



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 2025

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.***The Speaker:** Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 229—The Christian Heritage Month Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months
Act Amended)****The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler.**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I'm just waiting for the—**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler has the floor.**Mrs. Hiebert:** I move, seconded by the member from Fort Whyte, that Bill 229, The Christian Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), now be read a first time.*Motion presented.***Mrs. Hiebert:** It's my privilege to rise today to introduce Bill 229, recognizing the month of December as Christian heritage month. Christians of all cultural backgrounds and all denominations have played and continue to play a vital role in shaping our province and our nation.

Through religious gatherings of worship, establishing of charities, schools, hospitals and caring for the less fortunate, Christians have played and continue to play a vital role in Manitoba. This bill recognizes the role of their contributions.

Thank you.

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

The motion is accordingly carried.

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: I have a document to table. In accordance with section 49(2) of The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act, I'm tabling a report by the Ethics Commissioner regarding the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu) and member of the Legislative Assembly for The Maples, dated December 4, 2025.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**National Day of Remembrance and Action on
Violence Against Women****Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** December 6 marks the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

I want to begin by thanking the honourable Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity (MLA Fontaine) and her entire department for hosting a beautiful and moving sunrise ceremony this morning in the Legislative Rotunda to honour the lives impacted and lost due to gender-based violence.

December 6 is a solid day in Canada's history. On this date in 1989, 14 women studying engineering at École polytechnique in Montreal were murdered simply because they were women pursuing education in a male-dominated field.

The shooter claimed he was fighting feminism. This act of terror was rooted in misogyny and hatred, and it changed our country forever.

We remember these women because their lives were stolen from them for being women daring to learn, daring to dream, daring to exist.

On this day, it's important we say their names: Geneviève Bergeron, aged 25, civil engineering; Hélène Colgan, aged 23, mechanical engineering; Nathalie Croteau, mechanical engineering—she was 23 as well; Barbara Daigneault, aged 22, mechanical engineering; Anne-Marie Edward, aged 21, chemical engineering; Maud Haviernick, aged 29, materials engineering; Maryse Laganière, aged 25—she was a budget clerk in the finance department; Maryse Leclair, aged 23—she was also in mechanical engineering; Anne-Marie Lemay, aged 22, mechanical engineering; Sonia Pelletier, 28, mechanical engineering; Michèle Richard, 21, materials engineering; Annie St-Arneault, 23, mechanical engineering; Annie Turcotte, 21, materials engineering; and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, 31, nursing student.

Education should never be a place of fear; it must be a place of safety, inclusion and equality.

As Minister of Advanced Education and Training, I know education is one of the most powerful tools we

have to create change in the world around us. Our colleges, universities and training institutions are where ideas are shaped, where future leaders are prepared and where respect, equality and equity must be foundational values.

But we know that gender-based violence continues to affect lives across Canada and right here in Manitoba. We have seen families from all parts of the province torn apart by violence and women and children forced to flee their homes to escape harm. Some have even been killed. These tragedies remind us that gender-based violence is not a distant issue; it is happening all around us.

And we have seen a marked rise of online hate and both covert and overt misogyny over the past number of years.

In the US, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned; a hate-fuelled stabbing attack at University of Waterloo targeted women in a gender studies class; and right here in our own Legislature, two powerful Indigenous women leaders were targeted with violence online and in their community offices.

This violent behaviour at the hands of men must stop.

Across Manitoba, our post-secondary institutions continue to work towards greater safety on campus by strengthening policies, expanding supports and fostering cultures of respect and accountability. These efforts are about ensuring that students, instructors and staff members of all genders feel safe and supported.

Education is also the key to prevention. When we teach respect and equality in classrooms, we help prevent violence before it starts. When we create safe and inclusive learning environments, we send a clear message: violence and hate have no place here.

Tomorrow, as we pause to remember the 14 women whose lives were taken at École polytechnique, we also reflect on the women and gender-diverse folks lost this year in Manitoba and across Canada who were killed because of gender-based violence.

We honour their memory by continuing to make education a place of safety and recommitting ourselves to action through prevention, programming and partnerships that make a difference. We honour their memory by encouraging women and gender-diverse folks around us to continue to take space. We honour their memory by holding people accountable for words and actions that are rooted in misogyny.

Let us work together to build communities on campuses and beyond where every person feels safe, valued and free from violence, including gender-based violence.

This is our collective responsibility. Education is the path forward and together we can create change.

Honourable Speaker, I ask all members of this Chamber for a moment of silence to honour the victims of the Montreal massacre and for the countless bright futures that have been destroyed by misogynistic men.

The Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence after others have spoken to this? [*Agreed*]

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Myself and a number of my colleagues attended the sunrise ceremony here earlier this morning to acknowledge the victims of gender-based violence.

Each year on December 6, Canadians remember the 14 young women murdered at École polytechnique in 1989. These were women whose lives, full of promise, were taken simply because of their gender. That deliberate act of hatred remains one of the darkest moments in our country's history and continues to shape our national understanding of gender-based violence.

* (13:40)

The explicit targeting of women was not only an attack on individuals, but it was an attack on equality itself. It forced a conversation in Canada that continues to play out here in—today about the realities of sexism, discrimination and the violence that too many women and girls continue to face.

Gender-based violence is not a tragedy confined to the past. It exists here in our communities, in our province, across our country and around the world. Femicide is the intentional killing of women and girls because of their gender, and here in Manitoba, we continue to face the heartbreaking reality of having the highest provincial rate in Canada.

For the families and the communities in Manitoba and across Canada who have lost loved ones, please know that you are not alone. We stand with you in grief, in remembrance and in the shared determination to build a safer society. Your courage calls on legislators, community leaders and citizens to do better.

Violence against women often happens where it should never occur: in homes, in relationships and in

spaces that should be safe. Many survivors carry their trauma quietly, without recognition or support. It is our responsibility to empower survivors, challenge harmful attitudes and ensure that no woman or girl ever feels voiceless or powerless. This is not a partisan issue. Ending violence against women and girls requires all of us working together. Even the smallest actions can protect those at risk and help shift the culture that shows gender-based violence to persist.

Honourable Speaker, as we honour the 14 young women whose lives were stolen in Montreal 36 years ago, may we also remember the many women in our province who have suffered or continue to suffer violence today. Let our remembrance inspire action. Let our voices challenge hatred and sexism wherever they appear. And let our efforts move us closer to a future where every woman and girl can live without fear.

