or self-identity should not be used to give people access to spaces that are aligning with their identity, but rather it should remain the standard to access such spaces that align with one's biology. Women have fought long and hard for these spaces and have created engaging, competitive, safe forums for them to enjoy sport, exercise and other personal care. This is a fundamental right that should not be put at risk in any way despite an individual's personal feelings about him or herself.

As I approach my conclusion, I want to share a true story about an episode that I experienced almost 20 years ago. I was working in a school when one of my colleagues shared a challenging scenario. One of her six-year-old students believed that he could lay an egg. He was convinced, not that he was a chicken, but that he and possibly other young boys could lay eggs just like chickens. The teacher initially told him to stop being silly, but he persisted. He really believed he could lay eggs.

So the teacher quieted the chuckles and the laughs and spoke to the child after class and then phoned the parents. It seemed that the parents and the older siblings had been putting an egg in his bed every morning again. The parents had done this to their older children, but somehow it never became a matter at school. Nevertheless, the teacher wanted to ensure that the parents were aware of this child's insistence that he could lay eggs, that they were aware of the awkward classroom situation and that they were aware that the other children were confused and maybe even unkind.

Now, today, we are living in a world where we want all the other children to change their worldview or at least suspend their belief that little boys don't lay eggs. Sure, they can still have their thoughts, but they can't tell the boy who is convinced that he can lay eggs that he cannot. They have to suspend their own beliefs about reality in order to let this little boy live in his own perceived version of reality.

In a newspaper article by the Canadian Press, Karen Sharma is quoted as saying: I think it's important to note that the cases that have gone to human rights tribunals and have been found to be discriminatory are cases of sort of malicious, repetitive misgendering.

I would like to make it clear that it is not malicious misgendering that motivates my concerns here. I'm concerned with the growing requirement of individuals to suspend their fundamental belief. My belief that God created men and women in his image—male

and female, he created them. You want us to accept a version of reality that is entirely out of our purview. It is not malicious misgendering. It is a heartfelt conviction about the way the world is and ought to be. It includes a precious concern for those struggling with tensions between their vision of self, their gender expression—

The Chairperson: Excuse me, your time has expired.

Mr. Wiebe: Can I just ask for leave of the committee that we allow Mr. deBoer to finish his presentation.

The Chairperson: There has been a request from Minister Wiebe to allow Mr. deBoer to continue his presentation.

What is the will of the committee? *[Agreed]*

You may continue your presentation.

C. deBoer: Thank you.

It would be my prayer that there would be congruence between the expression and identity of one's physical anatomy and that it would be achieved by the changing of the mind rather than the changing of the body or even expression. Wouldn't it be a great day when those struggling with the sexuality-gender dichotomy could find peace by loving their God-given bodies again?

But mandating that I suspend my belief in how the world is and ought to be by addressing colleagues or customers by their subjective view of themselves and their subjective and often-changing view of reality is discriminating against me by compelling me to buy into what I truly to be—truly believe to be a subjective view of reality; to accept your view of yourself that is totally antithesis to my own view of reality does not actually give me freedom of thought or expression.

It would be my sincere request that you refrain from adding gender expression to The Human Rights Code of Manitoba as we seek to live in unity and harmony together as citizens of this great province.

Thank you, and thank you for the extra time.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

Moving on to questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. deBoer, for your presentation. You started by talking about the importance of dignity and respect for everyone and that flowing from your faith, and I just want to share that that's also the motivation for myself. And so I appreciate that we're on the same page with regards to that.

I also appreciate that you've talked about getting this bill right. We believe that we have gotten it right, and, of course, this is another advancement. Again, it doesn't take away any rights, but it adds to The Human Rights Code.

You know, appreciate we might differ on whether we think we've got it right, but we certainly are at least, I think, coming from the same place in terms of the intent of the bill. So I wanted to thank you for your presentation.

The Chairperson: Mr. deBoer, if you would like to respond.

C. deBoer: No, I appreciate that commentary. I guess I would—we heard some earlier comments about how this also would protect cisgendered expressions of sexuality. And I think the citation from that case in Ontario demonstrates that the Human Rights Tribunal interpreted The Human Rights Code as being intended to protect a certain group.

And that would be a concern here as well, that, in fact, they argued, no, you don't get to express—or you don't get to keep expressing your male identity, cisgendered-male identity with your beard, and that's not the purpose of the code.

And so I would challenge, perhaps, some of the comments that were made earlier that suggested that this is actually for protecting everyone. The case in Ontario suggests otherwise.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Mr. deBoer, for your presentation and specifically for doing some research on rulings and, I guess, legal commentary from the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The commissions have been clear in what they have said, and people can like or not like it, but they have been clear, and thank you for citing another case and putting it on the record.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Mr. deBoer, if you would like to respond.

C. deBoer: No, thank you.

The Chairperson: All right. Seeing no further questions from the committee, thank you again, and we'll continue on the list here.

So, Mrs. Erika Krahn has noted herself as unavailable.

Next on the list we have Kalen Taylor. Kalen Taylor has now been called twice, so they will be dropped from the list.

Next we have Mr. Jace MacFarlane. Mr. MacFarlane has also been called twice, so their name will be dropped to the bottom of the list—I mean, removed from the list.

Next is Bradley West. We'll be dropping Bradley West's name down to the bottom of the list.

Next is Mary Pauls. We—dropping Mary Pauls' name down to the bottom of the list.

Next is Gloria Dignazio. Gloria, thank you for joining us today. Please feel welcome to proceed with your presentation.

Gloria Dignazio (Private Citizen): Okay, thank you, and I guess could say good afternoon now.

So I'm just going to read what I've prepared, and then from being here Thursday and today—and this is all new to me, the process; it's all very interesting—so I'll just read what I've prepared formally and then some other thoughts.

So my name is Gloria Dignazio, and I do not support Bill 43. In my opinion, this gender stuff has gone too far, and the government has no right to police our words and thoughts, and I feel strongly this is an attack on free speech.

* (12:20)

I have to wonder how much of the actual population really is even affected by this topic. I bet it's less than 1 per cent. So why are we catering to less than 1 per cent of the population? To me, this is the government trying to police speech for an extreme minority of the population.

We do not need to legislate government-controlled language regarding so-called inclusion and equity. This is not the path to inclusion and it's the path to division. I feel the majority of the population does not want this, and similar efforts elsewhere to legislate pronoun use have received backlash and cause polarization.

This bill is essentially forcing everyone to participate in an ideology the majority of the population does not want. There are real problems in this city, including homelessness, tent encampments, severe crime issues including catch and release, vaccine injuries, infrastructure issues; and the NDP wants to talk about pronouns. This all seems to be a waste of time and

resources. I feel we should be based on facts and reality that there are only two biological genders.

That's kind of what I came up with formally, but—and I really believe in, of course, all—and respect all perceptions and perspectives. I just—when I think back to, say, everything that happened during COVID and stuff and I remember hearing, let's all work together and, you know, it's only going to be two weeks, and some of us know how that turned out. It was more than two weeks. So I have to say I'm a little suspicious in that this will start off, supposedly, that it's not going to cause harm to people that accidentally misgender people.

I feel from being in the vaccine risk awareness movement for 30 years and having really studied different effects of autism and the autism continuum, I feel a lot of the people in the community are actually affected by vaccines in the sense that there's aborted fetal tissues in vaccines. So I think this is causing a lot of the gender issues on the planet. That's something that's really never been said before, but I feel for the community, having a daughter with vaccine-induced autism, so there's varying degrees of it. I see the different things that, you know, certain people need to help with certain issues and stuff like that, so I just feel that's important to put out there.

So I really feel and empathize and have compassion for the community. I'm just concerned about yes, like, if I accidentally say something wrong, that it's going to come back to haunt me because I've had certain experiences—you know, that's what happened the last five years or even 30 years in my activism work.

I think that's all I want to say for now.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Gloria.

We'll open the floor for questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you very much, Gloria, for your presentation. I really appreciate it and I appreciate your perspective.

One of the benefits of this legislation now coming into place much later than other places, other jurisdictions—for example, Alberta's already had this for a decade—we know that some of those concerns around, you know, some of that slippery slope argument that some have articulated, we haven't seen that come to pass.

So that is, I think, encouraging. It might give you some confidence in what we're doing here, and just to

be clear, just, you know, if you're accidentally saying something, there's no way that you would be in any way held to account for that. I think it would just be a matter of correcting oneself and then nobody would question that.

But I appreciate the perspective and I appreciate your concerns because I think we want to make sure everybody's feeling heard here today.

The Chairperson: Gloria, would you like to respond?

G. Dignazio: I appreciate that.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. King: Thank you, Gloria, for taking the time out of your day to come in and present your concerns and your ideas on this bill, especially after being here on that late Thursday night as well, as you said.

So I just want to thank you for bringing your perspective to the committee and attending once again today. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Gloria, would you like to respond?

G. Dignazio: Thank you, and I do care because you know, I was here Thursday and I had to leave by a little bit after 10 o'clock. I'm actually blown away the—by the process here that nobody's really taking lunch or breaks, it's kind of a cool whole thing.

But I did finish watching the last two hours yesterday because I wanted to hear everyone, because I respect everyone; I see all 'perspectious' and perceptions with all of this, so I appreciate the time to be able to speak.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Gloria.

Seeing no further questions, we'll move on to our next presenter.

Next on the list is Teresa Lugzo. Teresa Lugzo. We'll drop Teresa down to the bottom of the list.

Next is Mrs. Sandra Saint-Cyr. Saint-Cyr.

Okay, Mrs. Saint-Cyr, please proceed with your presentation.

Sandra Saint-Cyr (Private Citizen): Thank you.

I'm going to go off script because this is a wonderful experience. I didn't want to come on Thursday when, you know, friends invited me to come, because when I read the bill, I thought, it doesn't matter. And that was, I guess—my initial read was it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what more we add after we say all and every and every citizen, and that means all of us, and so why continue to add subsets?

Well, let me just—I changed my mind on that and decided to come, so I'm going to read what I put down and go from there. So I do really thank everyone for being here, people with specific roles, ministers, members of the Assembly and Chair and the public as well, no matter what your role is in our culture. I'm just here representing me.

Language is important. It's quite impossible to fully control it. When we communicate, we are doing our best to express ourselves, and we can never, ever filter out what life someone else brings when they hear what we say. And so, unintentionally, we flavour everything with our lens, our own experiences—call them lived experiences, call them, you know, whatever—your journey, your path. It skews everything we see, that and—that is what I believe. My views skew everything I see, so I'm trying to be very careful and cognizant of that. Who can tame their tongue? It's something that we can never achieve. I wish we could.

Our code says Manitobans recognize the individual worth and dignity of every member of the human family; that's a beautiful comment. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights uses the language everyone, every human being, no distinction shall be made, all. Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms uses the terms everyone, every individual, every citizen, citizens of Canada. Not one of us in this room is excluded from the terms outlined; all means all. No one person or group or category has earned or deserves or even requires special treatment. We are all special. All equal under the law, all equal under God.

As soon as we start creating a list, adding an issue, a people group or a subset, we begin ranking people in importance, labelling, elevating, highlighting, jockeying. Why do we do this? What—are we afraid that someone's going to be left out of the group of all? Sometimes, simple language is the best way to express the largest idea. We are all—all.

The code using all leaves out many things; it even leaves out gender entirely, and I think that could be a good thing. We all have faults and giftings. Even in one family or group, there's rarely agreement on every issue. Just because I believe one way does not mean I agree with all people who believe that same way, nor would I act or make choices in my life the same way they do.

* (12:30)

Just because a person is—has a label that they have given themselves, it does not mean that it—they necessarily agree in action or thought or words with all

other persons who might also choose that same label. We're just not that cohesive as people.

We do choose to live peaceably every day, with or without agreement. I'm in disagreement on many issues, perhaps with, you know, members of my own family, but that doesn't stop me from loving them. We choose to live peaceably. We are unique, and our unique paths in life ensure that we will almost never experiment—experience just—life just like someone else does, and that's good.

More than anything, if we kind of hyperfocus ourselves, it will cause division and fear and taking sides in—we need to see our freedom as such a big thing that we don't take sides. And I believe that is true freedom, that there are no sides. And it's not just idealistic; it is a way to live.

I was surprised and continue to be surprised at, you know—and I know it's our passionate beliefs about our own experiences that cause us to do this, but I watched a little bit of Thursday's and I will continue to watch and I've just completely enjoyed every single person who spoke today; and I could say for every one, I agreed with some things that they said and disagreed with other things that they said, and that's fine. It will be the same when you listen to me express myself.

But I'm surprised to hear the very kind of difficult name-calling and bias. I think we should get off the path that this team-taking leads to. I think we can stop being afraid of rejection, and we can stop being worried about the other one and what they might say or do. We can't control any of it and we cannot ensure it won't happen. We have many, many laws in our country, and there's still crime; there's still hate; there's still murder; there's still theft. There—you know, it will continue to happen because we are faulty human beings, and we don't get it right all of the time in big, big ways and in very small ways. And none of us is outside of that fact.

So I do appeal for no change to the vote, just because I think it's covered; I think everything's covered. And we will see no end to the additions; in many ways, the longer we look, the more we'll find. I think all and freedom are so inclusive, so all-encompassing, and that gives us the parameters that we need to include everyone. Human race is human race. I'm not aware that there aren't humans all around us, and nobody's outside of that descriptor.

We want to live in a free society. If you look at me and perceive that I have more freedom than you,

you are deceived. We have freedom because we're human. We have to be careful. Even the fear, you know, of a stranger being different than me: if I carry that, I limit myself. We can love each other if we choose to. Our choice to do that is our greatest gift. As Manitobans, I'm hoping that we won't get stuck—that we'll see all and freedom for the—just the grand beautiful idea that it is and not have to continue adding pieces to a puzzle that already includes all.

There are so many more important things for us to do in our daily lives. This is important; I'm not saying it's frivolous. I'm just saying let's look at the language, and let's let the language be what it is. Freedom is freedom; no one can take it from me. I am who I am, regardless of what you call me, regardless of what you think of me, regardless of what team or box you want to put me on. I don't want to be put on a team or a box.

I want to have relationships with all people, and that's our unifying factor, our common denominator. And I guess that's just sitting here, feeling a little bit of sadness because that's the ultimate aspiration that we might have as people.

My gender isn't everything I am; it's just one aspect of who I am, and it's—you know, we're complex people, but we're also simple, and I guess that's my appeal. Whenever I feel I have to be right, I've already lost my way. It's okay for us to own who we are and where we walk and how we live, and I cannot ever force anyone to agree with what I think.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Saint-Cyr.

We'll move on to questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Ms. Saint-Cyr.

I really appreciate the broad nature of your presentation. I actually—the piece that struck me the most was when you described, you know, a relationship within a family. I sometimes think about all of Manitoba as one big family, and we don't always agree on certain specific things, but that doesn't mean that we can't find that common ground. And I think your sentiments around protecting everybody, being respectful of everyone, have really shone through in your presentation.

So thanks for sticking it out, and thanks for taking the time here today. Really appreciate it.

The Chairperson: Mrs. Saint-Cyr, if you would like to respond.

S. Saint-Cyr: Thank you for your comments, and thank you for the time that you take to listen to people,

because at the heart of it, that's what values all of us is when we listen, seek to understand even if we don't agree.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. King: Thank you, Sandra, for your presentation. I think we can all appreciate your presentation speaking through many of our hearts, speaking from all of our hearts here, wanting to be respectful to each and every Manitoban.

So I thank you so much for your presentation. It was very logical and very down-to-earth, and it was a great listen, and I appreciate you taking part of the process here. It means a lot.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Mrs. Saint-Cyr, if you would like to respond on the record.

S. Saint-Cyr: Oh, thank you. It's a valuable process, and I guess it challenges me not to see my life and my day to day through the hurts that I've experienced or through the experiences—you know, the things that happened to me or around me, and yet to just go forward with hope and with love and caring for others in every scenario.

The Chairperson: Seeing no further questions from the committee, thank you for taking your time out of your day, Ms. Saint-Cyr.

Moving along the list, we do have one note for Mr. Jon Bettner, who is unavailable to present, so we will drop his name from the list.

Moving on, we have Rhonda Forbes.

Thanks for joining us here today, Rhonda. Please begin your presentation.

Rhonda Forbes (Private Citizen): Okay, thank you.

Hello, my name is Rhonda. I thank you for taking the time to allow me to speak. I stand before you as a Canadian citizen concerned for my future, the future of my kids and the generations to come. I'm not a fan of public speaking, but when situations like this arise, and it's very concerning, I speak up and stand for what is true and what is right.

Bill 43 is an attack on freedom of speech. If you're telling me I can't say this or I can't say that, or if someone says the wrong pronoun that they could be fined, penalized in different ways, it's a concern. That is forced speech and is in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 52(1). Section 52(1) states: The Constitution of Canada is the supreme law

of Canada, and any law that is inconsistent with the Constitution is, to the extent of the inconsistency, of no force or no effect.

* (12:40)

This means that any law passed by Parliament or a provincial legislator that conflicts with the Charter is invalid. And I'll repeat that: any law passed by Parliament or a provincial legislature that conflicts with the Charter is invalid.

The supremacy clause establishes the constitution as the highest law in Canada. Section 2 states our fundamental freedoms, which includes freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of thought and belief, freedom of opinion and expression. Bill 43 violates these freedoms, hence myself and many others I know vote no for Bill 43.

There's been a lot of talk about job loss. I, as well, lost my job due to my beliefs. It was a tragic—yes, it was a tragic moment for me to lose my job that I enjoyed and was making a positive influence on society. Sorry. It affected my husband and our children financially. I won't speak too much on that, going to keep—I'll keep it to the point.

Does anyone know what the three values are which are stated on the Manitoba Legislative Assembly mission document? The three values that are stated on the Manitoba Legislative Assembly are excellence, integrity and fairness. Bill 43 does not provide excellence, Bill 43 does not give integrity, Bill 43 does not yield fairness.

Compelled speech is not free speech. There are some Bible stories referenced earlier, and I must say, the Bible story referenced early—maybe some weren't here earlier, but—regarding Abraham and his son.

I got to say, you cannot take a few verses out of the Bible, out of—in the wrong content. Jesus demurred—demonstrated His love for all of us by dying on the cross.

Governments are elected to provide core services. They're not to be making our—or, they are, pardon me, to be making our towns and cities safe to live in. Making sure our tax money is being spent wisely, not to control what we believe or how we speak.

Stop talking about the pronouns and discuss more important topics. The Manitoba government needs to focus more time and energy into fixing the strains on health care. I work in the health-care system. Reducing crime, we've seen that, and improving our education system. These are the topics that need to be focused on.

Policing our speech is not the role of our government, and because it violates our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. You've heard me repeat the words Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I keep repeating them because this Charter needs to be upheld and remembered for what it stands for.

Thank you for your time.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Rhonda.

We'll proceed with questions from the committee.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Rhonda. You mentioned that you weren't comfortable in public speaking, but I thought you did really well. And this is also an emotional subject for you, so I—you did great. I thought you did a really great presentation.

I also just wanted to note: I think you're right. This is one element of work that we're doing here today, but as you know, we've got six other bills that we're going to be working through today and going through the legislative process. There's a lot of priorities that government is undertaking. I understand and appreciate that, you know, there's other concerns. Hopefully you'll take the time to weigh in on those as well—maybe not today, but in future. Because this forum is really open to you and we want you a part of the democratic process.

So thanks for taking the time and you did great in your presentation.

So thank you.

The Chairperson: Rhonda, if you'd like to respond.

R. Forbes: Thank you for your comment.

The Chairperson: Further questions?

Mr. King: Thank you, Rhonda, for coming in today and expressing your concerns with the bill. And it's emotional for you and I can understand that, so I thank you for taking part in the process and letting us all hear what your thoughts are on this bill.

Again, thanks for coming in.

The Chairperson: Rhonda, if you'd like to respond.

R. Forbes: Thank you for your comment.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Seeing no further questions, thank you for joining us today, Rhonda.

We'll proceed down the list. Next is Alison Norberg and she joins us virtually.

Committee Substitution

The Chairperson: Before Alison begins their presentation, I'd like to inform the committee that under rule 84(2), the following membership substitution has been made for this committee effective immediately: Mr. Balcaen for MLA Goertzen.

Thank you, everybody.

* * *

The Chairperson: Alison Norberg, please feel welcome to begin your presentation. Alison, you'll need to accept the promotion to panelist on Zoom.

Alison Norberg (Private Citizen): Sorry about that. I switched back to my phone. Sorry. I was trying to do it with my laptop.

Thanks very much for including me today. My name is Alison Norberg, and very glad to be presenting in support of the amendments to The Human Rights Code in Bill 43.

I need to tell you, I presented to the—presented to amendments to The Human Rights Code in 1987, and—sorry—in 1987, and so, you know, when this came up again, I really—personally, I felt compelled to present, so I'm glad for the opportunity. I have to tell you, too, because now I'm on my phone, I can't see the time clock, so hopefully this will—goes okay.

I wanted to speak today because I'm a lifelong member of the United Church of Canada and have the good fortune of being, again, in an affirming congregation, which for us is, you know, being public and explicit in our open and welcome to folks from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. And I guess I consider the process that you're involved in as analogous to that.

My engagement as an ally goes back many years personally, when a family member came out to me as gay and looked for advice on how to tell the rest of the family. And so the welcome started then and the commitment to support and advocacy has continued in many ways throughout the years.

As I say, part—a big part of that for me is rooted in my involvement in my church community, which is lifelong, and we've been on a journey of this for many decades. It goes back to the '80s when the United Church first began exploring inclusion of homosexuals as ordained ministers in our community. And it was a privilege to be part of that process and again today, similarly.

I think I would want to specifically highlight that it—over the years, mainline churches across Canada

have been working their way through expanding their understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity and now gender expression. And that's been a process and has been really positive in terms of the communities I've been a part of, currently Young United Church.

And I want to be clear: I'm speaking as an individual, not on behalf of that congregation, and that I've also had the good fortune in the last 15 years to be a church administrator and had the opportunity to work in Anglican and Lutheran congregations also in Winnipeg.

And, similarly, those denominations have been in the process of that, and particularly the Diocese of Rupert's Land has been very proactive in terms of their commitment to inclusion and, similarly, my two employers at the moment. I work at two congregations that are Lutheran, and one is explicitly part of the reconcile and congregation process in that wider communion and, as well, the other is in—entering that process.

So I want to be clear that lots of the Christian communities are allies and supporters and are wanting to be intentional, inclusive about our welcome in providing safe spaces for folks as well as make that witness to the wider community. And I really appreciate that Minister Wiebe and the government have taken this additional step, because I see it as part of the natural progression of the process that we've been on as communities, locally and across the country.

* (12:50)

I think it's important to remember that—not only the current situation globally, but also historically: it's not always been true that folks have been safe and protected because of their differences, including sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity.

And especially now we're seeing lots of instances where—of what's going on in the States, but that's not unique to history, where people are being attacked and actually fleeing for their lives. There's been many inquiries currently but also over the decades of ministers essentially seeking asylum in Canadian churches, whether it's for themselves or for a family member.

There's instances in the States. I'm hearing, reading about—of Lutheran pastors who are making inquiries in Canada because for them, or for their, you know, or personally because of their gender identity and gender expression, orientation or their children—who may be gender diverse, gender fluid or non-binary—they are not feeling safe remaining in the communities that they're serving because of what's happening in their

particular state and what's happening across the country.

So it's a time where it's really important for those of us who are allies to speak out, to stand up and stand with all those who are created in the image of God. We're all created in the image of God, and that includes, you know, gay, lesbian, trans, gender-diverse folks. And, in fact, in our congregation, we had the benefit in the last—or had the privilege in the last year hearing our minister preach a sermon where he specifically talked about the gifts that our trans siblings are offering to us at a church in this time, transforming our understanding of humanity and transforming our understanding of the understanding of God, as well as expanding the images and the names and the ways in which we understand and experience God.

So I think that this is super important personally, and I'm glad to be here and I really want to commend the government on making this amendment.

I also want to say, too, I'm active as a volunteer at Winnipeg Folk Fest, and the—you know, the codes that have been created there, again, has been a process of evolution. And so one of the things that we're actively working on—I co-ordinate a crew in La Cuisine backstage—and so again, the importance of being supportive and inclusive, especially of 'transgunder'—transgender youth. We've had youth at—we've had apprentices work in our kitchen and—who are identifying differently than cisgender, heteronormative ways, and that's a wonderful opportunity for us to learn and to work at using pronouns.

And, yes, I've flubbed, and I've apologized for that and worked at being more, you know, better able to and more comfortable with—to doing that. And that certainly has been a process over the years, and especially where folks that I know, I mean, who have changed along the path of their own journey. Again, it's an opportunity for me to learn and to grow.

So yes, I want to say how much I really appreciate what—the work of the committee. I appreciate the amendment and really glad to have the opportunity to speak in favour of it today.

I think a couple of speakers that, you know, earlier today talked about things from their perspective, which—and I just wanted to be sure that there was an opportunity to clearly share that there's a great diversity in the Christian community, and there's a great diversity in other faith communities as well in terms of their perspectives on these issues. And so to know that

there are lots of congregations in Manitoba who are celebrating and grateful that our provincial government is taking this step.

I think the other thing that I want to reflect on is that all of our rights are connected, and so even if this is not something that affects me personally, if others are being diminished or held back or discriminated against or threatened because of their gender expression, it's something that does affect me because I'm part of a community, and I'm part of the communities that I'm connected to: my community of faith, my neighbourhood, my Folk Fest volunteering community, my, you know, Manitoba Crafts Council community.

I'm part of all of those communities as well as being part of my neighbourhood in the West End and part of the larger community of Winnipeg and Manitoba. And what happens—

The Chairperson: Alison, the time for the presentation has expired; though, during questions, if you would like to weave any remaining thoughts into your responses, you may.

Questions from the committee will begin now.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Alison. What an amazing story that you have this perspective of being here in 1987 and now again here today to see how we have evolved, how we have changed our understanding of one another and how we continue to protect one another through The Human Rights Code.

So I just wanted to thank you. And also, personally, just bringing the perspective of your faith community here today, the United Church of Canada in particular, it just really speaks to me.

So I just wanted to thank you for bringing that here. I think you've done a great job of bringing us all together and talking about some common values that all Manitobans, I believe, should have.

The Chairperson: Alison, if you would like to respond, you may.

A. Norberg: Sure. No, thanks very much, Mr. Minister.

Yes, and just at the tail end of what I was saying, you know, I mean, I think what affects one affects all of us, and so—and that's been true on a variety of issues across—in terms of things I've been involved in throughout my life. And so that is important.

And then I guess I'd say personally, you know, when my brother came out, that was celebrated by our family, and then his partner was included in our family,

and one of the great joys was that we walked together, including my late mother, at Pride parades. She was so happy that Roger had Rob *[phonetic]* in his life.

And I expect that that would have been true, as well, if at some point, you know, and will be true certainly in the future for us if we have a transgender or gender-diverse, gender-fluid member of our extended family. So the engagement I've had is certainly very much informed with, and I'm grateful that I'm part of a church that welcomes and celebrates the broad spectrum of our humanity.

But I also know this is very personal for me in terms of where the story begins. The story begins with my brother Roger. And I know that the welcome that we extended is the process that other individuals and other families are going through, in new and different ways now than we did all those years ago. And I know that it makes us better. It made us better as a family and grateful to have his partner with us all of these years.

The Chairperson: Further questions from the committee?

Mr. Balcaen: Well, thank you very much for your presentation. Again, greatly appreciated the differing views that we see and the fact that you presented back in '80s on issues and then again today is remarkable, quite honestly.

I think you brought forward a very good point in that there's varying opinions within the community and there's varying opinions within the church community too.

So—and, of course, as legislatures—legislators, we have to be respectful of everyone's opinions. So I appreciate you for bringing that forward.

The Chairperson: Alison, if you would like to respond?

A. Norberg: Yes, thanks very much.

Yes; no, I certainly agree with you in terms of that diversity and respect. But I'd also want to make very clear from my perspective that I do not believe that there is anything in this amendment that inhibits or prevents my exercise of my in any way, shape or form.

* (13:00)

And I think its—and I think that a lot of—I guess I'm just conscious of how much hatred is being stirred up in so many different ways, particularly around some of these particular issues and the kind of struggles that

we've seen in other parts of—I mean, certainly in the States and in other parts of Canada where—you know, and there's just a couple of instances here in Manitoba where there's efforts to address things through school divisions and try and address things that are happening in libraries and wanting to prevent libraries from having, drag queen story time, and all those kinds of things.

And I think we are a big, generous and open-minded province, and so I think there's room for all of that. I clearly do not choose to be part of, you know—

The Chairperson: Thank you, Alison. Time has expired for the Q & A, but thank you very, very much for joining us over Zoom today.

Committee Substitution

Clerk Assistant: Before moving on to further presenters, I would like to inform the committee that under our rule 84(2) the following membership substitutions have been made for this committee effective immediately: Mr. Oxenham for MLA Dela Cruz; MLA Loiselle for MLA Corbett; and Mr. Blashko for MLA Cross.

Thank you.

* * *

Clerk Assistant: I have before me the resignation of MLA Dela Cruz as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice. Before the committee can proceed with business before it, it must elect a new Chairperson.

Are there any nominations for this position?

Mr. Wiebe: I'd like to nominate Mr. Oxenham.

Clerk Assistant: Mr. Oxenham has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Oxenham, will you please take the chair.

The Chairperson: I have before me the resignation of MLA Corbett as Vice-chairman—Chairperson—of the Standing Committee on Justice. Before the committee can proceed with the business before it, it must elect a new Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations for this position?

Mr. Wiebe: I'd like to nominate MLA Loiselle.

The Chairperson: MLA Loiselle has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, MLA Loïselle is elected Vice-Chairperson.

I will now call on our next presenter, Mrs. Laura Fehr. Okay. We will drop her name to the bottom of the list.

Next on the list is Ms. Noreen Stevens. Hello, and please proceed with your presentation when you're ready.

Noreen Stevens (Private Citizen): Thank you. Alison Norberg is a hard act to follow, so I'm going to be brief.

Thank you for the opportunity to present, and thank you, as well, to all the presenters who have spoken before me and will speak after me. This is how we learn and grow.

My name is Noreen Stevens and I'm here today for my family, my wife of 30 years, my two grown children and all my relations present and future for whom I wish dignity, respect, human rights protection and freedom of gender expression.

I am a woman, but if one of you were to mistakenly call me sir, you wouldn't be the first and you certainly wouldn't be the last. This happens from time to time when a person's appearance or another aspect of their gender expression doesn't match expectations.

Now, I don't intend that this comment make light of misgendering. Sometimes misgendering is humorous; sometimes it's ironic. Sometimes it makes both parties quite uncomfortable. I think what we're talking about here today is bigger than this. When misgendering and other misunderstandings are systemic and hurtful and deprive people of opportunities in housing and employment, that is where we need legislated protection.

Like Alison, it's been almost 40 years since I, too, made a presentation in this room in support of including sexual orientation as a grounds for protection in the Manitoba human rights act.

I was 25 years old. I was 40 years old when I made a presentation in this room in support of legislation that would allow same-sex couples to jointly adopt a child or children. I am now 62 years old and honoured to speak today in support of including gender expression as grounds for protection in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Over the years, I have witnessed social and legislative changes that, at 25 years of age, I did not expect to see in my lifetime, and it has been life-changing for

me and my family. We don't for a minute take these changes for granted either. We only have to look to the United States to see how social progress can be erased with the stroke of a pen.

I hope that each presentation on the inclusion of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code, including those speaking in opposition, affirms for you the absolute imperative of this protection. The beautiful tapestry of human experience and expression has no boundaries. It exists in every Manitoba community, in every congregation and in every family.

Anywhere and everywhere there are people who are vulnerable to misunderstanding, discrimination and exploitation. These people, and I count myself among them, are uplifted when our governments take the lead, when our governments say, we see you and we commit to protecting your vulnerability.

Adding sexual expression to the Manitoba human rights act is that commitment and it sends a powerful message. It's life-affirming, it's life-changing and it's life-saving.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much, Noreen, for your presentation.

I will now move to questions.

Mr. Wiebe: Noreen, I'm getting a little emotional during your presentation. I don't know if it's just because of the length of the day or just the way that you have, in such a straightforward way, laid out how important this legislation is. I cannot believe; it's incredible that you've been here through these changes. You've seen these, you've witnessed this, and you're still contributing to change here in Manitoba.

So I just—I wanted to thank you. It's amazing. It's amazing that you've taken the time, and I'm just really in awe of your presentation, so thank you.

The Chairperson: Noreen, you're welcome to reply.

N. Stevens: Oh, sorry. Thank you. It's been a—it's made for an interesting life, let's put it that way.

Mr. Balcaen: Noreen, thank you for staying the course here for the whole day and being able to present to us and giving your views. Twenty-five years old when you started and know you've been through a lot of these different committees, so I sincerely appreciate your views and bringing your points forward today.

N. Stevens: Thank you very much.

The Chairperson: Noreen, thank you so much for your presentation.

I'm now going to call on Ms. Arlene Macklem, Manitoba Federation of Union Retirees, who joins us from Zoom.

* (13:10)

Ms. Arlene Macklem, please proceed with your presentation when you're ready.

Arlene Macklem (Manitoba Federation of Union Retirees): Yes, I am pleased to present this paper on behalf on MFUR, which stands for the Manitoba Federation of Union Retirees.

We are retired union members and the Manitoba affiliate of the 500,000-member Congress of the Union Retirees of Canada, also known as CURC. CURC is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress and MFUR is affiliated with the Manitoba Federation of Labour.

We appear here today to speak in favour of Bill 43, which amends The Human Rights Code, to include gender expression as a protected ground under the code. This builds on the work of the previous NDP government which added gender as a protected ground in 2012.

We fully support the submission of the MFL on this important bill. As former trade unionists we bargained many such provisions into the no-discrimination provisions of our collective agreements after first adopting such policies in our respective membership conventions.

As important as collective agreements are, we know that not all workers or indeed all citizens have such protections, which is why we fully support including gender expression as a protected characteristic under the code.

We note, sadly, that here in Canada and in the US and elsewhere around the globe, there has been an attack on equity-seeking groups across the board, including open discrimination against people on grounds of their gender expression. In New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Alberta, governments have opted to invoke the constitution's notwithstanding clause to hold—to block some students from using their preferred pronouns, gender expression and even restricting student use of change rooms and washrooms other than their assigned sex at birth.

Canada's Charter was written to protect people's rights, and the use of the notwithstanding clause is a

regressive move often amounting to nothing more than a solution in search of a problem. We saw this aggressive attack in our last provincial election and we note that a majority of Manitobans did not support these attacks.

Manitoba has historically been a leader in anti-discrimination measures. In the 1970s, we were one of the first jurisdictions to induct human rights legislation and over the decades, amendments to The Human Rights Code have increased protections for all equity-seeking groups.

At times, these legislative protections have not been popular with everyone. We submit that popularity ought not to be the goal; rather it ought to be fairness for all citizens. Bill 43 extends human rights coverage and very much lives up to the challenge that Nelson Mandela expressed so eloquently when he said: To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity.

Equity and equality measure strength in our community. Attitudes change, inclusivity advances and societies change for the better. That is what Bill 43 represents for Manitoba and we can commend the government for bringing this legislation forward.

And I just wanted to add that there was—the opposition had been asking if the labour code, which we are assuming that they're talking about The Labour Relations Act and The Employment Standards Code, covered this already under gender expression. The short answer is that it does not. We do attempt to negotiate—to negotiation provision in collective agreements, and where we are successful it becomes a matter for grievance and arbitration provisions.

But not all agreements contain this language and therefore, The Human Rights Code would be where unions and their members would to—would seek redress. In case of non-unionized employees, they will have to seek redress under The Human Rights Code, since The Employment Standards Code does not offer protection.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Arlene, for your presentation.

We'll move to questions from the committee, and I see Minister Wiebe has a question.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Arlene, for your presentation, and really looking out for the rights of all workers. I think that's an important perspective to bring here today.

I also just wanted to thank you for, you know, highlighting how some of the rhetoric around division and that, sort of, dividing Manitobans was so roundly rejected here in this province, and how, in your view, that's something we should avoid. I couldn't agree more and I think this bill really talks about bringing people together and protecting everyone, so I wanted to thank you for your presentation and your words.

The Chairperson: Arlene, you're welcome to respond.

A. Macklem: Yes, and also I'd like to say I have a very personal reason for wanting to support this amendment. I have a close personal—close family member who is trans and is struggling, and it's very, very difficult.

And people will say, oh, it's a choice, or it's a label. It's not. It's something innate, and it needs to be supported and understood and needs to go a lot further in society to have accept—you know, to be accepted.

Mr. Balcaen: Appreciate the opportunity and, again, like all other presenters, thank you, Arlene, for your presentation today, bringing forward your perspective and your thoughts on this bill. And, you know, practising your democratic right to voice your opinion.

So thank you for attending today and waiting this time out.

A. Macklem: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Okay, seeing no further questions, thank you very much, again, for your presentation.

We're now going to move down to the bottom of the list where we have Mr. Steven Somerset. All right, he is moved to the bottom of the list.

Okay, I will now call Ms. Sonja Stone. All right, Ms. Stone has been removed from the list.

I will now move to Madalyn [*phonetic*] Unger. Madalyn [*phonetic*] Unger joins us on Zoom. Please proceed with your presentation when you are ready.

Mandalyn Unger (Private Citizen): Hello. Am I coming through loud and clear?

The Chairperson: Thank you. Ms. Unger, please proceed with your presentation—Madalyn [*phonetic*] Unger. Mandalyn.

M. Unger: Thank you. Hi, my name is Mandalyn Unger. I'm here to speak in favour of the inclusion of gender expression as a protected characteristic in The Human Rights Code. I'm a non-binary person and I also identify as gender-vague, which is an autistic experience of gender.

And I named that intersection of my identity intentionally. As we are in a rising tide of fascism, it is important to name the role of eugenics and how queer people have historically and are presently being targeted alongside disabled and racialized people, as we are seeing south of the border.

I am a community educator and an organizer, working with queer, trans and two-spirit youth. Most recently in my work with the University of Manitoba's Social Justice Hub, where students learn to advocate on behalf of their communities. And these students, many of whom are not only gender diverse but also racialized and international students, for whom these dangers are especially close, are deeply concerned as they watch people like them being denied passports and status, criminalized and disappeared into prison.

* (13:20)

This is not a new phenomenon but it is an escalation, and we are in a political moment that requires courage on behalf of our elected officials to proactively protect the most marginalized members of our society.

And this is how I would like you, as my provincial government, to represent me. And with both the major federal parties promising to criminalize public protests and enforce the States' third country agreement, we are certainly not immune to, or without complicity, in this project.

Right now, it is urgently important to protect gender expression as well as gender identity. As many presenters have said, gender expression is the outward manifestation of our gender identity. It is the first thing a person sees on which they will judge us and decide how to treat us. And when that person is a landlord who holds the keys to housing, or an employer who could deny us a much-needed job, we should, of course, be protected in those circumstances.

This legislation stands to intervene in the discrimination of visibly queer and trans people, which currently influences our disproportionate vulnerability, the houselessness, as well as harassment in the workplace, schools and when accessing public services.

No one should have to worry that they will be discriminated against because of their appearance, their voice, their name, or their pronouns. This amendment will not just protect people who are trans, two-spirit, non-binary and gender expansive, it will protect everyone.

The scrutiny being applied in the execution of anti-trans laws is a form of social control and has already and will continue to be opened up to cisgender women and men to being invasively examined, profiled, and discriminated against for their appearance, voice and mannerism.

With that said, we shouldn't have to explain how protecting trans and gender-nonconforming people will also benefit cisgender people. That is not how equity works.

We are not here to debate the existence of trans people. We are not here to convince people of our humanity. We are not here to educate people on the diversity of human sexuality, although many presenters have been kind enough to do so, which includes the wide variety of sex differences, spanning chromosomes, hormones, primary and secondary sex characteristics, that belie the fictional, quote, unquote, biological woman category and biological man that we have heard invoked here many times.

Listening to these presentations I am reminded of the tolerance paradox, which states when a society tolerates all views, including those which are intolerant, then intolerance will dominate. If we are waiting for all Manitobans to agree trans people deserve human rights, we will never have human rights. That is the exact reason this legislation was necessary.