Thank you.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member for Tyndall Park have leave to respond? [*Agreed*]

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, we rise this afternoon for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women that will take place on December 6. It is a time to reflect upon and acknowledge women who we have lost due to violence.

In 1989, a man carrying a semi-automatic rifle and a hunting knife walked into a classroom, separated the women from all of the men and proceeded to shoot all of the women. There were 13 students in their 20s and 30s and one administrator that died that day at École polytechnique school in Montreal. It remains to this day one of the most horrific acts of gender-based violence in our country. They all died because they were women.

Honourable Speaker, the women who were shot had families. They were daughters, mothers, partners, aunts and friends. And that is why tears are shed from coast to coast to coast in remembrance of this devastating act of misogyny.

Acts of misogyny continue to this day. Sadly, gender-based violence happens every day in all of our communities across the country and all around the world. We as legislators have a shared responsibility to strive to end violence against women and girls by working together. We need to build more awareness and create much more means of prevention.

In closing, I want to recognize all of those who have done such important work in honouring and supporting victims and survivors. These are people who do the advocacy; they listen, show up, donate, educate or simply believe the survivors. You are the reason that change is made. Thank you for your strength, your empathy and your unwavering commitment to justice.

The Speaker: All rise, please.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Jill Chapman

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize an extraordinary athlete from Lagimodière, Jill Chapman. Jill is a proud Manitoban whose determination and self-discipline have carried her to the world stage not once, not twice, but three times—three years in a row at the IRONMAN World Championship in Kona, Hawaii.

For those unfamiliar, Kona is the pinnacle of endurance sport: a 3.8-kilometre swim in the open ocean, a 180-kilometre bike ride across lava fields and a full marathon under relentless heat and wind. This year, Jill completed that gruelling course in 13 hours and 37 minutes, earning her place among the world's toughest competitors.

Her splits tell the story of perseverance: over an hour and 40 minutes in the water, six and a half hours on the bike and more than five hours on the run. Every second of that race demanded resilience and Jill delivered.

What makes Jill's achievements even more inspiring is the journey behind it. Her first foray into multisport came in February 2019 at a women's indoor duathlon, sparked by a personal goal to complete a full-distance race by the time she turned 40. That early experience introduced her to a welcoming community, and by May of that year she was racing in the Birds Hill Duathlon series.

Since then, she has consistently embraced accountability and discipline, balancing intense training with family life and a demanding career. Her commitment also extends beyond personal goals. This summer she joined the Enbridge Tour Alberta for Cancer, cycling 200 kilometres over two days to raise vital funds for cancer-care initiatives.

Jill is joined in the gallery today by Adam Donaghy, Genevieve Donaghy and Sasa Ivetic.

Jill's story is a call to setting audacious goals, doing the hard work and lifting others along the way. Please join me in congratulating Jill on her incredible accomplishments and in wishing her continued success as she inspires Manitobans to chase their own finish lines.

Jeremy Matuszewski

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I am pleased to rise today to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Jeremy Matuszewski, owner of Thunderstruck Ag Equipment in Winkler.

Jeremy and his team recently earned remarkable global recognition: their Razors Edge Concaves were named one of Time magazine's top 300 innovations—inventions—sorry—of 2025, an exceptionally—truly an exceptional honour.

In 2016, seeing the need for a more adaptable concave, Jeremy began designing a new model through research and collaboration with farmers. Years after testing on John Deere and Case combines, the Razors Edge Concave was created.

Its smart, graded design—tighter spacing at the front and wider at the back—improves threshing efficiency, reduces grain damage and allows grain to flow more freely. International prototypes testing showed impressive results: combines ran faster, grain loss decreased and harvest interruptions were reduced.

Since its official launch in 2024, Jeremy's invention has earned praise from agriculturalists and attention from Time magazine. This recognition celebrates not only an innovative product, but the hard work, long days and determination behind it.

Agricultural innovation is vital to our province and to the farmers everywhere, and Jeremy's work shows how fresh ideas can create global impact.

Jeremy and Jeremy's team, your act—your achievement puts Winkler on the map in an exciting way.

On behalf of the community and as your MLA, I offer my warmest congratulations. Thank you for your contribution to our local economy and agriculture.

I ask my colleagues to rise to congratulate the Thunderstruck team who are here in the gallery today.

Care-A-Lot Nursery

MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Honourable Speaker, I'd like to rise today to celebrate a pillar in the Elmwood community, Care-A-Lot Nursery Incorporated,

who will be celebrating their 50th anniversary on January 26, 2026.

* (13:50)

Care-A-Lot began its operations at 829 Watt St. on January 26, 1976, thanks to the vision and dedication of its founders, Peter and Judie Schnell, along with Ray and Elspeth Newberry.

In its early years, Care-A-Lot offered programs for both infants and preschool-aged children, but over time, the centre transitioned to focus exclusively on preschool-aged children and now proudly serves children aged two to six, with a licence capacity of 68.

Care-A-Lot has benefited from remarkable leadership stability throughout its history, with only four executive directors over five decades: its inaugural executive director, Lorraine Maskiw, followed by Darlene Kupchak-Heiland, then Leona Loewen and its current executive director, Tracy Cosser.

For five decades, Care-A-Lot Nursery has been more than a child-care centre; it's been a pillar of Elmwood community and a source of support for families across Winnipeg. Generations of children have started their learning journey here, guided by caring educators who nurture curiosity and confidence.

Parents have found peace of mind knowing their little ones are in a safe, loving environment. The impact of Care-A-Lot extends far beyond its walls, shaping futures and strengthening the fabric of our community in ways that'll be felt for years to come.

Like to ask all my colleagues to join me in celebrating Care-A-Lot's milestone anniversary and to thank them for all their incredible work over the past 50 years.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Christmas Season

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): December, for many Manitobans, is the most joyous time of the year: a time for family, a time to slow down, a time to be thankful and a time to give back. The generosity of Manitobans truly knows no bounds.

This time of the year, maybe to some of your surprise, is my favourite time of the year. I love celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza and every other celebration and party under the sun. Regardless of your culture, faith, if you have family nearby or not, it's a time to reflect on what matters to you most.

Whether it's a big dinner with loved ones, catching up with old friends or a cozy night at home watching movies like *Elf*, *Home Alone* or *Die Hard*—yes, *Die Hard* is a Christmas movie—everyone has their own traditions, and that's what makes the season so special. It's one of the many reasons I love living in Manitoba and Canada. We celebrate in different ways, but all for the same reason: to share joy, gratitude and kindness.

This season also highlights Manitobans' generosity: families donating time, goods and taking care of one another, making holidays brighter for everyone. These acts of kindness are just as important as trees or dinners.

My son and I in Fort Whyte have the pleasure of judging Lindenwoods holiday lights once again, led by Laura Thomas and her incredible board from Lindenwoods Community Centre, from Polar Bear Lane to candy lane, Gingerbread and Nutcracker Lane, neighbours and Manitobans come far and wide to see the amazing lights in Lindenwoods. I invite you all to come by.

Now, caroling is also another trademark of Christmas. I was going to sing, but I was told I'm not allowed to sing in the Chamber. So instead, I invite all Manitobans to come to the Legislature on Saturday, December 6 to celebrate open house in a non-partisan way celebrating Christmas and the holiday season.

For myself and the PC team, I wish everyone a merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, happy Kwanzaa and a joyful holiday season.

Thank you.

End of Fall Session Holiday Poem

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): 'Twas the last sitting before the open house took place, / Not a creature was stirring by the Chamber or mace; / The halls had been decked out with garland and care, / In hopes that the Premier soon would be there.

The members were seated, the Chamber composed, / While papers lay quiet and laptops were closed; / And I, as the whip, keeping order in line, / Had readied the caucus with purpose in mind.

When out in the Rotunda there arose such a clatter, / I sprang from my seat to see what was the matter. / Away to the doorway I flew like a flash, / Past staff as they hurried in one final dash.

The lights in the hallways shone steady and bright, / Casting long solemn shadows through marble and height; / And there in the stillness, approaching the

floor, / Came the rise of loud footsteps I'd heard once before.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear, / But the Premier arriving with confident cheer; / The most popular premier this province has seen, / With one Manitoba his banner and theme; / With ministers behind him in a unified line, / I knew in that moment the Province would shine.

More rapid than motions their efforts they came, / I nodded in approval while calling by name: / "Now Ministers. Members. Stand proud as can be, / The whole place will sparkle from 11 'til 3."

"Stand ready, stand steady, show all that we do; / This open house shines with the province in view."

As I retook my place with the Chamber aware, / I honoured tradition and bowed to the Chair.

Then out from the hallway came heavy-footed strides, / Like a busted old play that no coach ever guides; / And into the Chamber, off-tempo and slow, / Stepped the PC leader, unsure where to go.

His papers were tangled, his messaging weak, / Each sentence collapsing the moment he'd speak; / He fumbled his notes like a botched second down, / Still searching for plays that would turn things around.

The Speaker sprang up as the noise reached full roar; / Calling "Order." so loudly it rattled the floor.

Then the Premier rose calmly on a point of order clear; / His voice cutting through chaos, so the House could hear. / Join us at the people's building, and share in its delight. / Happy open house to all, and to all a good night.

Introduction of Guests

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

We have seated in the public gallery, from the Source Program, 10 high school students under the direction of Mark Dewar and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew).

We welcome you here today.

I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today, from Thunderstruck Ag Equipment, Kristi Dueck, TJ Matuszewski and Bobby Matuszewski, who are guests of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert).

And we welcome you here today.

And further, in the public gallery, we have with us today, from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the provincial executive president Lillian Klaussen and her team.

And we welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Food Bank Usage Increase Pledge to Lower Grocery Prices

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I rise to acknowledge National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. I was honoured to attend the sunrise ceremony earlier this morning, honouring and acknowledging victims of gender-based violence. It's unfortunate that the Premier was not in attendance this morning, and it was duly noted.

Now, Manitobans are using food banks at record levels. Honourable Speaker, 50 per cent of Manitobans say they're within \$200 of being broke, and this Premier keeps talking about a 1-and-a-half-cent savings at the pump. Your average fuel tank, at 50 litres: that means you save 75 cents and this Premier thinks that's a huge accomplishment. That won't even buy you a can of soup.

The Premier promised that he would lower grocery prices two years ago.

I'm going to ask on behalf of all struggling Manitobans: Premier, why have you not fulfilled your promise to lower grocery prices?

The Speaker: I would remind members to make sure they direct their questions through the Chair.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, today is the opportunity at the Legislature to honour the solemn anniversary of the massacre at École polytechnique, and I'm very honoured to serve alongside folks like the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) and WAGE, who was the host; as well as Cambria Harris, who was the emcee, the daughter of Morgan Harris; and to work alongside deputy minister Anna Mackin.

* (14:00)

Now when it comes to affordability, which is what the question at hand is about, the cut to the provincial gas tax put \$350 million back in your pocket in the first year alone. When we're talking about help with rent, we restored a renter's tax credit that was cut by the members opposite. And, of course, under our watch, whereas they at the Cabinet table signed off on an

increase to the price of milk, we decreased the price of milk for the people of Manitoba.

There's plenty more work to do, but we are focused—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

And if I could get the clock stopped for a minute.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: There's some more guests in the gallery that I want to make sure we acknowledge that they're here before they have to leave.

We have seated in the gallery 13 grade 11 and 12 students from Rosenort School under the guidance of Connor Hopper, from the constituency of Midland.

And we welcome you here today.

* * *

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

Mr. Khan: The Premier is living in the past. Right now he is touting a 1-and-a-half-cent savings at the pump as a victory for you. Honourable Speaker, 75 cents won't even buy you a can of soup, and the Premier says he is making life, sadly, more affordable, according to his math. Big flashy announcements with zero action by this Premier.

Two years later, and what does he say to help with grocery prices? We're going to launch another study. And I'll tell you right now, what is that study going to say? Grocery prices are up under this NDP government.

Premier, the buck stops with you. You promised Manitobans you were going to lower the price—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Once again, I have to direct the member to make sure he's directing his questions through the Chair. *[interjection]*

Order.

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, the Premier said he was going to lower grocery prices. He threatened local grocery chains to lower prices. Two years later, grocery prices are at record highs.

What is the Premier going to do or when is he actually going to fulfill one of his promises to make life more affordable for Manitobans?

Mr. Kinew: Well, when we came in office, we cut the provincial gas tax. Under them, inflation was 8 per cent—8 per cent inflation. We cut it. It went back down to the Bank of Canada target, and it's been there every single month since we took office.

We also passed bill 31 against the objections of everyone on the other side of the House. When that bill passed into law, there were 66 property controls in Manitoba. That prevented competition. That was a barrier to better grocery prices for you.