Policy influences opinion. Many presenters who spoke against this bill said that they don't have a problem with someone being gay, but that using someone's preferred pronouns was a step too far. To that I say, as with the many social justice movements in the past, what is contentious now will soon be seen as common sense in hindsight.

I know that in the not-so-distant future all people, including those who fear the possibilities we embody, will benefit from the contagious liberation of trans people. Transgender people have the power to open up possibilities for everyone to express themselves more freely, as if also a principle of disability justice. By making the world more accessible for some we make it more accessible for all. Not everyone can use the stairs, but most everyone can use a ramp.

By transforming ourselves outside the dictates of the colonial gender binary, trans people demonstrate what is possible and make it safe for others to be curious, to think critically and to accept themselves. Specifically, Black and Indigenous trans women of colour have blazed that trail at great personal cost, and we owe them our thanks.

Myself and my sibling are both non-binary, and we are fortunate that we were raised in a family where it was safe to experiment with our gender expression from a young age. Even so, our parents initially struggled to use they/them pronouns when my sibling first made the switch. The moment it clicked is when they stopped operating from a place of fear, trying to remember it like the answer to a pass/fail test, and instead began to ask good faith questions about why those pronouns felt right for them.

They soon needed no reminders to use my sibling's correct pronouns because they saw them and understood them and that knowledge became integrated. This is the opportunity for connection which parents, educators, and community members miss out on when they assume something is wrong simply because they themselves do not understand it.

I share that story because while my sibling and I were lucky, whether a young person is safe in their gender expression shouldn't come down to luck, and whether a trans woman is able to access housing shouldn't come down to luck, and whether a cisgender man who wears makeup is granted a job for which he is qualified should not come down to luck.

I hope that by passing this and further legislation to enshrine the rights of all people to express their gender as they wish without discrimination, we will make access to housing, employment and public services including education safer and less precarious for the most marginalized members of society and for everyone.

I encourage the committee to support this bill to include gender expression as grounds for protection under the Manitoba Human Rights Code. And I thank you for your time.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mandalyn, for your presentation.

I will now—now move on to questions, and we'll begin with Minister Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you very much, Mandalyn. What a great presentation. I appreciate your work with the U of M Social Justice Hub. I know there's some really important work being done there, so appreciate that you are giving back to the community.

You know, similar to a previous presenter—I'm not sure if you were online for it—but comparing or using an example from within family, I think, is maybe one of the best ways I've heard to characterize this. The patience that you showed with your family until they

sort of got it and also the understanding of your family to join you on this journey.

Hopefully that's what you're seeing here today. Some people are getting educated, and ultimately, we're doing the right thing with the bill.

So again, just thank you for your presentation here today.

The Chairperson: Mandalyn, you're welcome to reply if you like.

M. Unger: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr. Balcaen: Madalyn [phonetic], thank you very much for your presentation today and sharing your views as well as your personal stories on this topic.

So I just want to say thank you again for presenting to this committee.

The Chairperson: Okay, seeing no further questions.

Thank you, Mandalyn, for your presentation.

We will now move down the list to Erica McNabb, private citizen. Hello, Erica. Please proceed with your presentation when you're ready.

Erica McNabb (Private Citizen): Thank you.

Hi. My name is Erica McNabb, and my pronouns are they and them, although Tomson Highway, who is a Cree Manitoban, once said that he responds to any pronouns said with love, and that is also true for me. And I define love as showing me the dignity and respect of trusting that I know myself the best.

I want to say a lot of things. I wrote down a lot of things, but like many of my fellow speakers have noted, speaking from the heart is often the best course of action. And so for me, that also means speaking from spirit.

So I am an uninvited white settler here, and part of my life's work has been to build relationships very deeply and listen very deeply to the people whose land that I live on. And I think that I'm guided by my queer and trancers in that work, as well as Mohawk ancestors that I do not know and who would not claim me, which is why I'm not Indigenous.

And so I want to name that we are on the earth where Myra Laramie had her two-spirit vision that gave the language of two-spirit to all the Indigenous people of Turtle Island.

I want to name that the process of this committee has caused harm in this community that will be needed to be repaired down the line. I looked around the lobby

the other day at the folks who stayed for six hours, listening to several hours of hate speech and watching our elected officials from our community have to endure that. And I know that it means a lot to a lot of queer and trans young people, that I care about a lot, that we have elected officials from our community.

* (13:30)

And so I would like to amplify Kai Zamora who spoke earlier and shared that this process needs to seriously examine accessibility issues, including the potential for harm. There are, reading the list today, many people from this community who have open human rights complaints; who have been through that process before; who have been working for dignity and respect for queer and trans people in this community for decades; who couldn't come because we face more barriers in employment. We face more barriers in our schools; we face more barriers in our communities. And so, allowing folks to organize to come from churches that organized to literally speak against our right to exist was harmful.

I have a responsibility to speak for queer and trans youth in this province and that's connected to my spiritual responsibilities. The time limit is very quick so I can't share the whole story, but if people want to talk, I can talk afterwards, certainly, but my dear friend and colleague, AnakwudwabisayQuay, otherwise known as Vanessa Cook, had a vision that the magpie spirit asked to adopt me and a group of people I was working with in Manitoba who care for young people. And so that's why I've brought my magpie feathers with me today so that they'll help remind me to speak to young people.

I want to right now amplify Mx. Moon Fast who spoke earlier today as the youngest person who was on this list. Everybody—they said that everybody wants to talk about youth but nobody wants to listen to the youth.

And so I couldn't do as good a job as they did describing this issue, but I will say that in my decades of experience working across the province of Manitoba with young people in every imaginable scenario like literal broom closets, literal fields, smallest communities you could imagine—First Nations, big cities, everyone—to get the gift of a young person expressing their gender fully and beautifully without apology for the first time is a gift that I will carry in my soul forever.

And we don't need to look as far as The White House to understand the harm that is coming for our

kids. We can look next door to Saskatchewan; we can look to Alberta; we can look to New Brunswick—places where gender expression has been the basis for the removal of the rights of those children and youth.

So as a subject matter expert in sexual and gender development, I would like to share some information that is really contextual to this conversation that other folks have not brought up, and I just need a moment to find it.

So I want to be very clear that across the medical community, across social sciences, across psychological neurodevelopmental studies, children have a good understanding of what gender is by age two to three. Children understand their gender in some way or form by age three or four and, yes, that includes trans, non-binary, gender-fluid, gender-diverse children. They often don't have the language to express that. They often aren't in safe homes to express that they are different and special, but they know.

And this is especially true for two-spirit youth and Indigiqueer youth who carry ancestral wisdom and knowledge of who they are in this world.

By age seven to eight, young children by grade 2 or 3 already understand when they have experienced discrimination based on their gender or perceived gender that people have made an assumption based on their gender expression—by grade 2 or 3.

And so, you know, as much as I—my experience is mainly working with teenagers. I'm also a queer parent. I have two amazing kids and they have peers and I want them to learn to respect those peers, whoever they are. And they do; they're great kids.

I want to speak briefly to my fellow parents who have spoken against this bill specifically. When we look at the situation that's been unfolding across Canada where young people are losing their rights in their schools to express their gender using words, pronouns, concepts, clothing, makeup, et cetera, but specifically around the use of pronouns and names, I want to cite some research by the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, which is referencing case law from New Brunswick. A parent or guardian cannot order the state to ignore a child's rights so as to comply with their direction and or value system.

So, in other words, parents do not have the right to restrict or permit their child's gender expression. That is why we need protection under The Human Rights Code. That's why that's a bare minimum.

If I can speak frankly for a moment—and I am known for speaking frankly—I really do feel like this is a bare minimum. I think we all know that this is going to pass anyway and that there seems to be a wish to organize people to speak against existing human rights and to further restrict people's human rights. And as a Manitoban, I resent it. As a Manitoban, I fight vehemently for the right of all people, including people—people's right to hate me as a queer person, people's right to believe something that I would never believe or that has harmed me in the past.

I think that we all choose to live in a secular society that upholds human rights and, in so doing, we absolutely need to protect the people who are most vulnerable. And to be very clear, young people are going to be the first victims if we do not enshrine gender expression explicitly into The Human Rights Code.

And in closing, I also just want to say, I'm not a hockey person, but my partner has been just begging me to say this that Ontario has had gender expression in their human rights code since 2012. We should not let Ontario, like, you know, Toronto, Ottawa, be the leaders in hockey certainly, and so we should also not let them to be the leaders in human rights; that's a place that's ours.

Yes, in closing, I just want to say that not enshrining this right would be an extreme disservice to the young people of Manitoba. And queer people, as you know, will continue to show up and fight, including for rights of people who don't want to spend time with us or listen to us.

So, that is all I'm going to say for now. That's all.

The Chairperson: Well, thank you, Erica, for your presentation.

I will move to questions. We'll begin with Minister Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe: Great presentation, Erica. There's a lot there. I think we could probably spend the rest of the afternoon just unpacking some of the things that you said. But it was really helpful.

If I could just pick up on one thing that I really appreciated is that you shouted-out some other members of the committee that are here today right now, but also cycled through and just how that representation matters so much.

I've expressed it to them individually, but I'm going to do that on the record here to join you in just thanking them for their incredible work and for

supporting us in getting this done as a government, so thank you.

The Chairperson: Erica, you're welcome to reply.

E. McNabb: Thank you.

I do also want to push a little harder, if I may, and you know, again, amplify Mx. Moon who was very wise in saying that it shouldn't be queer and trans people's job to educate people on our existence and our right to existence. And so I think the best form of thanks for the folks in our workplaces, whatever they be, is to do better.

Mr. Balcaen: Well, thank you very much for the presentation and again, sticking it out to the end of today, or near the end of today and reflecting on some of the stuff that's happened last week as well, so we appreciate all of the views that are being brought forward here today and thank you for bringing forward yours.

E. McNabb: I did just realize, looking back on my notes, that I didn't cite my information about ages and that is directly from the Canadian society of pediatrics.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Erica.

Seeing no further questions, we'll move on to our next presenter.

I'd like to welcome Aro van Dyck, private citizen, who joins us online. Please begin your presentation when you are ready.

* (13:40)

Aro van Dyck (Private Citizen): Thank you for your patience, giving me a sec to find my buttons. Can you hear me?

The Chairperson: Hello there, Aro. Please begin with your presentation when you're ready.

A. van Dyck: Fantastic. My name is Aro van Dyck. This is usually the part where I tell you my pronouns, but we're talking about gender expression today, and I am maybe going to save that for the end.

Gender expression being added to the human rights bill is something that I wholeheartedly support as a transgender person because, as has been noted, the first thing someone sees about you is how you look, how your voice sounds, how you act. That's gender expression.

And it's not just a thing for trans people. I think something that many of the speakers who have come before me could benefit to realize is that we all have pronouns. We all have gender expression. And, in fact, even among the crowd who spoke against this

bill, I saw many examples of women defying the norms of gender expression.

I saw women talking about the Winnipeg Jets. Hockey is for boys, you guys. You're not supposed to like that. So don't come in here and say we need to not include gender expression as a human right because you don't know when, like, the next person who's going to wind up getting called out for looking like a man in a bathroom is going to be you.

I would like to say that gender expression and discrimination that has, like, come to me as a result of how I express my gender; it's affected me my whole life. Now, actually, less than ever, I'm surrounded by a wonderful community that I'm a part of. I work at a workplace that really does accept me for who I am.

But, you know, I remember my first foray into gender expression: bit of a weird one. When I was a very small six-year-old child in grade 1, I chose a new name for myself. It was Zeeton [*phonetic*], and I was an alien. And my teacher said, oh, yeah, okay. You can be Zeeton [*phonetic*]. If you write Zeeton [*phonetic*] on your work, I know that that is you. I'm not going to cause a fuss of this. Oh, your alien religion makes it so that you can only write in green; sure, whatever.

And I think that that's maybe sounding a little weird as a gender expression thing, but looking back on it, you know, it absolutely spoke to the alienation I felt from all sides in society and the ways that I did not conform.

Further, growing up, the No. 1 thing I was bullied for was being told, boys don't act that way. Right? If you'll excuse—I'm not going to go into too much detail here, but, you know, being on the receiving end of, like, really bad violence and asking why is this happening, and being told, it's because you're being such a girl. It—they were reading my gender expression and saying, this is different from what I think it should be, and you need to be punished for it.

How is that not a stifling of our freedom of expression? Many of the folks who spoke on Thursday—and I was at the Leg.; I stuck around through all of that—spoke about how this is a curtailing of free speech. That's what they call it in America; here it's freedom of expression. How does this do anything but protect freedom of expression? It's gender expression. It's who we are and how we present ourselves to the world.

When I first came out, I was around 25, maybe, years old. It's been a while. I've lost track of years.

You know, it was a big day for me. I told the store manager at my work, hey, I'm trans. I'm going by new pronouns. I kind of softened the blow by telling everyone that Aro was a nickname that everyone just calls me, so, you know, several months in advance, the seed had been planted on that one. But I told the staff; we had a whole meeting about it. I told everyone, hey, I'm trans.

I came back to work the next day and, of course, you know, you don't overnight fly off to Montreal and get a bunch of surgeries and come back looking like an entirely different person. I don't wear makeup now. I can't stand the feeling of it on my skin. I walked into work the next day wearing things that were only a little bit different from what I'd always worn as what previously had been, like, a gender-nonconforming dude presentation. Now it's more of a gender-nonconforming lady expression.

But, you know, one of my managers was really getting the pronouns wrong; not in a malicious way; not in any sort of thing where I would say, hey, let's get you before a tribunal and get you fined, but what she said to me was, like, this just isn't what I was expecting. You know, you came out of the closet; I was expecting a full face of makeup. I was expecting a dress.

I said, hey, are you less of a woman at the end of the night when you go to bed, you take your makeup off. Is your gender expression, like, that limited? Is your idea of what a person can be that limited?

I think I really gave her something to think about that day. She—you know, and, like, I had identified she wasn't being malicious with it. That was literally the day after I came out. She eventually—you know, her heart was in the right place the whole time. She got it right by the time I left that workplace.

And yes, now, you know, when I do occasionally experience harassment on the street, you know, it's been just a couple—I guess just a year since the last time I had, like, a major transphobe incident, where someone threatened me with a lot of violence and really expressed that they didn't like that I was trans.

But it's the gender expression, right? It's what they see, and we need to be protected in our workplaces, in housing, in health care; to be able to show up to these places as we are and not put ourselves into a closet just to jump through a billion hoops that other people don't need to jump through, or at least don't have to consciously jump through. Because, you know, the way that they, like, phenotypically are with their biology

and their body just kind of carries it for them in a way where other people don't need to turn their brains on and look and analyze what they're seeing.

People who know me personally at this point have no trouble seeing me as a woman. They just know me; they understand. Most people in public don't clock me as trans until I open my mouth and say something. I don't talk with a high-pitched voice most of the time. It's just—this is the voice, this is who I am, this is who I've always been.

One final thing I would like to say before I wrap up is that I've been very disappointed with the decision to move the out-of-town speakers to the top of the list. I sat through, along with many of my trans community, who—six hours of vitriol and hatred, mostly spouted off in the name of Jesus Christ. And those people then got to go enjoy their Jets game or go on home early, and they didn't have to hear any of us speak to our own truths. They didn't get the opportunity to be educated on what it means to be two-spirit or it means to be trans. They just got to say their hate speech, for the most part not getting checked on it, with a few exceptions that I really do appreciate. But they just got to spew their vitriol and go home.

We're just people, you guys. We just want to get by. We just want to have jobs and roofs over our heads and health care we can rely on, just like any of you. We're not evil, we're not the devil. We're not here to take away your free speech or your rights.

In closing, I'm just going to say one more thing, which is that if this bill doesn't pass, I will make sure that, if I ever encounter any of the folks who spoke against this bill, I will be using the wrong pronouns for you, and I will be revelling in it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: Well, thank you, Aro, for your presentation.

We're now going to move on to questions from the committee. We'll begin with Minister Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Ms. van Dyck, for your presentation.

It was encouraging to hear that, as you learned to express yourself early on, that you did find some support from educators and from others, and so hopefully you're feeling that here today as well, that that support is here at the table.

What I would also say, though, is that it really does take some real grit to stick it out throughout this

whole process, and I appreciate that you have done that and that you've been able to lend your voice, because I think it's valuable.

So thank you.

The Chairperson: Aro, you're welcome to respond.

A. van Dyck: Thank you. I was very grateful today to hear from the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society and from at least one teacher, although it's been a bit of a blur, knowing that these kids have a safe space. Like, I needed that when I was a kid, and I didn't have that at school. I didn't really have that at home.

But you know, I think about, like, the Zeeton [*phonetic*] thing, kind of a weird social experiment. But by the time I was in high school, I was regularly thinking about, like, geez, I wonder what it would be like to live life as a woman. Didn't have any context to go, oh, that's a thing that you can actually do. That's a normal human desire to want.

But I think that if more of that had been around, if the messaging had been out there, that just—not you have to do it, just it's okay to do it. It's normal. No one's going to, like, hurt or kill you for it, or take away your job or not hire you, or deny you a place to live or deny you medical treatment for it.

That could have encouraged me to come out sooner, and, you know, the—quite frankly, like, that would have been a very game-changing thing for me if I'd been able to figure that out a decade earlier. I think that my life over the last 10 years would have been much, much happier and much healthier.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Aro.

* (13:50)

Seeing no further questions, we will move on to our next presenter.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

The Chairperson: Mr. Balcaen, on a point of order.

Mr. Balcaen: I just think, for the committee, I would like some clarification on the use of props.

The Chairperson: Okay, we don't hold to a—presenters to the same standards as we do MLAs in terms of props. However, we have discouraged presenters from using props in the past, and going forward, we ask that presenters comply with not having any props in their backgrounds or whatever online.

Mr. Balcaen: On the same point of order.

The Chairperson: On the same point of order, Mr. Balcaen.

Mr. Balcaen: I was just wondering, a step further, if that happens, would we block the video or stop that? I'm just wondering what the process would be for fairness for all the presenters and for all committee members.

The Chairperson: Okay. Mr. Balcaen, we really have no precedent for this; however, because virtual is very new to committees. But your point is taken and so perhaps the policy can be looked at for future committee meetings.

* * *

The Chairperson: Okay, we will now move to our next presenter, Corey Wilson. Okay, Corey will be dropped from the list.

We will now move to our next presenter, who is Lara Rae. Okay, the name will be dropped from the list.

Moving on to our next presenter, we have Wren Robinson [*phonetic*]-Robertson—my apologies, private citizen. Wren Robertson.

Hi, Wren. When you're ready, you can present.

Wren Robertson (Private Citizen): I think that most of what I've planned to say has been really well said, so I'm just going to briefly say that I support this amendment. I think it's a great step towards a safer Manitoba for trans and gender-diverse people, especially.

And, sweet, thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation, Wren. I will move to questions, and we'll begin with Minister Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe: Thanks very much, Wren. Quick and to the point but your presence actually makes an even bigger statement. You stuck it out to the end and you've been here to lend your voice. So I just want to thank you for doing that. That means a lot.

Floor Comment: Yes, thank you.

The Chairperson: Wren, you're welcome to reply.

Mr. Balcaen: Thank you as well for bringing your points forward; appreciate it very much.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

All right. Next on our list we have Adrian Cheater, private citizen. Okay, Adrian Cheater is dropped from the list.

We will now move to our next presenter, Mary Mikhail, private citizen. Mary Mikhail. Seeing they are not here, we'll drop them from the list.

We will now move to Mr. Jean-Paul Lapointe, Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union. Okay, they will be dropped from the list.

We will now move to Ms. Amanda Murphy. Okay, they will be dropped from the list.

Okay, next on the list, we have Mx. Em Boyko. Okay, they will be dropped from the list.

Next on the list, we have Ms. Tabitha Thomas. Okay, they will be dropped from the list.

Next on the list, we have Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, who joins us virtually.

You may begin when you are ready with your presentation, Kate Kehler.

Kate Kehler (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg): Is it all right to start?

The Chairperson: Go ahead, Kate.

K. Kehler: Thank you. So good afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

I do not intend to speak for long; I will not be as short as Wren, though; well done, Wren. But I will keep it short because there are people—voices here that are more deserving of the time.

I am the executive director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. We are an organization with more than a 105-year history of working to create a better Winnipeg for all. We identify with community-led development approaches, and one of our guiding principles is: that which you do for me, without me, you do to me. Hence, why I'm not speaking for long. I am just here to be in solidarity with those equity-deserving groups, organizations and individuals who Bill 43 will benefit, as well as their other allies.

I would like to echo Karen Sharma from the Manitoba Human Rights Commission that this bill's scope is limited to employment, housing and other public services. It is not aimed at interactions between private individuals or inside religious institutions. The cases that have gone to human rights tribunals have been when someone holding power over an individual, employer or a landlord or a public service, is being

malicious and are using their power to purposely—to be purposely discriminating.

I do want to take a moment to express my concerns regarding some of the comments made by those opposed to Bill 43. Some used offensive and/or disproven concerns. Some of the offensive comments were along the lines of hate the sin, love the sinner; sought to impose their religion on others; and that given people needing/deserving this amendment are a minority, so they just need to be patient and let the majority get caught up.

Religious rights remain in place. It is more than unfortunate that certain sects choose to deny themselves the company and wisdom of people who believe differently than they do, but that is their choice. As to the other, it is 2025 and Manitoba is one of the last provinces to enact this sort of legislation. People have waited far too long to have their rights protected.

We all know that means human rights are not a pie; more for some does not mean less for others. It is not a zero-sum situation. The concerns expressed have been disproven because it had been enacted in other jurisdictions, and there are no bounds of thought, word police, roving around charging individuals who make mistakes. If people choose to continue to misgender or otherwise insult and belittle people, then if they hold a position of power, then yes, they may find themselves in a hearing. If not, there are already other legal means to address harassment, for example.

The human code—The Human Rights Code exists to protect individuals and groups in Manitoba from discrimination and to provide protection from unreasonable discrimination in areas such as employment, housing and services available for the public. I am obviously therefore speaking in support of Bill 43.

I was at the Leg. not that long ago, speaking in favour of Bill 39, the school amendment act that calls for better scrutiny and transparency for school trustee elections. Our concerns there were, of course, we need to limit outside-of-Manitoba donations and also cap individual donation to level the playing field, but also concerns brought about some—brought about by some candidates having been fronted by organizations tied to the parental rights movement.

* (14:00)

I would like to congratulate the government on introducing these two pieces of legislation that, along, sadly, with much more work to do, will bring

Manitoba more in line with Canada's Human Rights Code.

We all know words matter. For example, we no longer use the word straight to describe heterosexuality. Why? Because it meant that those who were not heterosexual were somehow bent. It is time that the words that protect gender expression are enshrined in law. I would like to speak a little bit to Erica's point about the youth and the fact that people spoke about youth but not terribly interested in listening to youth, it seems.

I am obviously not a youth but I do represent the organization that was the lead on both the 2015 and the 2018 street census on point in town—point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness. We were also one of the leads on the original Winnipeg Plan to End Youth Homelessness. And those research studies demonstrated that, actually, coming out in whatever form to families did leave some youth into—lead them into homelessness.

So it just makes it all that more crucial for the government to do everything it can to protect these rights. So I encourage all members of the legislation to vote in favour.

And thank you for your time.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation.

We're now going to move to questions from the committee, and we'll begin with Minister Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe: Thanks very much, Kate.

The work of the Social Planning Council is so invaluable to all Manitobans, and I appreciate you lending your voice to this issue, as you said, as an ally, and that's certainly the point of view that I take as well.

I just wanted to highlight—you noted how we've fallen behind in Manitoba, how in other jurisdictions where this has been done, of course, the sky isn't falling and that we—you know, we've just continued to build and build on the rights that we afford to so many people.

So I want to thank you for highlighting that and for being part of the process here. It's so valuable to hear your voice and that of the Social Planning Council at every step of the way here.

So, thank you.

The Chairperson: Kate, you're welcome to reply.

K. Kehler: Thank you very much for that. Like, you know, we all know that other expression is, the best

time to have planted a tree was 20 years ago; the next best is today. So, let's move forward in this with that spirit.

Mr. Balcaen: Kate, thank you for your presentation today. Learned a little bit about the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and wasn't familiar with that prior to this.

So, thank you for your presentation today to our committee.

The Chairperson: Okay, seeing no further questions, thank you, again, for your presentation, Kate.

We will now move on to our presenter, Mrs. Zeljana Nikolic. Okay, Ms. Nikolic will be removed from the list.

All right, we will now call Mr. Andrew Kohan, who is online and joins us.

Mr. Kohan, when you are ready, you may proceed.

Andrew Kohan (Private Citizen): Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for having me. I appreciate the procedure of the committee allowing for, sort of, these makeup slots at the end. It's unique in my experience to other remote access to speaking in government committees, and I appreciate it, especially because I was picking up my other child from daycare at the time that my name was called earlier.

I assure you, this is not a prop who's with me; I just am parenting right now and don't have another option for where this one goes, so bear with me. And I will not be as parsimonious as Wren, but I will probably try to keep it short today.

I want to say that I've watched a lot of presenters over these last two days of presentation. I've seen many of my friends speaking, also members of other communities, folks I know and don't know. It strikes me that we've heard a lot of folks speaking from a position of lived experience about the way that this legislation will impact their lives and their freedoms, and then also a lot of presenters talking about fears about the way that it will—that it could impact their ability to speak.

I wanted to be here as a member of community, but someone whose cisgender white male body is maybe underrepresented among those speaking in favour of this legislation. I think that we have a lot of work to do to show that this kind of bill, this amendment to The Human Rights Code, is something that all of us benefit from no matter our relation to a particular right or the particular identity being protected.

I think about my kids first and their future when I think about this act. I think about the importance to them of protecting their gender expression however it manifests. I think about the way that my four-year old is in a preschool and I get a weekly newsletter with photos of all the kids being kids and I see—you know, I don't know whether they're going to be pulling a costume out of the box that's a dinosaur or a dress. I don't know whether they're going to be painting or they're going to be jumping on a tire swing.

You know, I think all of the kids are expressing themselves in all kinds of ways, and I want that freedom for them forever. I want them to feel themselves in however they want to express themselves, and I don't want us, as a society, to be allowing certain kinds of expression to be limited in ways that bully or control or constrain them.

I'm inspired by the many folks who spoke about their personal truths and how important it is for them to have protections for their gender expression. And I'm also thankful for the voices who spoke in opposition because I think they reveal the need for this protection to be written down. I think that it's important for us to recognize that there is still a difficulty with folks coming to terms with the expression of others.

And I—you know, I think in all of our beautiful diversity, there are challenges as we figure out together how to live together. But my faith tradition teaches that we love our neighbours, and it also says not to do what is hateful to ourselves to another. And I think those are core things for me in thinking about how we ought to relate to each other as Canadians, as Manitobans, and I think it's important that when we find that there is a breach in that, when we find that we're acting unneighbourly towards one another, that we try to correct that.

And so I appreciate the efforts of this committee to see this through to make sure that where we found the gap in our neighbourliness, where we have folks who are expressing their deep concern that there is a problem with others respecting how they identify and how they present that identity to the world, that they are asking for us to say yes, we affirm that we will protect your right to express that way. I think that's important that we listen to that and that we bring that forward into law, if that's what it takes to protect each other.

And so I think I'll end there, except I will ask one more time for the folks who have spoken against this inclusion of gender expression in the list of protections to consider whether their arguments would hold

any differently for the other categories which are already protected under The Human Rights Code, whether their protection of their religious expression, whether their—whether protections of race would be any different in terms of how those protections of folks also, in some way, constrain what we might say, but to how those constraints are important so that we can live together, and that there is nothing lost in the constraint of hate and there's nothing lost in the effort to educate about how we can be good neighbours to each other.

And so I thank you all for your time and your consideration and I hope that we can keep listening to each other as we move forward.

Thank you very much.

* (14:10)

The Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Kohan, for your presentation.

I'm going to open up the floor—the committee to questions. We'll begin with Minister Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, Mr. Kohan, thank you so much for your presentation. Thanks for having your son with you, first of all. I think that's going to be a pretty cool video to watch when he's older, that he was talking to the people of Manitoba. But also, I think it just helps put things in perspective. At least for me, it really speaks to why we're doing this, how important it is; and you mention that as well.

I also just want to thank you for taking the time as an ally to just sort of lay this out from your perspective. I thought it was helpful. The words you used: a gap in our neighbourliness, if I got that right. And just your emphasis on protecting one another. I couldn't have said it any better. I just thought it was a really, really powerful presentation.

Thanks, and thanks for letting us see your son. And boy, he's well-behaved. So thanks for having him as part of this.

A. Kohan: Well, I want to thank all of you around the table. As I've watched, I'm impressed by the level of compassion that everyone has expressed to members of the public who have expressed varying viewpoints. And I think this is a model for how we can behave with each other, and I really appreciate it.

I also realize I did not get a chance—I don't know if MLA Dela Cruz is still present in the room, but I very much appreciated her hosting the event last night with members—I have many friends who are members

of the Filipino community and as someone who's been subject to driver aggression and road violence, I appreciated the opportunity to gather last night, so thank you to her.

Mr. Balcaen: Well, thank you so much for the presentation. And, particularly, I'll echo your words about the Filipino community; and, you know, our collective hearts, I'm sure, from this table, go out to that community. And your son is very well behaved and thank you for the opportunity—or taking the opportunity to present to us today.

A. Kohan: Thank you and I hope I wasn't speaking out of turn.

Yes, and I just want to highlight, I don't think that I gave a gender for my child, and we can't ask them yet. They're not really speaking, and so I just think it's interesting that we all make assumptions about how people are presenting and it's a very good thing for us to provide protections for folks, to make sure that any mistakes we might make are in a space of—you know, can be corrected with the expectation that that correction will be helpful and used and so that people can move forward, respecting each other.

And so, thank you all.

Mr. Wiebe: I just wanted to apologize. I actually—I was mistaken. I thought, Mr. Kohan, that you had gendered your child. But it's a great point and it's a great opportunity for me to live that example through your words, so thank you for correcting us on that and I apologize.

A. Kohan: I—you know, I take no offence and I think that we should all be in the space of offering grace to each other where there's no malice and I think that that is certainly allowed within this legislation.

I think people, often, when you're walking around with an infant will ask, oh, is it a boy or a girl? And sometimes they say, is—are they a boy or a girl? And I say, I don't know, actually, maybe. In that—you know, this is a child who can't speak for themselves yet, right? And so, who knows where this will end up.

And do we, as a society, want to make sure that it's up to them, and that whatever that choice is, whether that's to conform to the gender that others might assign them or not, that we have a place of respect and that that doesn't impinge on their right to housing and education and health care and employment and so many other things?

So thank you all for this.

The Chairperson: Okay, seeing no further questions, thank you again for your presentation.

We're now going to move to the next person on the list, Mrs. Erin Robin. Mrs. Erin Robin will be dropped from the list.

We will now move to Mr. Junbin Shi. And they will be dropped from the list.

We will now move to Chyrel Young. And they will be dropped from the list.

We will now move to Bradley West. Bradley West will be removed from the list.

We will now move to Mary Pauls. Mary Pauls will be removed from the list.

We will now call Teresa Lugzo. And she will be removed from the list.

I will now call on Mrs. Laura Fehr. Okay, they will be removed from the list.

Okay, and the last person we're going to call is Mr. Steven Somerset. Okay, he will be dropped from the list.

And that concludes our list of presenters.

* * *

The Chairperson: In what order does the committee wish to proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of these bills?

Mr. Wiebe: I guess I would suggest that we go through the bills numerically.

The Chairperson: It has been suggested that we go through the bills numerically.

Is it agreed? [*Agreed*]

Bill 9—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (2)

The Chairperson: We're going to begin with Bill 9 .

Does the minister responsible for Bill 9 have an opening statement?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record with regard to Bill 9, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (2).

This bill puts a stop to controlled-access cannabis stores in Winnipeg and in other urban areas. We are confining the sales of cannabis to age-restricted stores, ensuring that cannabis products are secured

and not exposed to those patrons who are under the legal age of 19.

Currently, legislation allows for two types of cannabis stores in Manitoba: age-restricted stores that prohibit people from under 19 from entering, and controlled-access stores that sell cannabis within a larger retail store that offers non-cannabis products.

Although cannabis must be not visible in controlled-access stores, young people still may be present while cannabis sales are taking place. In fact, we heard some of those stories at committee last week. Winnipeg and other urban areas are now well-served by existing cannabis retail stores. Introducing more locations that are not age restriction-restricted invites greater access for young people under the age of 19.

This amendment is being brought forward to enhance safety for those young people by limiting the sale of cannabis to age-restricted stores. Our government is ensuring sufficient availability, of course, of legal cannabis to reduce the illicit market while responding to the industry and addressing public concerns. Controlled-access stores will continue to be permitted in rural and northern areas, ensuring Manitobans have sufficient access to legal cannabis products.

This amendment to this legislation supports our government's commitment to safety and ensures young people are protected by reducing their access to cannabis.

Thank you, honourable Chair.

The Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

* (14:20)

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record here during this committee for Bill 9. And after hearing some of the presentations—the few that were here for Bill 9—but I just want to put a few words on record here, and I just want to raise the concerns that prohibits the issuance of a new controlled access retail cannabis licencing in the major urban areas.

This change creates an unnecessary and problematic distinction between urban and rural retail environments, and between age-controlled and controlled-access models. Controlled-access cannabis sales have proven to be a viable and compliant business model, especially for scale-small-scale entrepreneurs. Removing this option in urban areas unfairly restricts businesses'

flexibility and reduces retail diversity in Manitoba's largest markets.

What makes urban areas inherently unsuitable for this model, you might ask. Well, larger centres have more robust enforcement capabilities and regulatory oversight than rural areas. If controlled access is acceptable in towns under 5,000 people, why not in cities with greater regulatory infrastructure?

The inconsistency becomes even more evident when we compare cannabis to tobacco. Tobacco, another highly regulated product, which is widely sold in controlled access environments, convenience stores, gas stations and even in the urban centres. Age restrictions and public health concerns have not precluded tobacco's availability in such spaces, so why is cannabis being singled out is the question.

Bill 9 risks stifling innovation and discouraging participation in the legal cannabis market, particularly from independent operators who may not have the resources to open stand-alone, age-restricted stores. Also undermines the role of municipalities and local business owners in shaping retail operations appropriate to their communities.

By consolidating cannabis retail agreements under the Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries Corporation while simultaneously narrowing licensing options, the province is centralizing control, unlimiting opportunity, especially in our urban centres where economic diversity and accessibility should be encouraged, not curtailed.

We should be expanding retail options in regulated safe and equitable ways, not closing the door on proven and compliant business models. I urge the government to reconsider this amendment and work collaboratively with stakeholders to support a fair, consistent and inclusive cannabis retail framework across this province.

Those are my comments and I appreciate the opportunity to get some of those on record. Thank you.

The Chairperson: We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 13—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2025

The Chairperson: Okay, we'll now move to Bill 13. Does the minister responsible for Bill 13 have an opening statement?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to put a few words on the record with regards to Bill 13, this year's minor amendments and corrections act.

MACA is an annual omnibus bill that is used for correcting typographical, numbering, minor drafting and translation errors and other minor amendments to acts. MACA 2025 brings forward a number of these changes, including amendments to The Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act, with respect to the hearing panel roster that clarify members of the roster remain on the roster until they are reappointed, a successor is appointed or their appointment is rescinded, ensuring no gaps in service related to the expiry of a term.

With the closure of the Manitoba developments—Developmental Centre in 2024, amendments to several acts that appeal—repeal references to developmental centres and the ability to establish and operate them that reinforce our commitment to deinstitutionalization and ensure that the MDC property can be repurposed for other uses.

Minor amendments to The Emergency Measures Act so that disaster assistance guidelines and policies will now be approved departmentally—already occur in practice—are now made.

The Police Services Act: amendments that will allow for First Nations police to—service—to operate a First Nations safety officer program, ensures a consistent response to public safety and protections of safety officers and harm.

The Public Libraries Act is 'amended'—amended to remove a requirement that one of the six members of the Public Library Advisory Board be nominated by the senate of the University of Manitoba, which will modernize the act and provide flexibility.

Changes to The Wildlife Act, which will modernize the terminology of the act to reflect current departmental practices, ensure current terminology to describe game tags issued with hunting licences and remove requirement that the form of licences are permits be set out in the regulation.

And there are several other changes.

I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record with regards to Bill 13. I look forward to its passing here at committee this afternoon.

The Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

No? Okay.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop in any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clauses 3 through 6—pass; clauses 7 and 8—pass; clauses 9 through 11—pass; clauses 12 through 14—pass; clauses 15 through 17—pass; clauses 18 and 19—pass; clause 20—pass; clauses 21 and 22—pass; clauses 23 through 25—pass; clauses 26 through 28—pass; clause 29—pass; clause 30—pass; clause 31—pass; clauses 32 through 34—pass; clauses 35 through 38—pass; clauses 39 and 40—pass; clauses 41 and 42—pass; clauses 43 and 44—pass; clauses 45 through 47—pass; clause 48—pass; clause 49—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 32—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities)

The Chairperson: Okay, we will now move to Bill 32.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 32 have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: I do.

The Chairperson: Okay, the Honourable Minister Wiebe.
* (14:30)

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record with regards to Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities)

Currently, the Public Safety Investigations unit must obtain a community safety order from the Court of King's Bench to evict dangerous or criminal tenants but rarely does because of the lengthy court process.

Instead, investigators provide their files to landlords to support five-day eviction notices for unlawful activity under section 74.1 of The Residential Tenancies Act.

When tenants do not leave their property, the landlord must apply to the Residential Tenancies Branch for an order of possession under The Residential Tenancies Act, which states that the unlawful must pose an immediate—quote: an immediate risk to health or safety.

RTB hearing officers don't often rule drug trafficking as an immediate risk to health or safety and will often deny orders of possession despite seeing video surveillance. We believe that it is an immediate risk to public safety and that's why we are changing the law.

Under Bill 32, amendments to the RTA will require contraventions to be, quote: significant; rather than, quote: immediate risks to health or safety. Amendments will also clarify that if the landlord proves that a tenant is engaged in drug or human trafficking, such activity is deemed to be a significant risk to safety.

The PSIU has been submitting written reports rather than participating in person at the RTB hearings, so amendments will make clear that they can provide evidence at RTB hearings while still protecting the confidentiality. Under this bill, an order of possession must be granted in cases where a landlord, at times, with the support of the Public Safety Investigations unit, has demonstrated that drug or human trafficking is occurring in a residential complex.

Amendments will also outline the types of information that the RTB may consider when determining whether to grant an order of possession due to unlawful activity by the tenant, including any evidence or information from an investigator from the Public Safety Investigations unit.

Honourable Chair, this bill is all about empowering communities to protect themselves, empowering tenants and landlords and communities at large from protecting themselves against that unlawful activity which we know is occurring and which, in many cases, we want to support law enforcement in addressing.

This is a great way to disrupt organized crime, to disrupt the drug trade, to keep toxic drugs out of our community; and we believe that passage of this bill swiftly will further empower communities and further make our communities safer. Thank you, honourable Speaker.

The Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Seeing none, during the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 35—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

The Chairperson: Okay, moving on to Bill 35.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 35 have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: I do.

The Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Justice.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): Pleased to put a few words on the record with regards to Bill 35, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

This bill gives MPI the flexibility in designing the insurance program that it offers to fleet customers. Insurance for fleet customers with 10 or more registered and insured vehicles has historically used year-end rebates and surcharges. This means customers pay for their full premium up front and then must either pay a surcharge or receive a rebate from MPI at the end of the year, depending on claims that have been filed across their fleet over the past year.

MPI's fleet customers find this model challenging. For fleets with a record of safe driving, customers have expressed a preference for discounts upfront rather than waiting to the end of the year for a rebate. Receiving the discount at the beginning of the year would not reduce the overall price, but it would help fleet customers to budget since it reduces the amount that the customer would have to pay up front.

This bill will provide MPI with the authority to offer discounts on fleet policies, which will bring them closer to the way that individual policies work, improving convenience for fleet customers. MPI's peer public insurers in Saskatchewan and British Columbia already manage their fleet policies in this way.