There was a deadline this Monday for grocery chains to register these property controls. Guess how many there are now? Forty-six. That means just by passing a law, we scared 20 grocery locations into having more competition in the market.

Now, when it comes to the remaining 46 property controls, I've asked our Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu) to challenge every single one of them.

We're in favour of competition and lower—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, the Premier said it right there. He governs with fear, bullying and toxicity and making empty threats to Manitobans and free entrepreneurs here in Manitoba.

Meat is up 47 per cent in the last two years under this Province. I guess Manitobans—more than half of Manitobans—won't be having a turkey dinner to celebrate the holiday season because of this NDP.

A new report from Manitoba Harvest states that roughly 60,000 Manitobans are using food banks every month and that an estimated six out of 10 food bank users have some sort of post-secondary education. Manitoba Harvest goes on to say that the challenging—it's challenging that educational background of food bank users suggests that schooling is no longer a reliable pathway out of poverty.

Under this NDP government, more Manitobans are using food banks than ever before.

When will the Premier, Honourable Speaker, do something to make life more affordable for Manitobans and realize that saving 1 and a half cents—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Kinew: I was hoping he was going to do this, but I'll take this opportunity to shout out and thank the

Manitoba Teachers' Society. They were one of our crucial partners in designing the universal school food program. Every single child in Manitoba gets food at school. That's how we're fighting food deserts.

What did the members opposite do? They cut the milk program. I tabled the documents this week in the House.

So let's review what it is that they stand for: we're bringing in a situation where Manitoba is the first province to have true competition in the grocery sector by knocking down property controls. They oppose competition. We're the party of public safety; they oppose our measures on that side. We're the party of cutting taxes; they oppose us every single step of the way.

They don't have any of the traditional conservative values. I guess that's why their leader is leading them down a path of attacking trans kids and attacking trans kids only.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Jobs and the Economy Cost of Living and Taxes

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Once again, the Premier does not have the courtesy or the respect to stand up and answer the question. Instead, he wants to put misinformation on there, he wants to mix issues and he wants to mislead Manitobans on the reality of what's happening.

And the reality of what's happening is that under this Premier, grocery prices are at record highs. Record number of Manitobans are visiting food banks and now they are paying record number of taxes under this government.

This Premier and the NDP government raised your educational property taxes by \$400 million. He thinks 75 cents is going to make up for that. The NDP is taxing you more than ever and our economy in Manitoba is dead last in all of Canada. The government talks about trying to make life better, but in reality, everyone knows life is worse.

Why has the Premier failed to improve the economic situation in Manitoba so Manitobans can thrive and not die under his government?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I want to table for the House these numbers from Stats Canada which show that our GDP in Manitoba has been revised upward

to 1.7 per cent, which means that we're actually growing and it's a result of you out there, the people of Manitoba, who are doing great work.

Listen, when it comes to party policies, we're the party of cutting taxes. We cut the fuel tax, we cut income tax, we cut corporate taxes, we even cut the payroll tax. That's to put more money in your pockets.

What have the members opposite been doing? First premier under their watch ever fined by the Ethics Commissioner. First deputy premier ever fined by the Ethics Commissioner. Even their current colleague—I'll table these documents in case they want to know who it is exactly that I'm talking about—first sitting MLA ever fined by the Ethics Commissioner.

Our member for Maples, another win he racked up today. On the other side of the House, it's L after L after leadership—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: The Premier wants to talk about stats and facts. Well, let's talk about this. The first premier on that—in the history of Canada to have a DUI: this Premier. The first premier to have two counts of aggravated assault—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —this Premier. The first premier to comply with a court order: this Premier. And the first premier to be charged with theft from a co-worker: this Premier, Honourable Speaker.

You want to talk about stats? Honourable Speaker, 14 per cent of Manitobans are working two or more jobs; 13.7 per cent is the unemployment in this province—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —and that has decreased 11.6 per cent under this NDP government. It only keeps going up.

He brags about job count, but in reality, thousands of jobs are leaving Manitoba. In October, the province suffered a net loss of 2,500 jobs under this NDP government. People are working more jobs to survive under this NDP government.

Why is the Premier's solution for affordability to take more money out of every paycheck, to tax you \$400 million and to make the cost of—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Kinew: So again, we're the party of cutting taxes. We cut the gas tax, we cut corporate taxes, we cut payroll taxes, we even cut—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —your income taxes. Now, the members opposite are just hating because I beat the brakes off of every single leader that they ever put up in question period. He's not the first, he won't be the last. Who's next?

Well, when we're talking about you and the cost of living, I really do think you should know that while they're busy being fined by the Ethics Commissioner—and I'll table the documents again showing that their deputy premier, their premier, their current colleague from Red River North, were all fined for breaking our Constitution, the supreme law of the land—what is their leader up to?

* (14:10)

Well, I'll table this document that the person implicated in putting pressure on the former government of the PCs is a current-year donor to the member opposite. So, again, we're not talking about the past; we're talking about the current PC corruption, the most corrupt party in Canadian—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, when it comes to crime and criminals in this province, you don't need to look any further than this Premier. He has a DUI charge, he has two assaults for assaulting his partner, assaulting his partner and dragging her across the floor. This Premier has two charges.

He has a charge for failing to attend court. He has a charge for aggravated assault. A charge for failing to comply with a court order. Honourable Speaker, the list goes on and on and on. No wonder crime is worse in this province under this criminal Premier. He doesn't want to make it better because he's a criminal himself. He won't even answer the questions.

I've asked him why is he making life more unaffordable for Manitobans, why are grocery prices higher than they've ever been—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —why is unemployment higher than it's ever been and why are Manitobans fleeing the province more.

Will the Premier stand up today and tell Manitobans why he, as a criminal, thinks he has all the answers to solve the crime in this province when he has no idea what he's—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Order, please.

And I would remind members to use the proper names so that it's either the ministerial title or the constituency name when referring to other members.

Mr. Kinew: The member opposite is unravelling in question period more quickly than his caucus staff is unravelling.

Again, we go on LinkedIn yesterday, and we see that his own caucus director contemplating, thinking about the future, posting philosophical quotes, somebody who's worked in their caucus for 28 years. Also quoting Confucius—of all people—at all times.

Again, and why is this? Perhaps because instead of choosing somebody who was good at question period or choosing somebody who was good at politics, or somebody who was good at communication or even somebody who would address the unethical behaviour by a current member who was fined, according to the documents that I will not table, the PCs chose instead a self-proclaimed big guy.