In addition, legislation passed in 2022 allowing for MPI to offer a new type of insurance called a blanket policy would be an option in the future for

peer-to-peer car-sharing services like Turo and vehicle-for-hire services such as Uber and Lyft, in alignment with other Canadian jurisdictions. Expansion of blanket policies to other commercial stakeholders is possible, but would be based on customer demand and further analysis.

A blanket policy covers drivers and vehicles who are engaged in active operation on specific—on a specific application under the one policy. MPI is working towards making them available in the future. This legislation will allow MPI to future—to offer future blanket policies using discounts as well.

Honourable Speaker, this is all about supporting those Manitoba businesses who operate within the province of Manitoba and form a very close relationship and partnership with MPI to ensure that we have safe roads and affordable insurance. These changes will make things more streamlined, and we look for support from all members of the committee here today to pass this through to third reading.

The Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Seeing none, during the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; clause 7—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 36—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act

The Chairperson: Okay, moving on to Bill 36.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 36 have an opening statement?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It's my pleasure to put a few words on the record with regard to Bill 36, the drivers and vehicles amendment act and highway traffic amendment act.

This act makes changes to MPI's services and improves customer protection and road safety in several areas. This bill will give MPI the authority to issue tickets to persons who authorize, permit or acquiesce in the issuance of a fraudulent vehicle safety certificate

or one issued by a person who is not a qualified mechanic.

Legislation passed in 2022 authorized MPI to build a tool which will become available this year, allowing individuals to enter a driver's licence number on the website—on the MPI website—and learn if the licence is valid or if there are conditions or restrictions to that licence. However, that legislation doesn't allow the tool to disclose the class or stage of the licence being searched, which this new bill will change.

Manitobans under the age of 18 cannot obtain a driver's licence or register a vehicle without the consent of a parent or guardian. The Drivers and Vehicles Act suggests that both parents would be needed to provide approval. This amendment will clarify that only one needs to sign, which will keep us in line with other provinces, and if there is no parent or guardian or if they cannot provide approval, then another adult who MPI considers responsible could do so as well. If the person who provided the approval revokes it and the child is still under 18, then MPI cancels the driver's licence or vehicle registration, and this will continue to be the case.

A person who is convicted of an impaired driving offence or is issued some types of licence suspension at roadside by a police officer must complete an impaired driver's assessment and possibly additional programming through Shared Health. They can't become licenced again until they have completed this requirement, but the legislation is not clear about this, so we are further clarifying it in the bill.

* (14:40)

MPI can require a person to provide a medical report if there are concerns about their medical fitness to drive; and, if urgent, MPI can suspend their licence. If the medical report indicates that the person is not fit to drive, MPI can cancel their licence, but the language in the legislation is not clear about this, so we are continuing to clarify it.

Again, this is about streamlining the experience for all customers of Manitoba Public Insurance while at the same time, ensuring that our roads are safe, and that all the—that the vehicles are—that are operating on those roads are continuing to be safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record.

The Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Seeing none, during the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Also, if there's agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clauses 1 and 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clauses 4 and 5—pass; clauses 6 and 7—pass; clauses 8 and 9—pass; clauses 10 through 12—pass; clauses 13 and 14—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 43—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act
(*Continued*)

The Chairperson: Okay, moving on to Bill 43.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 43 have an opening statement?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I just need to start by thanking the many Manitobans who took time out of their day, out of their work in many cases, to come to the Legislature to present on Bill 43.

Those who came in a respectful manner I think really added so much to this conversation, because this is really a conversation about learning, about understanding how we can respect one another and about protecting those who are most vulnerable in our society. Those presenters who came out on any side of the issue, who did so in a respectful way, I think added to that conversation that a lot of Manitobans are having right now, and really spoke to who we are as Manitobans, you know? Often to call ourselves friendly Manitoba; it's on our licence plates.

But I think it goes a lot deeper than that. I think that that's genuinely who we are as Manitobans, and for most Manitobans, I think we want to see protections expanded. We want to make sure that rights are protected, and, really, that's what Bill 43 is all about. By expanding The Human Rights Code to include gender expression and a list of protected characteristics, we know we're doing what we can to protect those Manitobans who feel vulnerable right now in commu-

nity, ensuring that they have the same rights as every other Manitoban.

We know, honourable Chair, at present, the code prohibits discrimination against individuals based on numerous specified characteristics such as age, such as sex, such as family status, sexual orientation, gender identity and, of course, physical or mental disabilities. This bill, this amendment is really about adding gender expression to the list of protected characteristics, referring to how somebody presents and communicates their gender to the rest of the world. This can include everything from behaviour to outward appearance, such as dress, hair, makeup, body language and voice. And it's distinct from gender identity, which refers to a person's deeply-felt internal and individual experience of gender.

Gender expression can be a distinct aspect of their lived experience, and we heard from many folks who expressed that very beautifully here at committee. Without this explicit protection, individuals who challenge the traditional norms of masculinity or femininity are vulnerable to discrimination in workplaces, in their housing and in public spaces.

Our government believes that all people should be able to express their gender in a way that feels authentic to them. Human rights laws in almost all provinces and territories in Canada now explicitly prohibit the discrimination based on gender expression. In many cases, we're over a decade behind.

This proposed amendment would align the protected characteristics in Manitoba with the laws of other jurisdictions and with the federal Canadian Human Rights Act. The amendment is an important step forward and will protect vulnerable individuals in the workplace, in their schools and when seeking services in public spaces.

Honourable Speaker, we are making an important change here with this legislation, but it's the right thing to do and it's the kind of thing that makes a real difference for so many Manitobans.

I know that for many, the experience of the committee was a difficult one, and this can be a challenging space in any circumstance but especially when sharing very personal and very, very difficult stories. I want to thank those who took the time to share their experience—share their lived experience—and to stand up for so many others. It was a beautiful

experience and it was one that, I think, helped to inform me as an individual and as an MLA and as a minister. I think that probably speaks for a lot of people at the committee. I think we really heard some very, very touching stories.

And so I want to just thank again the Manitobans who've participated in the democratic process, who've given their time to inform the committee and to help keep this momentum going: to pass this bill, to make this change and continue to support so many in the community. I just want to thank everybody for your input.

And with that, I'll thank you, honourable Chair, for your incredible work here at the committee, and my fellow committee members. And thank you for the time to put a few words on the record.

The Chairperson: We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I would just like to express my gratefulness for all the presenters that were here the last two committee meetings. And I know that it's just encouraging to see people coming from rural areas, as well as the city, to discuss and to talk about a topic that's really important; that we need to really consider.

And so thank you to everyone who presented and for—it's great to be able to have this opportunity for, like was said, the democratic process; that people are able to be heard. And that's such an important part.

So thank you.

The Chairperson: We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

The hour being 2:49, what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Committee rise.

The Chairperson: Committee will rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 2:49 p.m.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Re: Bill 43

In support of Bill 43 because my gender identity is not a matter of opinion, it is not something that needs to be questioned or commented on. It simply needs to be respected.

Folx that reside outside of the gender binary deserve the same protections provided to those that identify within them.

Kat Roberts

Re: Bill 43

I object to Bill 43 because it is against our freedom of speech, conscience and freedom of religion

Do not pass this bill

Lorraine Hackenschmidt

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43!

Amelia Valencia

Re: Bill 43

Please, I respectfully ask you to please pass Bill 43.

We are living in very hard & stressful times, our family members, loved ones & affected friends - they need all of our support. That if one doesn't fit into a male or female gender, or perhaps they identify as a gender opposite (their assigned at birth gender), or they are non-binary....that we are respectful, engaged & make a space for them to sit at the table, to have a voice. Do not erase them, just because they might not fit into a traditional male or female checkmark. Please also respect our trans brothers and sisters. Do not erase their existence. They matter and we need to strongly consider helping them by standing up for them...and other minorities. We don't need empty seats at our dinner tables. We want our loved ones, our friends with us. They are brilliant, amazing & their voices need to be heard. They need a seat at the table.

Barbara Young

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Eric Musick

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree with Bill 43.

Paulo Gonçalves de Arruda

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Ashley Dupont

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Kelly Smith

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Cassandra Schroeder

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

Debra Schroeder

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Madeline Dumont

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Mikayla Patenaude

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree with Bill 43

April Penner

Re: Bill 43

I oppose Bill-43

Isabelle Froese

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43!

Colleen Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43 and request it not be passed.

Sharon Webb

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with passing this Bill as it will take away our freedom of speech.

Nettie Kehler

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Betty Hiebert

Re: Bill 43

This bill is absolutely ridiculous. Anybody with common sense would never vote in favor of this bill. It must be thrown out.

Mark Harder

Re: Bill 43

I do not support bill 43

Justin Jeanson

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Kendra Fehr

Re: Bill 43

I disagree with this bill.

Al Dyck

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

It is an abomination of what our Creator has masterfully created.

It is just wrong that a minority of people can change the majority. Nothing else in life works that way.

Jamie Fehr

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43 as it undermines freedom of speech and expression.

Thank you.

Milton Garcia

Re: Bill 43

I am completely opposed to this bill. No one should face any legal consequences for using a pronoun.

Marina Doerksen

Re: Bill 43

I oppose bill 43 as it infringes on rights regarding freedom of speech. This legislation allows the government to police speech which will also violate freedom of religion.

Massis Sarkes

Re: Bill 43

I am responding to Bill 43 and want to express my concern for freedom of speech, civil liberties, freedom of religion and the concern for the next generations mental and physical health.

I am voting against bill 43.

Every person has the right to form their own opinion, belief and practice according to their culture.

Elizabeth Michnik

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Anna Madden

Re: Bill 43

I am opposed to this bill!

Eva Krahn

Re: Bill 43

I am against bill c43, it is against my religion, my rights as a tax paying citizen, I don't believe that I should be told what to say or how to say it. I do believe that it is my responsibility as a believer in

Jesus Christ to be respectful to all people on this wonderful planet God has created.

Donald Michnik

Re: Bill 43

Protecting the right to gender expression is incredibly important, in great part due to the attacks on trans people in nearby provinces and countries, but I feel like we must also acknowledge these protections are even more broadly applicable and necessary. Allowing for the monitoring and policing of gender expression means that all people may be forced to perform according to external, often arbitrary standards of gender performance - I for one have no desire to be required to prove my gender or change my interactions with the world because I wear pants, have a strong jaw, or speak too stridently, all ways I've been informed I perform being an individual assigned female at birth inadequately. In all likelihood, most people in this province would have something about them that would fail someone else's opinion of "correct" gender expression. They should not be fired, harassed, or otherwise treated poorly because of it.

The diversity of human gender, sex, and sexuality is supported by evidence. It is a fact of life and biology that there is variety in the physical expression of sex and gender. Unusual or unexpected gender expression enacts no material harm on the people who view it, any more than wearing brown shoes with a black belt enacts material harm. To suggest that mismatched accessories do cause harm is immediately and obviously silly. I use this silly example to drive home the point that someone's right to gender expression cannot infringe on the rights of others, but the reason we must protect the right to gender expression when we don't protect the right to dress poorly is this: someone's gender expression is a lot more difficult and damaging to change than a pair of shoes.

I cannot easily change my jaw, my broad shoulders. I cannot easily change my personality, my way of speaking. But many people in this world would have me change one or both in order to express my birth gender correctly, harming my body or my mental health against my will. I ask that you protect me, and others like me, from those people.

Ruby Warren

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Curbing free thought and free speech erodes our rights and freedoms as protected under the Charter, and will only cause further disunity in Manitoba and Canada. Freedom of thought and speech allows for open debate between diverse ideas, leading to better solutions and a stronger society. Shutting down opinions that you disagree with does not promote diversity.

Brendan Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with passing bill 43

Marcey Waldner

Re: Bill 43

We are not in favor of taking away free speech and forcing someone else's ideologies on society!

Carol Neufeld

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43 changes. Restricting our speech and ability to educate others on the two genders that God has created is not ok. There are only two genders, Male and Female.

Jordan Fehr

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

The government has no right to rob us of freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience, as Manitoba/Canada or not supposed to under a dictatorship government.

Freedom of speech is much more than a value as it is the foundation of Western society.

Rhonda Banman

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with this bill. It violates our right to speak up for what we believe in. I believe we were all created by a sovereign God with a sovereign plan. He has designed that there are only two genders: male and

female. This being said, I don't hate anyone who chooses to call themselves something different, even if we disagree. Everyone is allowed to make personal choices about their own life. What I do disagree with is being forced to call someone by pronouns which are a by-product of their disillusion. I will refuse to call a woman a man, and a man, a woman, because it is my religious belief. This law would prohibit me from following my religious beliefs for the sake of someone's personal feelings.

For the above mentioned reasons, I do not agree with the amendment bill.

Claudia Dyck

Re: Bill 43

Dear Committee members,

I am writing in support of Bill 43 (The Human Rights Code Amendment Act).

It stands to reason that Manitoba's Human Rights Code should be harmonized with federal Human Rights legislation such as C-16. Speech or conduct that targets or marginalizes individuals on the basis of gender expression is not justifiable in a free and democratic society. Our province should recognize this as our nation does.

As a teacher and a parent, I am deeply concerned with the ongoing scapegoating of transgender and gender non-conforming people in the current political climate. Calls for books bans, challenges to school Pride activities, misinformation regarding Comprehensive Sex Education, and pervasive bullying of marginalized students all indicate worrying opposition to students' rights and show that stronger protections for gender expression are necessary.

I strongly urge you to pass Bill 43.

Sincerely,

Catherine Hart

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Someone else's beliefs shouldn't be pushed on myself. My beliefs are my beliefs. Your beliefs are your beliefs. Yours are not more important than mine and vice versa. So there should absolutely be no law that

requires me to believe like yourself. This free country is coming to an end...

Jillian Freund

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43.

Bryan Sullivant

Re: Bill 43

I am speaking in respect to the fact that this bill will cause more confusion as well as more reason for people to hide away and become antisocial... this will harm businesses and outreaches. People will become more depressed and have a much harder time opening up to people and seek help when they need it. As a parent I see the future of my children becoming one of fear of being themselves and making friends for the fact they may offend or get in trouble. As one who believe we need to have a life that is structured and disciplined in order to have good mental health and deal with difficult situations better we see the constant change of one's identity causing more mental illness and depression. This in turn will raise suicides abuse and abusers, crime and many more lost and helpless people.... if I want to identify as woman thats my choice. If someone decides they will call me a man that is theirs. Freedom of speech and freedom of belief.

Elizabeth Heide

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43. It blocks my right to free speech, you see.

Sondra Sawatzky

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43. It is against free speech.

Gustav Sawatzky

Re: Bill 43

I do not support this bill. I believe that it infringes on my free speech.

Margaret Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

I believe it goes against my rights of freedom of speech and forced us to validate beliefs I don't believe in. I can respect their beliefs but I can't be forced to believe

Viola Kraemer

Re: Bill 43

As a 22-year-old Canadian born and raised, I do not support Bill-43. I believe it violates our fundamental rights to freedom of speech and expression. As a proud Canadian, I am deeply disappointed in a government that seems to be moving away from the freedoms that once defined our nation.

Canada is meant to be a free country, a place of refuge, community and stability. If Bill-43 is passed, I fear that my future children may never experience the beautiful, free country I know and love today.

Cassia Nelson

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Tahlia Hiebert

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill-43

Indira Pedersen

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Julianna Dueck

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Cheryl Enns

Re: Bill 43

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I just want to go on record to say that I do not agree with the ideas being proposed. It violates Canadians

in their constitutional rights and also moral and free speech rights. Please reconsider the passing of Bill 43.

Brenda Kroeker

Re: Bill 43

I do not want Bill 43 to be passed into law. I do not agree to it.

Robin Janz

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill43

Helena Peters

Re: Bill 43

Hello

I am against bill 43. Please do not pass this bill.

I am very concerned about my human rights.

Nettie Freund

Re: Bill 43

I strongly oppose bill -43

It is against our human rights in every way. You Don not get to decide how I think or believe.

Helena Friesen

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Naomi Bergeron

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill43

Amy Martens

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill 43

Pam Reimer

Re: Bill 43

I do not support or agree with Bill-43.

Colleen Zacharias

Re: Bill 43

I am strongly against Bill 43 as it violates my freedom of conscience.

Victoria Freund

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

I do not believe that how one feels should be made into an issue of human rights litigation.

Rhonda Rempel

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43's amendment to include 'gender expression' as a protected characteristic. Gender dysphoria is a serious mental health issue that requires compassionate treatment but I believe protecting people against 'misgendering' is completely unhelpful to the individuals dealing with actual dysmorphia as well as extremely confusing for others (especially children.) I do not see a future where this type of bill helps anyone in the long run. The stats coming out now of gender-confused individuals reversing their identity back to their biological gender speak loud and clear. Again, I am fully against this bill in every way. Speaking truth in love, backed by science and biology and compassionate, professional counselling, I believe, is the best way forward for our province. Thank you.

Alana Knelsen

Re: Bill 43

This bill is forcing basically a benefit system that not everyone believes in on them. So if I forced you to believe in something that you didn't believe and then you get punished for that, is that right ? Or in this case I don't believe in what this is making us chose and therefore I am pushed for not believing in something that I see is very dangerous. The act should be let people chose, that is freedom, that is what our country is based on, unfortunately our world has become more about equality but only in certain ways and freedom of faith is frowned upon just because we don't agree,

everyone should be allowed to have what they believe otherwise it just one sided.

Alyssa Knelsen

Re: Bill 43

This bill goes against the right to free speech. Nobody should be coerced into saying anything. The right not to be offended does not exist and as much as I would sometimes like it, there is no law against being mean.

Celine Castro

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Julia Wall

Re: Bill 43

I am very opposed to Bill 43. Hormonal interventions to treat gender dysphoria are experimental and have not been shown to be safe. Surgery and complications often follow.

It is also a threat to free speech in this province. It forces religions to go against their beliefs.

Tammy Klassen

Re: Bill 43

Good afternoon, my name is Danna McDonald and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

As a parent, community member, and Marriage and Family Therapist, I have witnessed firsthand the harms that people and families experience when they experience gender-based, transphobic discrimination. The hate-fuelled and lie-filled rhetoric of transphobia misleads people to believe that gender-creative, non-binary and transfolks pose some sort of terrible threat to the world, which is unequivocally false. On the contrary, youth that are gender-creative, trans, and non-binary experience high rates of bullying, sexual assault, and abuse in comparison to peers. They are more vulnerable to harm of all sorts, and homelessness, and are just trying to make their way through the world, make real and meaningful connections, and contribute, like everyone else. They are resourceful, creative, and diverse, and deserve to

engage in their lives with the same freedoms and confidence as others.

All Manitobans deserve to be able to express their gender in ways that feel congruent for them, whether this be in what we may consider to be traditional or binary ways, or in creative or fluid presentations.

As a proud Manitoban and Canadian, I implore you to uphold the principles of dignity and respect for all persons, and include gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Kind regards,

Danna McDonald

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with the bill 43, because it conflicts with the basic human right of having a belief or conviction. It is a fact, (biologically and scientifically), that there are only two genders! Strange, that we have come so far as to being afraid to state common sense! I cannot be forced to call any person their self made up identity or "gender".

I understand that even on that basis I could be accused and prosecuted.

All other protections against discrimination of ALL human beings are already in place!

Inna Kraemer

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Rachael Krahn

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Rachael Krahn

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43, speech cannot be compelled!

Nicole Winkler

Re: Bill 43

I am against this bill going through. It goes against my freedom of speech and freedom of religious.

Zachary Freund

Re: Bill 43

We do not agree with Bill 43

Do not pass it!

Shirley Sawatzky

Re: Bill 43

I strongly disagree with bill 43. I am not among the group that would be offended by something as small as misgendering, and a punishment by fine would be a step too far. Harassment is far different than accidentally using the wrong pronouns on someone by mistake.

Nathan Unger

Re: Bill 43

It is heart breaking to me that I grew up in a free country, a freedom that was paid for in the blood of our forefathers, and yet now we've come to a point where that freedom is slowly being stripped away to accommodate the feelings of an extremely small minority.

It doesn't bother me if someone chooses to express their gender identity in any way they see fit, however I should absolutely not be legally obligated to affirm this expression in any way, shape or form, and it certainly should not be institutionalized as a legal position.

I strongly disagree with Bill-43 and would implore the Canadian government to do the right thing here and preserve the free country I and millions of my fellow Canadians are proud to be a part of.