They'll keep focusing on themselves. We're going to keep focusing on you. Cheaper gas, cheaper rent, better—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Brandon West.
[interjection]

Order.

Violent Crime Rate National Ranking

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): This Premier wants to talk about toxic leadership. How about he talks to the member from Fort Garry who made the comment he's dysfunctional and a toxic leader?

This minister and his Premier have failed Manitobans yet again. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Balcaen: Each and every day, more Manitobans are experiencing random violence because this Premier wrote cheques with his mouth that his government could not cash. Repeat violent offenders are running rampant while this Premier gets shuttled around Manitoba under armed guards in the back of a police car.

If this Premier is so confident in his Justice Minister, why does he need to be under police escort? Is it for his safety, or just to reminisce?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Once again, Honourable Speaker, the member opposite not only discredits himself in this place as a member of this Legislative Assembly, but he discredits himself in his former role as a law enforcement officer.

We won't do that, Honourable Speaker. We're going to work with law enforcement, we're going to start at a foundational level by ensuring that they have the funding and the resources to keep our streets safe. But we're going beyond that. We're going to work with community, we're going to work even with the federal government if they're going to listen. Every single person who wants to make this province safer, we're going to work with them.

We won't work with members opposite.

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

Mr. Balcaen: Under this minister, the murder rate has risen to historic levels. While the rest of the nation is reducing, this minister oversaw a 22 per cent increase.

While the minister was guarding himself against paper cuts, answering Gary Doer's phone, I was on the ground working with officers and experiencing the terrible realities of murder.

The minister has done nothing but make things worse, and he's—must be consent—content with his legacy to be the highest murder rate in Canada under this minister.

Mr. Wiebe: Honourable Speaker, under the members opposite, under the failed PC government for seven and a half years, their record on homicides is clear: 2017, a 7.65 per cent increase; in 2018, 15.6 per cent increase; in 2019, 33 per cent increase; in 2022, a 43 per cent increase in homicides in this province.

The former minister of Justice sits there quietly. He won't defend his record because he knows, under the PCs, crime was getting worse. Under our government, we're starting to turn the corner. We're making our communities safe.

Mr. Balcaen: This minister talks provincial stats, not national stats. He's on a national level. This minister blames everyone but himself for the increase in violent crimes. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Balcaen: Manitobans are experiencing more violence in the workplace, more violence in the community and, under this minister's watch, they are less safe. The minister has failed to do his job at every step, and he's the Minister of Justice. He is the only one responsible.

This minister is all sizzle, no steak; but with the meat prices here in this province, this minister is more akin to—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Balcaen: —a can of SPAM.

Since he won't do anything about safety, will the minister resign today and let someone else in his caucus address this government's constant failures on the safety of Manitobans?

Mr. Wiebe: This is very worrisome, Honourable Speaker, because the member opposite was a chief of police in the province of Manitoba. He would have been privy to these numbers that were provided to law enforcement: year over year increase in crime in his city, across this province.

Those are the Manitoba numbers, and yet he stood silent when members opposite cut funding to law enforcement across this province. That is a shameful record.

We're not going back to the record of members opposite. We're in the future, where we're starting to see the crime stats are coming down only because we work with law enforcement and work with community partners. That's the way that our government approaches. We're going to work together—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Health-Care System Government Management Record

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Honourable Speaker, 2025 has been a very tough year for health care in Manitoba.

In January, Manitobans were waiting 14 weeks longer for hip and knee surgery than they were a year earlier. In February, Chad Giffin tragically passed away in the waiting room at Health Sciences Centre. In March, this minister rolled out disastrous changes to home care against the advice of front-line workers that have resulted in chaos, thousands of missed and cancelled visits and a still-unresolved backlog. In April, Manitobans in the Southern Health region were waiting 15 weeks longer for an MRI than they were a year earlier.

Why does this NDP government continue pretending everything is fine when, in fact, things are getting so much worse under their watch?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to talk about what our government is doing to fix the monumental damage done to health care by the previous PC government.

We were happy to share yesterday that we have brought back the virtual ward. The virtual ward was something that we saw work really well during COVID. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: But Honourable Speaker, unfortunately, despite the virtual ward having great success for Manitobans, the previous government made the decision to cut the virtual ward, to the dismay of Manitobans.

No worries; we've brought it back, and it's already adding more bed days to our system across the province. I'll share more about—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —the virtual ward when I answer the next question.

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

* (14:20)

Mrs. Cook: In May, hundreds of nurses rallied here at the Legislature to protest this NDP government's empty, broken promises, giving this NDP government a D- grade. In June, Doctors Manitoba warned Manitobans to expect unstable rural ER services over the summer, noting that Brandon, Boundary Trails and Steinbach were experiencing high physician vacancies and people should expect long waits for care.

In July, three staff members were sexually assaulted on and around the HSC campus. Unfortunately, this was just one of a series of terrifying assaults on health-care workers in Manitoba this year. In August, Manitoba nurses voted to greylist the Health Sciences Centre, a very serious move that hasn't happened since the last time the NDP were in government.

When will this minister finally quit with the blame game and take some responsibility—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I'll stop blaming the PCs when they start taking responsibility. Pretty simple.

Honourable Speaker, the PCs cut the virtual ward. We're bringing it back. It's delivering better care for Manitobans. The PCs cut and closed ERs. We're bringing them back to deliver better care for Manitobans. The PCs cut and fired nurses. We're bringing them back—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —and hiring record numbers of them. The PCs cut beds from the health-care system. We're bringing them back fully staffed, adding care to the health-care system.

Honourable Speaker, what they cut, we add. What they destroyed, we're fixing.

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

Mrs. Cook: The facts tell a completely different story.

In September, median emergency wait times hit an all-time high at more than four hours with 90th percentile wait times three times that length. In October, Brandon was left without general on-call coverage, forcing patients in emergencies to travel to Dauphin or Winnipeg.

In November, nurses voted to greylist Thompson General Hospital, the first time in history that two major hospitals have been greylisted at the same time. Also in November, Genevieve Price tragically passed away after waiting 30 hours on a stretcher for the health care she needed. And it's now December, and the number of people waiting in hospital for personal-care-home placement is more than double what it was when the NDP took office.

Will the minister commit today to finally stop making health care worse in 2026?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, in the spirit of the holiday season, I'll talk about the gifts we're giving Manitobans.

I'm going to start with Lac du Bonnet. We are gifting the community of Lac du Bonnet and the MLA for Lac du Bonnet—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I need to be able to hear what's being said, and right now I cannot. So I would ask members to calm down so that I can hear the questions and the answers.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, in the spirit of the holiday season, we're giving some health-care gifts out to Manitobans, and I'll start with Lac du Bonnet. The member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) is getting a new personal-care home in his community. Folks living in the south end of the city are going to see a new ER return: the Victoria ER is being reopened.

Honourable Speaker, just like the Grinch, the PCs stole hundreds of beds from the health-care system, and we're adding back 450 beds to the health-care system, a gift that keeps on giving—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Pembina Trails School Division 2024 Cybersecurity Breach

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to also welcome the representatives from Manitoba Teachers' Society here today in the gallery to watch the crazy show that's happening, put on by the government.

Honourable Speaker, 25 years of students' social insurance numbers, passport numbers, health-care numbers, personal health information; 20 years of staff, name, date of birth, contact information, provincial health numbers, financial account numbers—this info is out there forever.

Does the minister think 36 months of credit monitoring is sufficient?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Firstly, I would like to say a really big thank-you to the administration, the divisional leadership, the school board, the teachers, the staff at Pembina Trails School Division for the way that they have managed and guided their school community through this terrible security incident. We thank them very much for their report and all of the many, many steps that they have taken to protect their school community and their school community's information.

The fact of the matter is, Honourable Speaker, that after seven and a half years of having their operational funding frozen by the previous PC government, by having school budgets frozen, schools were not able to invest in many things, including cybersecurity.

Thankfully, after seven and a half—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, an expert says, and I quote—a privacy expert says, and I quote: She's not seen a breach elsewhere in Canada that matches the scale of the Pembina Trails School Division's debacle. End quote.

This minister is nowhere to be found, except she does get up and say, well there's nothing we can do. It's going to get out there, so it is what it is. She said that in a local paper not that long ago, Honourable Speaker.

So I'm asking the minister today—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —what is being done to ensure the data is safe for other Manitobans and throughout other school divisions, Honourable Speaker?

MLA Schmidt: Unlike the members opposite, we like to work with our sector partners. We stand with the Pembina Trails School Division, we stand with the Manitoba School Boards Association and we stand with the Manitoba Teachers' Society in addressing all the issues that are affecting our schools.

I'm happy to announce that the Pembina Trails School Division has just recently completed their investigation and their probe into the 'cybercurities' incident. They've produced a report. They have taken excellent steps in communicating with their school community about how they are going to protect their students and their school community and how they're going to prevent this from happening in the future.

I'm very glad to update this House and all of Manitoba, that for the first time in the history of Manitoba, under the leadership of our Premier (Mr. Kinew), we have now a Minister of Innovation and New Technology (MLA Moroz) that is working not just—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, the students are going to be retired by the time they clear off all that information that this minister has lost throughout the worldwide web. And as we listen to the member for River Heights, it's on somebody's computer somewhere, and that's his quote.

Honourable Speaker, I don't know what the minister is talking about, standing up with the Manitoba Teachers' Society and whatever else—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —couldn't even be bothered to get out there and take a picture with them today.

So she cancelled the modernization of data services throughout school divisions, so why is safeguarding student data such a low priority for this minister and the Kinew government?

MLA Schmidt: Absolutely, securing the data of information of our students and our staff is of utmost priority.

But did you notice, Honourable Speaker, on a day where we had a delegation from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, how disappointing from the Education critic: not a question about absenteeism, not a question about literacy, not a question about school nutrition, for example.

Just this week, we have produced our report on—the annual report on the school nutrition program, developed in partnership with our incredible sector partners. Let's read a little bit.

Do you know what, Honourable Speaker? Do you know that Manitobans can trust the NDP on school policy? We have nine educators in our caucus—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired. [*interjection*]
The member's time has expired. [*interjection*]

Order. Order.

Food Bank Usage Increase Need for Affordability Measures

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, recent data from Harvest Manitoba shines a very different light on the NDP's talking points about affordability.

The heartbreaking truth is that last year, 62 per cent of families relying on food banks went hungry at least once a month; 24 per cent of food bank users don't own a car.

How does the minister justify promoting a gas tax holiday as an affordability measure to a single parent or to the many Manitobans who don't even have the means to purchase a car to save the tax?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): The member opposite may not recall because she wasn't in the Chamber at this time, but there was a—several years that when—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would just remind members not to comment on whether members are present or absent in the Chamber.

* (14:30)

MLA Fontaine: Honourable Speaker, let me just correct that. What I was saying is that the member wasn't yet elected.

But those of us on this side of the House will remember that year after year after year, whether it was Brian Pallister or Heather Stefanson or any of the myriad of failed ministers, we routinely lobbied the government—the failed government at the time for a universal school nutrition program.

And what did members opposite—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, to quote a Manitoban who spoke publicly: I have—I actually haven't used a food bank for close to 20 years. I was doing fine on my own, not struggling to keep my family fed, but I just signed up for one today. End quote.

Manitobans are worse off, and there is no affordability plan. Why does the minister refuse to see things are getting worse under this NDP government?

MLA Fontaine: So while Brian Pallister and Heather Stefanson and a bunch of their members routinely blamed and shamed families that were struggling for not feeding their children on the way to school, our government—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —stands with families and we support children with the universal school nutrition program.

And our amazing Minister of Education, yesterday, tabled—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —her report that showed 632 public schools offering at least one meal program, with an average of 93,000 children accessing meals and snacks daily. I table that for the House. That's more than 30 million meals and snacks provided overall.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, families with young children are returning to food banks more and more. Harvest Manitoba has highlighted that 91 per cent of families cannot afford to consistently make healthy choices when shopping. Parents want to buy healthy food for their kids, but they are forced to make hard choices at the store.

Why hasn't this minister—why has this minister refused to find solutions and help parents to afford food for their families rather than forcing them to go to a food bank?

MLA Fontaine: The other thing that community and members on this side of the Chamber asked for years and years and years, and Brian Pallister and Heather Stefanson didn't care about: we talked about doubling the Prenatal Benefit so that we're giving the best start to Manitobans who are pregnant.

Oh, who doubled the benefit? Ah. That would be our government that benefited the—doubled the benefit.