Adam Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Bill 43. As a Canadian citizen who legally immigrated, became a permanent resident, and proudly took the oath of citizenship in 2024, I chose this country because of its freedom—including freedom of conscience, religion, and expression.

This bill would, in practice, threaten those very freedoms. It risks compelling speech and punishing those who hold to the historic and sincerely held belief that God created mankind male and female. That is not equality—it is coercion.

Religious freedom is not a threat to society, nor is respectful disagreement. I believe that Manitobans, including those in the transgender community, can live peaceably together when mutual respect is preserved—without forcing ideological conformity through the legal system.

I respectfully urge you to reject Bill 43.

David Betker

Re: Bill 43

My name is Linda Churchill and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Including gender expression and gender identity in the amendment as a protected characteristic is important to me because I have more than one trans family member as well as friends and colleagues in the LGBT2Q+ community. I'm referring to loved ones and fellow citizens whose rights and safety are endangered and who need our protection.

I cannot imagine regressing as a human community to the days when non-heteronormative and non-binary people feared for their livelihoods and lives. We are seeing a resurgence of bigotry fueled by misinformation and fear. Citizens of a progressive country need to be educated about the continuum of human sexuality, sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity. I believe the NDP government of this province is well-positioned to foster deeper understanding of diversity. It helps everyone when gender expression and gender identities are celebrated, respected, and protected. No citizen should be marginalized.

Education can help people distinguish the myths from the facts. For example, I know people who truly believe that all non-heteronormative, non-binary people corrupt young people. Such fear-fueled demonization must stop. I'm old enough to remember the ban regarding same-sex marriages, lifted on that good day September 16, 2004, in a Winnipeg court by Judge Douglas Yard who ruled that Manitoba's (then) same-sex marriage ban violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have a precedence of

progressive thought and action here in Manitoba.
Let's keep it up for the love of all our citizens.

Thank you for the time and attention paid to this matter.

Linda Churchill

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Tracy Friesen

Re: Bill 43

I am against bill 43.

Eva Guenter

Re: Bill 43

I am opposed to Bill 43. It goes against our freedom of speech, and the principles our country was founded upon.

Cynthia Klassen

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

Thank you for all you do in serving Manitoba!

Please understand I do not agree with Bill-43.

Margie Loewen

Re: Bill 43

I do Not agree with Bill 43!

Margaret Ketler

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Jessica Dyck

Re: Bill 43

I am against bill 43.

Rebecca Waldner

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree with bill 43 because NDP government has no right to police our words.

There are far more important work is needed to fix manitoba than amending human rights codes. Which I believe nobody was complaining about it.

Arev Melkon

Re: Bill 43

I am supposed to the amendment of Bill c43. I am concerned that this will give credence to charge people with crimes for standing for their faith.

Juan Friesen

Re: Bill 43

I disagree with Bill 43.

Bob Hildebrandt

Re: Bill 43

I disagree with Bill 43

Elizabeth Hildebrandt

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with this bill 43. Thank you

Daniel Laurence

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Shayna Hart

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with this bill.

Edward Brost

Re: Bill 43

I am not okay with this Bill, it restricts the fundamental rights of Canadians and the freedom to express thought and speech. This is outrageous and should not be allowed.

Aasher Kataria

Re: Bill 43

I would like to voice my opinion that I am against this bill. I believe that we already have equal rights at this current time and by going ahead with this bill you're taking away from my rights and giving more to others which is no longer equal rights or freedom of speech. Please vote no

Steven Freund

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43.

Chelsea Hoffman

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill - 43.

Sarah Wall

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Cornie Wall

Re: Bill 43

Im voting against Bill 43!

There are 2 genders as stated in the Bible, God created man and woman in His image.

Just because you change your body or remove parts, it never changes your sex because God chose it for you and He doesn't make mistakes.

Brendalee Reimer

Re: Bill 43

I do not support bill 43 as I believe that it will cause greater ambiguity and misuse than what it aims to achieve.

By adding gender expression under discrimination characteristics, it creates the possibility of a term that is unbounded by plain text or physical markers because it is unique to the individual that creates their own definition for it. A term like that would make the interpretation of it impossible to understand rendering an environment where discrimination can be applied anywhere without assessable properties.

Arthur Aidarkhanov

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43.

Thank you,

Jodi Janzen

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Rachel Hiebert

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Andrea Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Helene Engbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I oppose it. Because I believe in freedom of speech.

Vikin Sarkes

Re: Bill 43

I entirely support MB Bill 43, amendment to Human Rights Code which proposes to add gender expression as a protected category. The reasons should be self-evident. Trans people face discrimination, erasure, and violence. Today, such attacks are in a clear incline as ruling class forces foment fear and division in

people struggling for resources that have been stripped away. Any public opposition to the bill is just one indication of the rise of such hatred, based in false information. This government must demonstrate that it respects gender autonomy, a basic and universal right. To move otherwise is to open the door even wider for vicious exclusion and attacks. Support for bill 43 is urgently necessary. Failure to support this valuable amendment to the Code would mark a clearly regressive failure on the part of government. Please support bill 43; it is the only humane position, and the responsibility of all governing representatives to protect and uphold such rights.

Irene Bindi

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Crystal Wall

Re: Bill 43

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Victor Mondaca, and I'm writing today not as part of any organization, but as an individual who believes in the basic right of every person to live safely, authentically, and with dignity.

I strongly support Bill 43, which would add gender expression as a protected ground under Manitoba's Human Rights Code.

This protection is long overdue, and it's a vital step toward building a safer, more inclusive Manitoba for everyone.

Safety begins with autonomy—the ability to live and express ourselves without fear of judgment or harm.

That freedom isn't a luxury; it's a foundation for wellbeing and for any real sense of belonging.

Right now in Manitoba, gender identity is protected—but gender expression is not.

That gap isn't cosmetic. It's dangerous.

It means people can still be harassed, excluded, or discriminated against—not for who they are, but for how they are perceived.

This isn't theoretical. Gendered expectations around clothing and appearance have been shaped by colonial history, not by any universal truth.

Across cultures, men have worn kilts in Scotland, tunics across Africa, sarongs in South Asia, and chamalls among the Mapuche people of Chile and Argentina.

In my own Mapuche heritage, men traditionally wore chamalls—handwoven wool ponchos, often adorned with bright colors and natural dyes.

To a Western or colonial eye, these garments might appear "feminine" because of their patterns, colors, or draped, dress-like form.

But within our culture, they have always been symbols of identity, strength, and belonging.

Human expression has always been diverse—because people are diverse.

When gender expression isn't protected, we have to ask:

Where do we draw the line?

Who gets to decide what's acceptable?

And what happens to those who don't fit someone else's idea of comfort?

This isn't just about clothing. It's about the right to exist safely and visibly.

Protecting gender expression is essential to public safety.

People are safer when they are seen, respected, and free—not when they are forced to hide who they are just to survive.

When we stay silent, we aren't neutral. We side with systems that punish difference and reinforce colonial ideas about who belongs and who doesn't.

That is not the future I believe in.

I urge you to pass Bill 43 without delay.

I stand with trans and gender-diverse people across Manitoba, and I will continue to advocate for a province where everyone can live, work, and thrive with dignity.

Sincerely,

Victor Mondaca

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Ana Penner

Re: Bill 43

I have critical concerns about Bill-43. As the mom of a 15 year old girl, who was stabbed multiple times by a Man, in a Woman's restroom, it gives me great anxiety to think that our freedoms to speak up about how passionately we feel about our personal experiences, could land US in trouble....

I speak quite passionately and have deep convictions, and very strongly oppose Any & Every form of human rights violations.... including my own, and those of my family members.

Please put a stop to Bill-43!

Barbara Teichroeb

Re: Bill 43

I am apposed to this bill and my hope for the government is to vote against this bill.

Wilhelm Zacharias

Re: Bill 43

Honourable Members of the legislator, thank you for allowing me to present today.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my strong conviction to say a resounding no to this bill as presented.

This resounding no must come from the realization that the desire for love and detestment of bullying and hatred are real, sincere and noble desires on the part of all Manitobans. However, there is a fundamental misconception of these words as desired to be accomplished. Love is portrayed and perceived as a feeling. It is a physical and emotional quality that comes and goes with the whim of the current circumstances. If all goes well then there is love; when something is wrong then love disappears. These are emotions misinterpreted as love. While the feelings are great, they cannot be a guild to anything as they are unreliable at best.

True love is a choice; it is a choice to do what is best for the other individual no matter what. Think of a mother who will tirelessly stay up and take care of her sick child. How about the aged man who spends his life savings and endless time seeking treatment for his terminally sick wife only to see her pass away at the end. These are precious and true examples of real love. Love is not something that can be gauged by

feelings, but by the choices and actions of doing what is best for those around him.

You may ask why I present at all since it sounds like we are seeking the same end? We all have a desire for love to be pepetuated throughout our great province. This is true, untill we come to making the best choices based off of what? The Truth, the ultimate truth! Truth must be adhered to or we will suffer the consequences of our choices. Truth waits for no man, truth is constant, truth can be consistently gauged and lived by.

Who then determines what is truth? My truth, your truth, what is Truth? I quote John 17:17 which says "Thy Word is Truth" KJV. There has never been anything proved false in the Bible, the principles, the historical accounts, the prophecies have all been proven true.

Laws have a moral base; theft is a crime why? Because it is based on the truth that an individual deserves to keep what he worked for and owns. This is not based on emotions, but in truth.

The LGBTQ+ movement is a growing movement seeking for love and acceptance for their personal choices in life. These choices often stem from childhood termoil and a degradation of their physical and emotional value as children. They often did not receive the love every child so desperately deserves as they grow up. Being a child and teenager is difficult; there is a lot going on physically and emotionally. In the midst of these physically and emotionally difficult times they need to be shown the truth and be guilded to the truth that their bodies are changing and they will not always feel good about themselves. They need to be loved and helped to the truth that God has laid out for us in His Word that there are only two genders and He has never made a mistake in assigning genders at birth. Truth is hard. It doesn't care about our feelings. You will hear this in business all the time. How about when a child needs to hear that everything is ok and they are perfectly fine the way they are because everyone struggles with self acceptance or emotional issues?

Please say no to this bill, it promotes acceptance of a feeling based movement and is not grounded in Truth; just as it would be foolish to require everyone accept and affirm someone's choice to make poor financial decisions. The LGBTQ+ movement is not interested in affirming my choices as a Bible believer, they enjoy the privilege of freedom of expression as they attack everything I hold precious. While it is the beauty of freedom of speech/freedom of conscience that allows

for every individual to say what they will, live and do as they please with their lives. It is a violation of the rights and freedoms of all Canadians to be required to affirm someone else's decisions in life. This is both to the benefit of all Manitobans and very much to the benefit of the LGBTQ+ communities.

If I as a free and proud Canadian am not required to affirm someone's poor financial choices, then I should not be required to affirm someone's personal lifestyle choices. This is the beauty of freedom of speech and one of the reasons I love my country.

Randy Hiebert

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill-43

Vanessa Rodas

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill 43.

Mabel Neufeld

Re: Bill 43

I am opposed to Bill-43. It concerns me that freedom of speech will be taken away from Manitobans, especially to those who seek to follow their religious beliefs. Religious freedom is a right as a Manitoban and Canadian. I believe that even if the bill is over turned that those of the transgender community can live peaceable with all Manitobans based off of mutual respect regardless of what either party believes regarding the gender issue.

Judy Betker

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Esther Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

As a Canadian I do not agree with Bill 43.

"The issue here is not about inclusion or exclusion—it is about the fundamental right of people and organizations to make their own decisions without fear of being publicly shamed or coerced. Language naturally evolves over time through organic changes

in social interaction, not through top-down mandates. When external forces dictate language, it ceases to be about genuine respect and becomes a tool for control.

Cheryl Pecus

Re: Bill 43

I am 100% against passing bill 43. North America was founded on the truth of God's word. This country is heading towards communism to fast if bills like this keep getting passed, keep Canada free and stop making law abiding citizens criminals. Stop trying to make laws supporting a tiny minority who's feeling get hurt to easily. The vast majority of Canadians can't become criminalized for simply not calling someone how they want to be called. I didn't want to be called many things growing up but here I am today stronger then ever because I had a Godly foundation showing me my identity was in Christ and not what people called me.

Tanner Fehr

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill 43 because it is against Freedom of Speech Conscience, Expression and Freedom of Religion

Brenda Peters

Re: Bill 43

I am writing to state that I am against Bill 43 because it is against Freedom of Speech, conscience, expression and Freedom of Religion.

Donna Molberg

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43. Therefore I would like to see it not pass.

Jenna Dyck

Re: Bill 43

I am opposed to Bill 43 because it violates our Freedom of Speech, conscience, expression and Freedom of Religion.

Barb Neudorf

Re: Bill 43

This bill forces compelled speech, which runs contrary to our freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. I am 100% against this bill as it will negatively impact our future generations.

For my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Final authority in our lives and for my Children and future grandchildren I want it known that I am against this bill.

Justina Dyck

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill 43 because it is against freedom of speech, conscience, expression and freedom of religion. We already have legislation that can deal with such and do not need legislation for every special interest. This will open the door for all kinds of other legislation and a lot of unnecessary government.

Richard Peters

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree with and am against the passing of bill 43

Will Klassen

Re: Bill 43

I strongly disagree with Bill 43. It should not pass! It will infringe upon my human rights.

Anna Toews

Re: Bill 43

This bill forces compelled speech, which runs contrary to our right to freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience.

Aaron Zacharias

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Janelle Colbourne

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill 43. A biological male is not a woman, nor can he be. Therefore to compel someone to use incorrect pronouns against their conscience and held beliefs, goes against the freedoms that we as Manitobans are supposed to stand for.

Caleb Waldner

Re: Bill 43

I am against Bill 43.

Jeremiah Dyck

Re: Bill 43

I do not support Bill 43.

Tammy Harder

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Julie Wall

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43!

Peggy Peters

Re: Bill 43

I opposed Bill 43.

Curtis Hildebrand

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

Shirley Watt

Re: Bill 43

We are opposed to bill 43.

Diane Falk

Re: Bill 43

Good afternoon,

I am writing to you today to request that you please go forward with Bill 43, as it is critical for us to ensure safety for the 2 Spirit and trans Communities in Manitoba.

As a cisgender Queer woman (with many privileges, including the white colour of my skin), I am fully supportive of enshrining the rights of gender-diverse people into our human rights codes.

I am hopeful that you can pass this Bill.

Thank you so much for your time and your commitment to human rights, on behalf of my communities and loved ones.

Sincerely,

Sarah Broad

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Melanie Hildebrand

Re: Bill 43

There are no studies that show that affirmation of transgender identity in young children reduces suicide or suicidal ideation, or improves long-term outcomes, as compared to other therapeutic approaches. Meanwhile, multiple studies show that adult individuals living transgender lives suffer much higher rates of suicidal ideation, completed suicide, and negative physical and mental health conditions than does the general population. This is true before and after transition, hormones, and surgery.

Schools are not equipped to guide minors through the difficult and life altering decisions surrounding social transition to support a transgender identity given the complex medical ethics issues that arise. (Section IX.D.)

Nicole Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

I don't support bill 43

Henry Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I am writing in regards to bill 43.

As a Canadian, I am appalled that any government would seek to impose a law that would steal my freedom of speech. Under the guise of inclusion?

I fail to understand how policing my words; and that of every other citizen in Manitoba; does not infringe upon our rights?

Amendments to the Human Rights Code, is not what the NDP's need to be focusing their time, attention, and resources on. You would do well to focus on the true needs of the citizens of Manitoba. Our infrastructure is crumbling; our healthcare system is broken; our taxes are rising, on and on the list goes.

This government was not elected to control my speech, or my beliefs. Shame on the NDP's for thinking You can conform the whole of Manitoba to one way of thinking and speaking.

Sad, and disillusioned;

Lesley Dalrymple

Re: Bill 43

I firmly do not agree with this law as it infringes on our fundamental rights to practice our religion and express ourselves freely. I believe that God does not make mistakes, and by imposing this law, you are directly undermining people's religious freedoms. In Canada, we are guaranteed the right to conscience and religion, which allows individuals to practice any faith or choose no religion at all. This essential freedom is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which also safeguards our right to thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including a free press.

Alex Watt

Re: Bill 43

This is not something that I am paying taxes for and wanting of my government, especially when there are very big issues that need attention like health care. I am against having freedom of speech eroded in this way in manitoba and that's where our tax dollars are

going. This is a highly disappointing direction that we as taxpayers were not asked if we wanted.

Patsy Penner

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43 amendment

Carol Neisteter

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Dorothy Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree with bill 43

Jack Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I absolutely do not agree with Bill 43!

Bonnie Friesen

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43 amendment

Ron Neisteter

Re: Bill 43

I am again Bill 43

Charlotte McCrar

Re: Bill 43

I disagree what Bill 43 stands for

Jake Klassen

Re: Bill 43

I disagree with Bill C-43. I see that great harm could be caused by this bill.

Sharon Schroeder

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

Abe Redekop

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

Myrna Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with this bill

Sharon Nield

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Esther Hoepfner

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Pauline Mahmood

Re: Bill 43

No I do not agree to bill 43

God has made man and female only according to God's word His word is truth

Thankyou

Carol Fehr

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with the changes presented bill 43. Specifically adding gender expression as that is vague and and at best childish terminology.

Linda Hildebrandt

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Crystal Driedger

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Pratima Manuel

Re: Bill 43

I object to gender identity requiring a forced language response. There are adequate protections already in place. Ambiguity and fluid gender identities make this amendment impossible to obey/enforce.

This amendment to Bill 43 needs to be voted down.

Irene Letkeman

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree to bill 43, when you make law that I can be criminally pursued for using false pronouns, simply because of my lack of understanding the opposite. The implications of this bill will only cause confusion and stupidity among other things, I believe it would be unwise to imply legal action on improper pronunciation of someone/somethings pronouns. One could quickly spin this in either direction and cause a fair amount of confusion. Lastly this bill is taking away the freedom of expression and undermine everyone's freedom of opinion, as a Christian who believes in Jesus Christ, I would no longer speak to any strangers or people I wouldn't know, all in fear of legal action and therefore would cause much greater divide among the people rather than community! I do believe bringing this law past goes against everyone's rights to freedom of expression, this would only cause chaos in the courts and amongst the Manitoba community and bring even greater division amongst the Manitobans. Also imagine if this was the other way, where one could take legal action against someone for not identifying me as a Christian, despite there unawareness of my beliefs. This is dangerous and, Julius Caesar said it best. The crazier the laws, the closer to collapse the empire is!

Dario Sidler

Re: Bill 43

I strongly oppose Bill 43.

It not only goes against freedom of speech, but also against freedom of religion. Please do not pass this bill.

Gender expression are terms that can change constantly unlike "sex", and/or "gender assigned at birth". If one chooses to use terms that do not match their "biological sex", they are still free to do so, without everyone around them being forced under law.

There is not enough clarity what this bill would all entail. Could it be used out of context like when a female patient visits a clinic or hospital and then asks to be seen by female doctor or nurse out of safety and comfort of the circumstances. If a male that identifies as female is sent, will this be going against Bill 43 if the patient refuses the doctor? If a pastor is asked to council a young girl struggling with her identity, will he be reprimanded for quoting parts of the Bible that specifies that we are created in Christ's image, male and female. Would this go against Bill 43?

Once again, my stance is vote no to Bill 43.

Brya Enns

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Maria Neufeld

Re: Bill 43

I oppose Bill 43

Marge Hoepfner

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43.

Brenda Wooley

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43

Carolyn Klassen

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

Brent Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43

Mark Warms

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree to Bill 43.

Janice Thompson

Re: Bill 43

Regarding Bill 43, I oppose.

Lynn Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill B-43

Jan Wollmann

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43. I'm am opposed to it

Lorraine Penner

Re: Bill 43

I am strongly against Bill 43.

Mary Tarka

Re: Bill 43

I don't agree with bill 43

Nicole Thiessen

Re: Bill 43

I am writing to express my support for this Bill. The addition of 'gender expression' to the Manitoba Human Rights Code is, I believe, an important protection

from discrimination and an important strengthening of the Code. Thank you.

Jonathan Young

Re: Bill 43

If this becomes law, then people should be required to wear name tags with their preferred pronoun(s) on it. This way others will not accidentally call them by the wrong pronoun(s).