Not only that, we're also strengthening disability supports by ensuring that no federal disability benefits are clawed back. We supported over \$1,000 a year for families with our true \$10-a-day daycare, something again members opposite didn't care about, because at the end of the day, they don't care about families, they don't—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Education Funding Levels Use of Funds Request

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, teaching is arguably one of the most important professions in our world today. Without teachers, we would not have doctors, lawyers, musicians, business people, or even politicians, for that matter. Teachers are compassionate, nurturing, dedicated people who care deeply about the success and well-being of their students.

Earlier today, I had the pleasure of meeting with members of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and they explained how they feel undervalued. Honourable Speaker, the government claims to have increased spending in schools, but the teachers say that they are not seeing it.

Can the government share, in front of those who have joined us today in the galleries, what these supposed funds have specifically been used towards?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Again, we welcome very much the delegation from the Manitoba Teachers' Society Provincial Executive, led by their president and their executive director. We also—our caucus also had the pleasure of meeting with them today and hearing about their many concerns, and we're happy to meet with them at their leisure. I also, as minister, have another meeting with the organization next week so that we can hear and listen directly from teachers.

For too many years, teachers did not have a relationship with government. In fact, Honourable Speaker, if you wonder why we have so many educators on this side of the House, it is because of the seven and a half years under the previous government. Teachers couldn't take it any longer and had to leave the profession to come into this Chamber to finally get some change.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

New Positions in Education Number of Teachers Working

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, with the workloads of teachers increasing, they, like many health-care workers, are getting frustrated and facing burnouts at high rates. We're hearing stories where some are counting the days to retirement and others are leaving the profession within their first five years. Teachers are constantly being asked and expected to do more with less.

This government said they've hired 800 teachers, but again, those who have joined us today—teachers from across Manitoba—have said that they've yet to see this in action.

Can the government share if these supposed 800 new teachers are only positions or are they actually teaching?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Thank you to the member opposite for this opportunity to get up and laud the 'accreditable' profession of teachers.

And she's not wrong that for many years, teachers were leaving the profession; that is the truth. Teachers, at the time that we were elected, were working without a contract. Let's not forget, Honourable Speaker—working without a contract.

Our government was elected, came to the table, negotiated a fair and free collective bargaining agreement with the teachers that we are very proud to do. We are grateful for the work that they do every day and we're grateful in partnership with school divisions to have been able to hire 832 brand new teachers since taking government in 2023.

Honourable Speaker, do not get me wrong. Much, much more work to do. It is true that we ask more of teachers every single day—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Teacher's Professional Development Allocation of Funds Inquiry

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, teachers need to have some autonomy relating to their ability to teach and connect with students.

However, oftentimes, instead of being able to do this, teachers are being backed into corners facing backlash rather than being able to teach what is in their curriculum. Teachers are becoming increasingly nervous as to what they can teach because of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation.

Funding for professional development is crucial to a teacher's ongoing need to keep up and keep ahead of societal trends and the needs of their students.

Can the government confirm that the money allocated towards professional development actually goes towards professional development and is not reallocated to other budget lines?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Thank—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt: Again, thank you to the member opposite for this important question, which quite frankly, I've forgotten half of it because the members opposite decided to clap for so long. But that's great. Let's clap for teachers. Let's keep clapping for teachers, Honourable Speaker.

And yes, the member brings up an issue that the MTS delegation brought up with our caucus. I'm happy to continue on that conversation next week.

Let's talk about one of the biggest investments we've made in schools—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt: –in that it's making a difference in the lives of both students and teachers and that's our universal school nutrition program.

Let's hear directly from a principal from—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt: –Thunderbird School at South Indian Lake from Frontier School Division.

Due to the remoteness of South Indian Lake, the cost of ensuring a well-balanced breakfast program has been difficult in the past due to the lack of funding. We were limited as to what we could serve. For the past two years, we've been able to provide a wider variety of—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired. *[interjection]*

Order.

The time for question period is also expired.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: And I have a statement for the House. *[interjection]* The Speaker is still standing.

The House is expected to adjourn later today for our winter break and the youth parliament will again be using the Chamber to hold their legislative sessions. This is a friendly reminder to please remove the contents of your desks before you leave the Chamber today.

I would encourage everyone to please recycle as much of the material as possible. Any material you would like to recycle may be placed in the larger recycling containers in both of the message rooms located just outside the Chamber. The big blue bins here inside the Chamber are designated for recycling copies of Hansard only, as these can be re-used by the Hansard and the Legislative Library.

Thank you.

* * *

The Speaker: Orders of the day, government business.

House Business

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): On House business.

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

* (14:40)

All right, we're still in routine proceedings, government business.

The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

MLA Fontaine: Perfect.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 10 a.m. to consider the following: the Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet Thursday, December 11, 2025, at 1 p.m. to consider the following: Annual Report of Elections Manitoba, for the year ending December 31, 2024.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations will meet Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 9 a.m. to consider the following: Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations will meet on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 1 p.m. to consider the following: Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro Electric Board, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations will meet Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 9 a.m. to consider the following: Annual Report for Efficiency Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations will meet on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 1 p.m. to consider the following: Annual Report for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 9 a.m. to consider the following: the Annual Report of the Manitoba Seniors' Advocate, dated November 28, 2025.

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations will meet Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 1 p.m. to consider the following: Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

The Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Chairperson, Standing Committee on Public Accounts): Honourable Speaker, I'd like to announce the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, to—1 p.m. to consider the following: the Auditor General's Report, Efficiency of Court Services for a Provincial Court of Manitoba, dated July 2023.

And also, I'd like to announce the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. to consider the following: the Auditor General's Report Pairing Incarcerated Individuals for Transition from Custody, dated March 20, 2025.

The Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

We will now move on to petitions.

PETITIONS

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

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

(1) Children with disabilities often require child care beyond the age of 12. Children with disabilities aged 12 to 17 face a gap in publicly available care programs.

(2) The current adolescent-care service model creates undue hardship on caregivers.

(3) While developing children may be entering into extracurricular activities, school clubs or spending time with friends independently, children with disabilities have reduced opportunities for such social and recreational opportunities due to the lack of spaces.

(4) The current self-managed adolescent-care models place additional workloads onto already stressed families, requiring parents to seek all alternative options and prove their need for care.

(5) The current adolescent-care system, as part of overall respite and supports available to families, is failing families of children with disabilities, as identified

in the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth's Bridging the Gaps report.

(6) To date, none—sorry—to date, none of the nine recommendations it contains have been completed beyond 50 per cent.