In my opinion this is an unnecessary law. It will just create more division, and result in more hatred amongst Canadians. Which has been part of the Liberal ideology and propaganda. It's time to quit enabling people with these mental issues and drug problems.

I do not consent nor agree to the passing of this bill in party or whole.

Stanley Neufeld

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43.

Lori Wiens

Re: Bill 43

I do not approve of passing Bill43

Bev Hamm

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with bill 43.

Jennifer Giesbrecht

Re: Bill 43

I Do not agree with this Bill. It is way to Dangerous.

Jake Peters

Re: Bill 43

To Whom it may concern,

Compelled speech has no place in a free society. I do not agree with Bill 43.

Kathy Bueckert

Re: Bill 43

We are not in favor of taking away free speech and forcing someone else's ideologies on society!

Abe Neufeld

Re: Bill 43

I'm writing to protest against bill 43, which is not actually about protecting people from discrimination or "protecting all Manitobans"; rather, it's about protecting only one particular group of people. It's about compelling speech, forcing everyone to participate in an ideology they may not share, under threat of legal sanction. No one in a free society should ever be forced to say what they do not believe.

Judy Penner

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with this bill.

Judith Loszchuk

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill-43

Bruce Wooley

Re: Bill 43

I do not agree with Bill 43 as it greatly impacts my rights and freedoms and opens a pathway for greater reduction of my rights and freedoms

Shauna Peters

Re: Bill 43

I respectfully but strongly write to express my significant disagreement with the proposed changes to the the Manitoba human rights code that are contained in Bill 43.

L. Grant Morrison

Re: Bill 43

I object to what this bill is proposing.

Laura Hatfield

Re: Bill 43

I am against bill 43

Caleb Martens

Re: Bill 43

I am opposed to Bill 43.

Cliff Wiebe

Re: Bill 43

To whom this bill concerns,

I am not for this bill at all. It is forced speech, an effort to control rather than allow acceptance and understanding. It is a violation of The Charter of Freedom and Rights.

Every single day people make mistakes in their communication with others. The majority of these errors are innocent and not a purposeful act of hatred.

Yet you the NDP, are trying to enforce a bill which will cause more division and less understanding.

These types of bills cause division, increase confusion, and makes for an attack against family and societal norms. How can inclusivity and positive conversation even begin to happen when these types of bills immediately perpetuate division, offense, hurt and anger, to both sides of the conversation?

Please stand up for the freedoms which our charter of rights was put in place for. Everyone has a say, not just one side. Whether you have the majority or not, please think about the slippery slope you are embarking on when passing such a precarious bill.

As a retired nurse I worked for many years with people who made choices I did not agree with. I did not preach to them, or make them see my view. I accepted them where they were at. We got along well, did not matter culture, religion, gender.

We must encourage conversation not shut it down. If I knew I could slip up a pronoun in a hospital setting and then be taken to court, I really do not think I could continue nursing. Please reconsider this bill and try to believe in the greater good of humans.

Cindy Schulz

Re: Bill 43

Hello, thanks for listening to my comments on this bill. I am a simple person that feels "all" persons should be heard, considered, valued, and engaged with. That being said, when I engage with a person, my only concern is, who they are, how are they doing, and how they are feeling. I ask this to empathize and encourage them along in their journey of life. Now, if I have to worry that I must correctly use their required "pronoun", that is worrisome to me. The person is a human created by "God", and that is all I care about! So if this doesn't make sense, I only care about the person....Simple...love rules!

Thanks for listening,

Reynold Schulz

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Davey Bonser and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

We are in the middle of a human rights crisis. With the United States of America being added to human rights watch lists, it's now more important than ever that Canada stand up for human rights. The rest of Canada, aside from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have already included gender expression and gender identity in their Human Rights Codes. Manitoba must do its part to support human rights and reify the importance of gender expression in our Code.

I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Davey Bonser

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Teresa Hildebrand and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Teresa Hildebrand

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Amanda and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Amanda Livingstone

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Danielle Hart and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Danielle Hart

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

I am writing to say I oppose the amendment to bill 43, on the Human Rights Code.

Whereas in Canada we already have federal laws against violence-inciting speech, laws enforceable in Manitoba, we do not need further provincial laws to enforce speech about how to address others.

Most Manitobans seek to respect others and want respect shown to them. We do not seek to disrespect others nor make them feel awkward; we seek to be kind.

Respect is not something that can be legislated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Irma Syganiec

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Kimbal and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

We are in the middle of a human rights crisis. With the United States of America being added to human rights watch lists, it's now more important than ever that Canada stand up for human rights. The rest of Canada, aside from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have already included gender expression and gender identity in their Human Rights Codes. Manitoba must do its part to support human rights and affirm the importance of gender expression in our Code.

I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to

protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Kimbal Hyszka

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Colleen and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Colleen Rogers

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Lindsey Childs and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Childs

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Dan and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

We are in the middle of a human rights crisis. With the United States of America being added to human rights watch lists, it's now more important than ever that Canada stand up for human rights. The rest of Canada, aside from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have already included gender expression and gender identity in their Human Rights Codes. Manitoba must do its part to support human rights and affirm the importance of gender expression in our Code.

I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to

protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Dan Saul

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Liz Lylyk and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

We are in the middle of a human rights crisis. With the United States of America being added to human rights watch lists, it's now more important than ever that Canada stand up for human rights. The rest of Canada, aside from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have already included gender expression and gender identity in their Human Rights Codes. Manitoba must do its part to support human rights and affirm the importance of gender expression in our Code.

I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Liz Lylyk

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Amber and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Amber Vandenberg

Re: Bill 43

All Manitobans' beliefs and choices matter. Bill 43's amendment to include gender expression will require the larger percentage of our public to accommodate a very small percentage via controlled speech. Rather than the goal of inclusion, this will result in division.

The public is still unclear about what constitutes a misdemeanor under this amendment.

Democratic society = freedom of speech.

Mutual respect is earned, not legislated.

I do not support the amendment as proposed.

Thank you to the Justice Committee for respectfully listening to public presentations.

Rosanne Loewen

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Brett Kozak and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Brett Kozak

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Michael Lesperance and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to

protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Michael Lesperance

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Alexis Lam

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Elaine Burland and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Elaine Burland

Re: Bill 43

I do not support Bill 43 because it goes against our freedom of speech, conscience and religion.

Raquel Driedger

Re: Bill 43

Hello honourable committee members. I write this because I am concerned about Bill 43. I am opposed to it and am writing to ask you not to pass this bill.

I believe that this bill will undermine our right to freedom of speech and other freedoms that should be enjoyed by all Manitobans. I also believe that this bill is contrary to Biblical principles and the biological facts that there are only two genders. Concerning inclusivity, I believe that the spread of gender ideologies in our society has led to confusion in the minds of many people. Under the current human rights code there is protection and freedom of speech for all those who choose to identify differently. They have already been living under that legislation as all Manitobans have. The issue as I understand it is protecting against discrimination for gender identity and expression. People have a free will and can choose to be who they want we are leaving them be. Personally, gender identity and expression that is not biologically male or female goes against my belief. However, with this law, my freedom to speak the way I believe even if unintentionally "misgendering" someone could cause problems.

I am concerned by the way this NDP government is changing Manitoba's laws. I know you have received many submissions and heard many presenters. Please take myself and others' beliefs seriously and do not continue going forward with this law.

Eliana Dueck

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Keith and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Keith Johnson

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Feng, and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Feng Xu

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Crystal Johnson and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to

protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Crystal Johnson

Re: Bill 43

Gender expression should be protected as much as possible. Not just because trans and non-binary people need protection, which they do. But because if they're not protected, then none of us are protected. If they don't have a right to dress and act in a way that feels natural to them, then neither do you and neither do your family and friends. Protecting a trans woman's right to carry herself respectfully and honestly protects the rights of cisgender women to do the same. Allowing trans-men to be themselves allows cisgender men to be themselves.

This is Canada, and in Canada we should all be able to be our honest and authentic selves. Nobody should ever be pressured to lie about who they are.

David Puranen

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Leah McDonnell and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Leah McDonnell

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Matthew Schiller and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Matthew Schiller

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

My name is Paul and I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Sincerely,

Paul Navidad

Re: Bill 43

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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I thank the Standing Committee on Justice for their consideration and for committing themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans by passing Bill 43 to the next stage of the process.

Darren Pawella

Re: Bill 43

Dear Members of the Standing Committee,

Since the inception of Western society, the protection, maintenance, and preservation of human rights have been paramount. As members of the Manitoba Legislature, it is your duty to protect all Manitobans and safeguard their rights. Today, these rights face a grave threat. Although the proposed change to the Human Rights Code might seem minor perhaps just a single word its effects could be far-reaching. As a Manitoban, I am expressing my strongly held belief that this bill poses a significant threat to my human rights and those of all residents of our wonderful province.

I will present the case against this bill in three parts. First, I will outline the logical case, arguing why this bill is based on flawed reasoning. Second, I will address the moral grounds, explaining why supporting or passing such legislation is ethically questionable. Third, I will discuss the potentially significant negative implications this bill could have for all Manitobans. Through these arguments, I intend to make a clear case for why this legislation should be rejected.

Let us begin with the logical argument against Bill 43. There is a concept known as cognitive dissonance, which describes the mental discomfort experienced when holding conflicting beliefs or values. This bill appears to reflect such inconsistency on the part of its proponents. They seek to control the language others use, seemingly based on personal preference, yet the bill does not adequately consider that individuals may not always disclose preferred pronouns or may choose to withhold certain language. This approach is logically inconsistent because it appears to champion one form of expression (an individual's identity) while simultaneously suppressing another (an individual's speech, even if unintentional). True freedom of speech implies consistency; either speech is free, or it is not. Attempting to censor specific speech based on subjective grounds, while allowing other speech, creates a massive logical contradiction.

Secondly, let us consider the moral case against Bill 43. A fundamental aspect of reality, supported by biology, is the existence of two sexes, male and female. This is presented here as a simple truth. Truth, by its nature, is objective; it does not change based on shifting opinions or feelings. Attempting to reshape truth according to personal preferences undermines its objective nature, potentially allowing any assertion, however unfounded, to be claimed as truth. In this

instance, it appears a segment of the population wishes to enforce their perspective on gender expression upon all Manitobans. This action seems to contradict the foundational principles of our society by eroding the shared understanding of truth upon which it rests. From this perspective, such a move is morally concerning.

Having examined the logical and moral arguments, we now turn to the negative consequences of Bill 43 for all Manitobans. The Manitoba Human Rights Code is a foundational document outlining the rights and responsibilities of persons within our province. This bill seeks to amend this document, potentially without full consideration of its impact on every citizen. A concerning implication is that an individual could potentially face proceedings under the Human Rights Code requiring legal representation and associated costs simply for using language that offends another person, perhaps unintentionally or due to lack of prior knowledge about preferred forms of address.

If causing offense through words becomes grounds for prosecution under the Human Rights Code, where does this logically end? By this standard, should we also consider legislation to prohibit swearing, which offends many Manitobans, including those of Christian faith? If certain offensive terms warrant legal action, consistency demands that all subjectively offensive speech be treated similarly. If the Legislature is unwilling to ban all offensive language, how can it justify prosecuting the specific instance addressed in this bill? To remain logically and morally consistent, the law must apply equitably. Prosecuting one group for perceived offenses while ignoring others is unjust and corrupt.

Your goal as members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly should be to stand on the right side of history, representing your constituents and protecting all Manitobans. Your duty transcends party lines and personal opinions; it is about upholding what is right. As I have argued from logical, moral, and consequential standpoints, Bill 43 will have significant negative effects and is fundamentally flawed.

If you wish to leave a legacy of standing for truth, upholding Manitobans fundamental freedoms, and doing what is right, I urge you to oppose this bill. Ultimately, the future of our province lies not in the hands of political parties, nor those who seek position, but in the hands of individuals committed to doing

what is right, regardless of the difficulty. If you do not uphold these principles, who will?

I appreciate your consideration, and your time.

Sincerely,

Logan Wall

Re: Bill 43

Thank you for taking the time to review my submission in support of Bill 43. I was present to speak in-person last week but am unable to attend today to speak in-person.

We all know, well some of us know, without a shadow of a doubt, that what the experts in the fields of medicine & adult & child mental health, tell us about providing safe(r) and affirming spaces, by assisting gender-expansive individuals to live, identify, And express themselves in ways that affirm them, is true. What they tell us is that by doing this, the lives of trans and gender-expansive individuals are made safer & healthier. Exercising this truth, by protecting gender expression as a human right, is the right, moral, & necessary thing to do. Everyone deserves the right to be protected from discrimination not only based on how they identify, but also on how they chose to express that identity. We know that this is the right & necessary thing to do because, again as the vast majority of experts assert, providing this extra layer of safety for folks, directly impacts mental health outcomes for the better. We live in a country where it has become the norm to talk about the importance of mental health. We encourage people to seek support, and to take care of themselves. We have the Bell Let's talk day, where we see celebrities and politicians echoing the importance of mental health. We often talk a big game in this country, and in this province, about how much we care about the mental health and well being of others. But when it comes down to making the actual changes, that will have a direct impact on the wellbeing and mental health of many, we falter. In short, we know, without a shadow of a doubt, that this type of protection will help save lives. To deny this extra layer of support and safety is to admit to being in direct opposition to that, to explicitly say, your safety, your life does not matter. We cannot allow those with no credible knowledge of the lived experiences of gender-expansive individuals to decide

on the human rights of others. To do so would be irresponsible, misguided, and simply wrong.

We know, well some of us do, that the notions of gender & gender expression have changed over the centuries and will continue to do so. Can you imagine me standing here, not so long ago, arguing that those in the room who identity as female should not be allowed to wear pants? To me, it is as simple and as straightforward as that. Can you fathom how that would affect my life, or anyone's life in the least? But here we are today debating over something of a similar vein, with real-life consequences for present day people, and generations to come. There are so many studies we could site, so many big-name academics, professionals, and big words we can use to back up why this amendment should pass, but to put it plainly, and simply, what does it matter to you? What actual affect does it have on your life if someone identifies or expresses themselves in a way that you don't get? Because that is what it really comes down to: the unwillingness to learn and understand, prioritising disinformation and fear, with no room for critical thought.

We have heard arguments from individuals against this amendment, siting religious freedom, arguing that one should not be forced to do something that goes against one's faith. To put it plainly to those folks, your faith is not my faith. Your interpretation of what is written in the bible, which as a side, was written, rewritten, translated, and edited, to suit those in power, many times over, should not be used as a guide on how to treat thy neighbour. Just as today, most people know it is unjust to support slavery, or many of the other sins written in the bible (the Bible also contains prohibitions against eating shell fish; there are also the cultural practices of stoning to death those who commit adultery, stoning to death recalcitrant children, women not being allowed to talk in the Church, women not being allowed to teach men, women always keeping their heads covered in church, not wearing mixed fibers in one's clothes, etc. The sin of Sodom (Genesis 19) has nothing to do with homosexuality. It deals with gang rape. Whenever Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned in the Bible, homosexuality is never mentioned as its sin. Its sins are primarily inhospitality and not taking care of the poor. - Jerry Maniker resource: Some Talking Points on Christianity and Homosexuality - GayChurch.org. Another good resource on Why being Transgender is not a sin: Why being transgender is not a sin Baptist News Global), the same logic should apply to human

rights regarding Trans and gender-expansive folks. Hiding behind the bible as the one-and-only truth, is not only ignorant, it is irresponsible. Critical thinking and logic, coupled with empathy and compassion must guide one's morals, and participation in modern society.

My ancestors believed in uplifting and celebrating Two-Spirit individuals for the gifts they possessed, just as many other cultures around the world have affirmed and celebrated varying gender identities and expressions prior to colonialism. In the Canadian context, denying human rights based on one's gender expression (often, but not always tied to gender identity) is in direct opposition of the spirit of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. From opposing presenters, we have heard fearmongering, cherry picked research and statistics, and conspiracy theories thrown around as if they were facts (ie. the supposed cover-up of sexual assaults in women's washrooms at the hands of Trans folks). We have heard accusations of Trans folks denying life saving medical care, based on an imaginary scenario of denying assumed internal organs. We have heard from folks, with tears in their eyes, express the fear their children experience at the notion of sharing a washroom/changeroom with Trans folks.

As a parent, I can relate to wanting to keep our children safe. I can also wholeheartedly say that I have never once felt unsafe sharing a space of any kind with a trans person, nor do my kids fear using the same washroom as a Trans person. The reason for this, is because I would never instill this fear into them, because the dangers are unfounded, often outright fabricated, and false. The real danger here, is scapegoating and demonizing trans women (and the whole trans and gender-expansive community), which in turn continues to put their safety at risk. Parental fear based in reality, is having a gender-expansive child/youth use the restroom of their choice facing harassment, physical harm, or worse, based on their gender expression. Parental fear based, in reality, looks like sending a child to school fearing for their physical and mental well being because a teacher showed other kids it is ok to disrespect and bully them, because their gender identity or expression goes against their religious beliefs.

We have also heard from an opponent of this bill, question if this bill would mean that their right to refuse the service of a trans Dr. would be taken away, and from another stating their refusal to use gender neutral washrooms. I can't help but point out the clear connections to human rights issues of the past (which

are clearly still injustices faced by some today). The parallels with these statements, to the human rights injustices common in the not-so-distant past, from refusing service from non-white professionals to refusing to share spaces and amenities with non-white individuals, are glaring.

From our present-day position, most folks can see which side of history they would choose to be on, yet still others use the same arguments, only today, with Trans folks taking the place of those being othered. From my standpoint these sentiments, arguments, and fears are one in the same, based in bigotry and fear. No, I am not afraid of the consequences one might face should this bill be introduced, as one MLA posed to opponents of the bill, over and over again. I have faith that, although not perfect, and yes, perhaps with some backlog issues, the Human Rights Commission is well-suited to flush out baseless and frivolous claims, as they do on a regular basis.

For those who don't know the points I've spoken to be true, or who refuse to look at, critically examine, or accept these points as facts, even without the backing of a plethora of expert opinion & support, the only opinions we really need to listen to, are those of the people this bill is aiming to protect. That's good enough for me, and that should be good enough for everyone in this room. I urge you to move forward with Bill 43. Thank you, merci, maarsii.

Chrystal Neault-Lount

Re: Bill 43

The Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) is Manitoba's central labour body, made up of over 30 unions representing the interests of more than 130,000 unionized workers from every sector and every region of the province in the public and private sectors, as well as the building trades.

We support this legislation as it will protect Manitoban workers from discrimination based on gender expression. Including gender expression as a protected characteristic under the Manitoba Human Rights Code builds on the work of the previous NDP government in protecting gender identity in the Code in 2012.

Manitoba's Human Rights Code is a powerful tool that helps protect Manitobans against discrimination and the Human Rights Commission does an excellent job of promoting human rights principles and adjudicating situations where Manitobans have

experienced discrimination. Workers often rely on the Human Rights Code and Commission to ensure their rights are protected in their workplaces.

It is already illegal to discriminate against people based on their gender identity and sexual orientation. By adding gender expression, we are just adding a protection based on how people present themselves, like clothing, hairstyle, voice and behaviour. That means people can't discriminate with respect to any service, accommodation, facility, good, right, licence, benefit program or privilege available to the public because you don't like how someone presents themselves. This seems like a pretty fair and basic principle, one that all people should respect and enjoy.

The human rights code is clear already under section 9 sub section (5) that this isn't about condoning or condemning any beliefs, values or lifestyles. It is about requiring people to treat one another with respect and protecting their rights.

This bill is especially important given the current attempts by far-right governments, both in Canada and in the United States, to discriminate against people based on their gender identity and gender expression. The Trump administration has openly discriminated against trans people since its first day in office, passing draconian orders to ban them from serving in government, the military, athletics and other areas.

Here in Canada, we have seen right wing governments in New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Alberta go after students for their preferred pronouns, gender expression, and even try to restrict students to changing rooms based on their assigned sex at birth. The continued obsession and attacks on trans people, especially young people, by the right wing in this country makes life less safe for trans people. Right wing political parties continue to attack trans and gender-nonconforming people in election campaigns, a disgusting trend aimed at some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Unfortunately, Manitoba has not been immune from this. In the last provincial election campaign, the PC Party of Manitoba ran a vile dog whistle campaign aimed at young people who do not conform to that party's outdated view of gender norms. The current PC leader was the poster boy for that campaign, raising serious concerns about his political priorities.

Given these rising threats to trans and gender-nonconforming people, we are glad to see the Government of Manitoba taking steps to protect their

human rights here in our province. This bill will help in building a fairer and more equitable province.

Kevin Rebeck
Manitoba Federation of Labour

Re: Bill 43

Hello,

I'm writing in support of the amendment to include the protection of gender expression in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Gender expression is something that all people engage in. It is not something that is exclusive to transgender and gender diverse people. Decisions that people make about how to cut their hair, what clothes to wear, and what professions/hobbies they have are all parts of gender expression. All Manitobans (including transgender and gender diverse Manitobans) should be protected from discrimination and prejudice on the basis of their gender expression.

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Sincerely,
Samantha Stevens

Re: Bill 43

Thanks for the opportunity to speak to this important bill. As a trans and non-binary person, I support the amendment to add gender expression to the human rights code as a protected category. We know from the history of anti queer and anti trans persecution that oppression of our communities often hinges on how we look and how we are interpreted as violating gender norms. While this amendment is particularly important for trans and Two Spirit people, it is a protection for all LGBTQ+ people and indeed for cisgender people as well. With the rise of anti-trans persecution in public places, we see transgender and

cisgender people alike being targeted for harassment and removal in bathrooms and other single-gender spaces, based on someone's perception of their gender expression. This amendment protects everyone, and is a significant step forward in legal protection.

I also want to note that lived rights are different from rights on paper. In order to live our rights as trans people, we need more doctors willing and able to treat us. We need access to gender-affirming surgery within Manitoba where our support networks can care for us. We need guarantees of housing and increased disability supports. Expanding the social safety net helps everyone, and provides a bedrock of security for our communities who are less likely to have family and financial support. This amendment is a good step, but doesn't touch lived rights for our community outside of protection from specific kinds of discrimination in specific provable circumstances. We need more in order to thrive.

I would also like to suggest that that process of allowing out of town speakers to present ahead of people from Winnipeg is unhelpful in creating opportunities for learning and engagement with affected communities. Last Thursday, Two Spirit and trans people were forced to listen to vitriol and disinformation about us. Meanwhile, many of those who came from outside Winnipeg to attack us were not obligated to hear even a single Two Spirit or trans person speak before they left to return to their echo chambers. While I appreciate the effort to allow people to get home safely, I would suggest this committee ensure that at least a few people with lived experience be allowed to speak up front before opening the floor to anyone with an opinion. Perhaps the opportunity to hear from us would change some hearts and minds, and allow for a more productive conversation. At the very least we would open with facts and relevant experiences that some in the room on Thursday had clearly never encountered.

Thank you for your time.

Lex van Dyck

Re: Bill 43

Dear Standing Committee on Justice,

I write in full support of amending Bill 43 The Human Rights Code Amendment Act.

My name is Carey Richards. I'm queer and nonbinary and use they/them pronouns. I'm grateful for the opportunity to advocate in full support of this life

saving amendment to the Human Rights Code to include gender expression. I truly believe its detrimental to the overall health and wellbeing of Manitobans. On June 19, 2017, the Governor General signed Bill C-16 into law, amending the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code. The amendments established the legal authority needed to counter discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights of individuals, including freedom of expression, the right to equality, and protection from deprivation of life, liberty, or security.

Frankly It's time for Manitoba to catch up and demonstrate the care and protection for all Manitobans.

I agree fully that "Everyone should be able to have the same opportunities and benefits, and be treated with equal dignity and respect period/full stop. Including people whose gender identity or expression is, or is seen to be, different from their sex assigned at birth".

As someone who has identified as non binary for 8 years (a self proclaimed in betweeny before I discovered this language) I have never felt as scared and worried for the safety and rights being protected for myself, those I love, and our beautiful community, as I do at this current point and time.

As someone who has had to utilize my freedom of expression (through clothing, hair style etc) to validate my identity as a nonbinary human from a young age, I know how valuable and important it's been to me, to be able to align and affirm my identity, with how I express myself externally or how the world sees me.

The freedom of expression is utilized by everybody (regardless of gender identity), and is one of the many ways that we all explore our sense of self, our sense of belonging and our identity. I think back to my high school days and how common of an experience it was for my peers and I to explore who we wanted to be, or what fit for us through our clothing, hair styles and behaviour etc.

Gender expression refers to how people convey their gender to others through behavior and appearance. It encompasses physical appearance, clothing, hairstyles, behavior, movement, mannerisms, and pronouns.

Gender Dysphoria is the distress a person experiences due to a mismatch between their gender identity, their

personal sense of their own gender and their sex assigned at birth.

As someone who has experienced Gender Dysphoria as a result of being born Assigned Female at Birth, and into a body that doesn't fit and match with my Non-binary identity, being able to express my true self (identity) through how I dress, how I style my hair, what pronouns I use etc have been some of the only avenues I've had to allow myself to be fully "seen", accepted and respected. They've been some of the only avenues I've had to affirm and validate my existence, show up for myself and practice self love.

The need to feel seen is universal, and is a crucial part of being human. Feeling seen validates our existence, nurtures emotional intimacy, and strengthens bonds in ways few other experiences can. At its core, the feeling of being seen is tied to our psychological need for connection and validation.

Feeling unseen or ignored can significantly impact mental and emotional well-being, leading to feelings of isolation, negative self perception, emotional distress, low self-esteem, lack of self worth, anxiety, and depression and the list goes on. It can also affect social interactions and relationships, making it harder to connect with others. It also greatly impacts our physical wellbeing, with social isolation and loneliness being linked to chronic diseases like high blood pressure, heart disease and a weakened immune system.

I am misgendered daily. I have family members who invalidate my existence. I have experienced hatred and violence when simply trying to use the bathroom. The impacts the experiences I've had of not being seen, validated, respected and accepted for who I am (identity) have led to low self esteem, lack of self worth, I suffer from anxiety and depression, and my relationships have been impacted negatively, as I haven't always felt worthy of love and connection.

Transgender, non binary, and gender non conforming folks routinely experience discrimination, harassment and even violence because their gender identity or expression is different from those typically associated with their sex assigned at birth.

Including this amendment in the Human Rights Code will aid in creating a sense of increased safety. It can support more inclusive spaces, or a more inclusive Manitoba, by protecting all people, including children and youth from experiencing harm, distress, discrimination and bullying.

6 weeks ago I had the ability to receive Gender affirming care, in the form of having Top Surgery, I recognize that not everyone has access to these opportunities and that I am super privileged to be able to have accessed this care. Having this surgery has been transformative for me. Now my body more so fits and matches my gender identity. For the first time in my life I feel comfortable to allow myself to 'be seen' fully. For the first time in my life I feel like I can fully love myself. Feeling seen by others can be an incredibly empowering experience. The recognition of various parts of our being helps us feel connected to others, less isolated, and more understood.

Choosing to have surgery is the biggest gift of self love I will ever give myself in this lifetime. I can now live more in alignment with who I am, and I now can look in the mirror and actually stare at myself for extended periods of time, with my shoulders back, and head held high. However by choosing this surgery, I am at greater risk of harm, violence, and being othered.

Housing impact

A few years ago I had the pleasure of working as the Director of Housing at the West Central Women's Resource Centre. I was shocked to learn how disproportionate it is in terms of 2SLGBTQIA+ unsheltered or precariously housed people.

Could this amendment provide more opportunities to address the root of homelessness crisis? (Without this bill being passed, it sure isn't helping)

Will this protection help provide employment opportunities, and in some way minimally impact the poverty rate? (Without this bill being passed, it sure isn't helping)

Mental Health

The lack of basic human decency, lack of dignity, lack of respect that is demonstrated in opposition of this bill is damaging, harmful and can negatively impact our mental health.

Lack of ability to live authentically, to live and express freely, to not be able to live in alignment of oneself.... The isolation, inability to feel a sense of belonging, feeling invisible, living constantly in fear, lack of safety.... This is all impacting and contributing to our mental health crisis.

If you want a solution, I'd be willing to put all my money (which isn't much because I'm nonprofit leader) on the table that this bill being passed is a step

in the right direction and Will directly impact the need or frequency in which people will need to access mental health resources.

Do you know how much bravery and courage it takes for each and every person in this room to be here or to submit a letter in support? Or if I'm being real, how scary it is to be here?

Thank you to each person who came up to speak, who sent letters, who shared their stories so courageously to support the passing of this bill. One of the many things I love about this community, is that we show up, and that is clearly evident in the volume of people in support of this life saving amendment to Bill 43.

Another thing I Love about Community is our diversity, and Manitoba's Multiculturalism Act shares that value "The diversity of Manitobans is a fundamental characteristic of our society and benefits all Manitobans".

Sincerely,

Carey Richards

Re: Bill 43

Dear members of the Standing Committee of Justice,

I would like to sincerely thank the Committee for the opportunity to submit my full support for Bill 43 – The Human Rights Code Amendment Act, which proposes to explicitly include gender expression as a protected ground under the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

This amendment is a vital and long-overdue measure that brings Manitoba's legislation into alignment with both legal realities across Canada and the lived experiences of all Manitobans. It also reflects a simple but powerful truth: every person, regardless of their gender identity, expresses their gender through their appearance, behavior, clothing, speech, and mannerisms. These expressions are often shaped by deeply personal, cultural, and social values, and they are a fundamental part of who we are.

While protections for gender identity already exist in the Code, the inclusion of gender expression ensures broader and more precise coverage. This distinction is critical. Courts and human rights bodies across Canada have recognized that gender identity and gender expression are distinct yet interrelated concepts. For example, a 2019 decision by the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal emphasized that discrimination on the basis of gender expression can

occur independently of a person's gender identity – affecting not only transgender individuals, but also cisgender people whose presentation doesn't conform to stereotypical norms (e.g., men with long hair or women with deep voices).

Bill 43 helps clarify and codify those protections, closing potential gaps and making human rights law more effective, transparent, and inclusive.

Evidence Supporting the Inclusion of Gender Expression

Consistency with Other Jurisdictions:

Several other Canadian provinces and territories – including British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island – have already added both gender identity and gender expression to their human rights codes. At the federal level, Bill C-16 (passed in 2017) amended the Canadian Human Rights Act to add these same protections. Manitoba is currently lagging behind, and Bill 43 would help the province catch up to this evolving national standard.

Prevalence of Discrimination:

Numerous studies document the real and persistent discrimination faced by people based on gender expression. According to Egale Canada, over 70% of transgender and gender-diverse individuals report having experienced discrimination in public spaces, and many of these instances are specifically due to how they look or behave – not just how they identify. Even cisgender people can face harassment or barriers when they do not conform to societal expectations of masculinity or femininity. This reality underscores that gender expression affects us all, not only those who identify as transgender, Two-Spirit, or gender non-conforming.

Legal Clarity and Access to Justice:

Without explicit reference to gender expression in the Human Rights Code, individuals who face discrimination may experience uncertainty about whether they are protected under the law. This can lead to fewer complaints being filed and reduce access to justice for those most in need of protection. Codifying these protections in Bill 43 sends a clear and affirming message that Manitoba is committed to upholding the dignity and safety of every resident, regardless of how they express their gender.

Public Support and Social Impact:

Public attitudes in Canada have increasingly supported broader LGBTQ2S+ rights and protections. Polling by Research Co. (2021) found that over 70% of Canadians agree that transgender and non-binary people should be protected from discrimination. Laws that reflect these values help to foster a culture of respect, inclusion, and belonging – especially important in schools, workplaces, and healthcare settings.

In summary, Bill 43 is not only a necessary update to the Human Rights Code – it is a proactive, inclusive, and evidence-based reform that will help ensure the dignity and equal treatment of all Manitobans, no matter how they express their gender.

I strongly urge the Committee to move forward with this amendment and to reaffirm Manitoba's leadership in human rights and equality.

Respectfully submitted,

Joey Moore

Re: Bill 43

Good Afternoon:

I am Speaking Out Against Bill 43: I am aware that Manitoba MLAs will be voting to make mis-gendering someone who wishes to be called by an alternative gender...a human rights offense? That's right, you could be put under scrutiny by the provincial Human Rights Commission (HRC) for not calling someone they/them, ze/zer, he/him, etc.

This is forced speech and in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is meant to create dueling rights and will inevitably underpin further ideological lawfare. Punishment could include fines or whatever else the HRC decides.

We all have a given birth name which becomes our name for legal use such as a drivers licence, a birth certificate, a marriage or divorce licence, a passport . This is my my legal name : Judith Ellen Phinney on my birth certificate. I may have other names legally added to it as I may be married or divorced. I have never been forced to use Ms or Miss as part of my legal name. And I do not use any of them. If used they are a name of "choice" and not legal reasons.

Life nowadays is complicated enough without throwing into the pile a choice of pronouns. I have personally witnessed people deciding that they want to be a different gender and then months later

changing their minds. Some even changing a few times as their circumstances in their lives change. There are only 2 genders in the world. Male & female: you are one or the other: choose one ! And let's get on with living. I really do not care what you call yourself as that is entirely up to the individual. But when someone is going to have the legal resources to bring me under scrutiny by anyone else that is an entirely different story.!

The courts will become filled with cases over Suzie not being called Billy: Or Jake not being called Mary: and so on. And then next month changing their names. Names or pronouns are not like a pair of Pajamas that we change every night before bed.

I wish that I could be at this meeting. I just had a total knee replacement on April 10/25 and I am 75. Not moving very well to say the least ! :)

This agenda is not based on reality, science or immutable characteristics. It is an attack against the nuclear family and societal norms. Please make it a priority to attend and contact your MLA in advance to voice your opposition.

With Respect:

Judy Walker

Re: Bill 43

I absolutely do not agree with bill 43!

George Friesen

Re: Bill 43

I disagree what Bill 43 stands for

Mary Klassen

Re: Bill 43

Dear members of the Standing Committee on Justice,

I would like to thank you all in advance for reading this letter that I submit in unequivocal support of Bill 43 - The Human Rights Code Amendment Act.

I had originally planned to speak in person regarding Bill 43. However, due to the immense volume of speakers registered to speak on this Bill, I am submitting my comments via this letter in the interest of saving time in the legislative process. Additionally, the nature of my submission has changed significantly after hearing the misrepresentation of scientific

findings at the previous session on April 24. I feel that it is my responsibility as a scientist to put factual information on the record.

For context, I am a doctoral student at the University of Manitoba in the Department of Community Health Sciences. I completed my Bachelor of Arts at the University of Winnipeg with a double major in Rhetoric, Writing, & Communications and Psychology in 2021. I then obtained my Master's of Science degree in Community Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba in 2024 where my thesis research focused on the primary healthcare experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ Manitobans. In addition to my doctoral studies (also at the University of Manitoba), I have been involved with and led studies in data equity, health systems improvement, cancer care, and infectious disease. As a scientist and a part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community myself, it is imperative that I correct the misinformation that has been entered into this record.

A study by Hughes et al., (2022) was cited by one presenter at the April 24th Standing Committee on Justice. The presenter rightly noted that the study found that trans people were nearly twice as likely to die over the study period compared to their non-trans counterparts (Hughes et al., 2022). However, the presenter incorrectly attributed the cause of this increased mortality amongst trans individuals as being evidence that gender affirming care does not work. In the discussion section of this paper, Hughes et al., elaborate that this discrepancy has several contributing factors including the higher rates of interpersonal violence, discrimination, and other forms of enacted stigma experienced by transgender people (Hughes et al., 2022). Another important factor noted by the authors is suicide risk, which is documented as being between 10% - 44% amongst transgender people compared to 4.6% in non-transgender Americans (Hughes et al., 2022). Societal stigma and discrimination are the persistent drivers for these elevated rates of suicide among trans and gender diverse people, not gender affirming care (Hughes et al., 2022).

Gender affirming care is, in fact, the most effective way to reduce suicidality among trans and gender diverse people. 67% of transitioning people thought about suicide pre-transition and only 3% thought about it post-medical transition (Bailey et al., 2014). Further, the estimated prevalence of suicide attempts without gender affirmation surgery is approximately 32% (Bailey et al., 2014).

Another concern that has been brought up regarding gender affirming care is regret rates. One presenter at the April 24th session described the experience of one individual who regretted their gender affirming surgeries. While these experiences of regret are important to understand, it is equally important to understand that regret after gender affirming surgery is incredibly rare.

A 2021 review of studies regarding regret after gender affirming surgery found that for transfeminine people, the surgery regret rate was 1%. For transmasculine people, the surgery regret rate was even lower than 1% (Bustos et al., 2021). In contrast, total knee replacement surgery has a regret rate of 17% and total hip replacement surgery has a regret rate of 4.8% (Cassidy et al., 2023). If we are to say that the surgery regret rates of gender affirming care (less than 1%) is too high, then other quality-of-life improving surgeries such as joint replacement surgeries should be called into question as well.

Related to regret rates, the concept that trans and gender diverse identities are "new" or "trendy" was mentioned several times. Not only is there historical evidence that gender and sexual minorities have existed throughout human history, recent research provides additional information to assert that these are not new concepts. Specifically, there is no scientific support for "rapid onset gender dysphoria". In a study by Turban et al., 59.2% of participants (16,279 people) came to understand that they were trans and/or gender diverse at age 10 or younger (Turban et al., 2022). The remaining 40.8% of participants (11,218 people) came to understand their trans/gender diverse identity at age 11 or older (Turban et al., 2022). Importantly, the realization of one's trans/gender diverse identity does not necessarily mean that a person feels safe enough to disclose it to other people immediately.

Proponents of "rapid onset gender dysphoria" (RODG) insist that the cause of this phenomenon is children's desire for attention. The study by Turban et al., further nullifies the RODG hypothesis as among those who realized their trans/gender diverse identity age 10 or younger, the average time between realization of one's gender identity and sharing it with another person was 14 years (Turban et al., 2022). This means that children who realize their gender identity at a young age overwhelming still feel that way about their gender 14 years later. When children come to know their trans and gender diverse identity, they should be affirmed and supported just as you would when your child tells you they want to be a

doctor when they grow up. You support their goals, offer affirming parenting, and provide them with opportunities to learn and explore.

Gender is no different.

Finally, on the topic of regret rates, a 2022 publication by Park et al., outlined the long-term outcomes after gender affirming care for patients born between 1970 to 1990, which is up to a 40-year follow-up. The authors clearly state in their conclusion that: "Gender-affirming surgery is a durable treatment that improves overall patient well-being. High patient satisfaction, improved dysphoria, and reduced mental health comorbidities persist decades after GAS [gender-affirming surgery] without any reported patient regret" (Park et al., 2022).

All citations for this letter have been included on the final page in the form of a reference list. I highly recommend that you take the time to read the cited studies in full in the event that my letter has not been sufficient to persuade you.

Now that the record has been corrected with factual scientific information, I would like to take a brief few paragraphs to speak to the matter at hand: the inclusion of gender expression in the Human Rights Code of Manitoba. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines gender expression as "the physical and behavioral manifestations of one's gender identity".

Gender expression is not reserved for just trans and gender diverse people. Everyone (including those who are presently reading this letter) are expressing a gender. Whether that gender is man, woman, non-binary, or Two Spirit is irrelevant. Gender is still being expressed.

To categorize the inclusion of gender expression as benefiting only the trans and gender diverse community is simply untrue. All Manitobans will benefit from the inclusion of gender expression under the Human Rights Code.

The inclusion of gender expression is not a radical concept, nor is it one that will add undue burden to the Human Rights Commission. This is made evident by the fact that gender expression was added to the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) in 2017 and there is a notable lack of increased human rights violation complaints at the federal level following this amendment. This is similarly true of all other Provinces with the exception of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, where this protection is currently not in place. Essentially, the concern of unwarranted human rights complaints is a non-issue based on all available evidence.

Manitoba must continue to be a strong-hold of human rights. To do so, we must continue to strive towards improving our human rights protections. A logical next step towards this goal is to follow the lead of the majority of Canada by adding gender expression to our Human Rights Code. There is no evidence to suggest that any harm will come from this. On the contrary, all evidence points towards the conclusion that this will benefit all Manitobans.

I implore the Standing Committee on Justice to commit themselves to protecting the human rights of all Manitobans and to pass Bill 43 to the next stage of the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Mikayla Hunter

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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