(7) The recommendations in this report touch on many of the issues facing families, with adolescent care being but a small component of their overall needs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to fully implement recommendations in the Bridging the Gaps report.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately implement official policies and procedures that are more respectful and collaborative, which also minimize harm faced by families seeking help from Children's disABILITY Services; and

(3) Honourable Speaker, we urge the Minister of Families to arrange for a full review of employment supports provided by Children's disABILITY Services for children with disabilities aged 12 to 17, including direct consultation with impacted families and to explore a full spectrum of options to support families, empowering them to choose solutions that best fit their needs.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Georgia Wells, Sidney Malegus and Jeremy Martin. This has been signed by many other Manitobans as well.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

* (14:50)

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

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

Honourable Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Garry Davis, Henry Riendeau, Marilyn Chopinski [*phonetic*], and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This petition has been signed by Lisa Sawatsky, Susan Peters, Rachel Hildebrand, any many, many Manitobans.

Provincial Road 210

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Michel Michaud, Russell Rudy, JoAnn [phonetic] Hora and many, many other Manitobans.

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

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

(1) Children with disabilities often require child care beyond the age of 12. Children with disabilities aged 12 to 17 face a gap in publicly available care programs.

(2) The current adolescent-care service model creates undue hardship on caregivers.

(3) While developing children may be entering into extracurricular activities, school clubs or spending time with friends independently, children with disabilities have reduced opportunities for such social and recreational opportunities due to the lack of spaces.

(4) The current self-managed adolescent-care models place additional workloads onto already stressed families, requiring parents to seek all alternative options and prove their need for care.

* (15:00)

(5) The current adolescent-care system, as part of overall respite and support available to families, is failing families of children with disabilities, as identified in the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth's Bridging the Gaps report.

(6) To date, none of the nine recommendations it contains have been completed beyond 50 per cent.

(7) The recommendations in this report touch on many of the issues facing families, with adolescent care being but a small component of their overall needs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to fully implement recommendations in the Bridging the Gaps report.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately implement official policies and procedures that are more respectful and collaborative, which also minimize harm faced by families seeking help from Children's disABILITY Services.

(3) To urge the Minister of Families to arrange for a full review of employment supports provided by children disability services for children with disabilities aged 12 to 17, including direct consultation with impacted families and to explore a full spectrum of

options to support families, empowering them to choose solutions that best fit their needs.

This petition has been signed by Calvin Meilleur, Kingsley Heart and Roger Meilleur, and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Sheila Graham, Jerry Weseloski and Peggy Larson, and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Children with disabilities often require child care beyond the age of 12. Children with disabilities aged 12 to 17 face a gap in publicly available care programs.

(2) The current adolescent-care service model creates undue hardship on caregivers.

(3) While developing children may be entering into extracurricular activities, school clubs or spending time with friends independently, children with disabilities have reduced opportunities for such social and recreational opportunities due to the lack of spaces.

(4) The current self-managed adolescent-care models place additional workloads onto already stressed families, requiring parents to seek alternative options to prove their needs for care.

(5) The current adolescent-care system, as part of overall respite and support available to families, is failing families of children with disabilities, as identified in the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth's Bridging the Gaps report.

(6) To date, none of the nine recommendations it contains have been completed beyond 50 per cent.

(7) The recommendations in this report touch on many of the issues facing families, with adolescent care being but a small component of their overall needs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to fully implement recommendations in the Bridging the Gaps report.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately implement official policies and procedures that are more respectful and collaborative with—which also minimize harm faced by families seeking help from children with disability services.

(3) To urge the Minister of Families to arrange for a full review of employment supports provided by Children's disABILITY Services for children with disabilities aged 12 to 17, including direct consultation with impacted families and to explore a full spectrum of options to support families, empowering them to choose solutions that best fit their needs.

* (15:10)

This petition was signed by Michael Ledarney, Aaron Janzen Plett, Duncan Hamilton and many, many other fine Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I would like to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly as follows:

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Sally Willms, Sandra Sharpe, Linda Nickels and many, many other Manitobans.

Moratorium Lift—New Cottages (Bird River)

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Winnipeg River Planning District, in its proposed development plan (bylaw 83/25), is lifting a moratorium on new cottage development on the Bird River in the rural municipality of Alexander.

(2) Multiple studies, including but not limited to the 1977 Bird River Sector Plan by Westland Planning Consultants that was reaffirmed in the 2008 BRCO Survey Results by Lombard North Group, concluded

that the river had already exceeded its safe carrying capacity. These studies highlighted overcrowding, boating conflicts and environmental pressures that would only worsen with further development.

(3) Shoreline development and deforestation risks, accelerating habitat loss of at-risk animal, bird and fish species, shoreline erosion and water quality decline. These impacts will extend beyond the Bird River into Lac du Bonnet and the Winnipeg River system.

(4) The claim made by the Winnipeg River Planning District that rising boat numbers on Bird River prove the moratorium has, in quotation, failed, is deeply flawed. In reality, the moratorium has been effective in preventing even greater overcrowding.

(5) There has been a complaint registered with the Office of the Ombudsman surrounding the process by which the public hearing on September 11, 2025 was conducted.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations to prevent the lifting of the development moratorium on Bird River proposed by the Winnipeg River Planning District.

Honourable acting deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Elizabeth Hnatiuk, Paul Dureault, Wayne Karwacki and many more fine Manitobans.

Location of Safe Injection Sites

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The Province of Manitoba has filed paperwork with the federal government proposing the establishment of a drug injection site for illegal drugs at 200 Disraeli Fwy. without sufficient public consultation.

(2) The decision to locate the facility at 200 Disraeli was made despite that the site is located in the immediate vicinity of a daycare centre, a high school and multiple community gathering sites, including churches and cultural institutions.

(3) Residents, business owners and community organizations have raised concerns that the location is incompatible with nearby institutions serving thousands of youths and families, and believe it will erode public safety and confidence in the area.

(4) Existing community consultation specifically ignored concerns about public safety and were criticized by community members for being artificial and scripted.

(5) The provincial government has failed to introduce legislation and regulations to control where drug injection sites can be located.

(6) Other provinces are closing drug injection sites and adopting a recovery model, following the expertise of groups such as the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence.

(7) This decision to ignore the experts will leave people suspended in addiction and will not give Manitobans their lives or their loved ones back.

(8) The provincial government has failed to fund and operate any treatment or additional Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinics to break this cycle.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to cancel drug injection sites in the Point Douglas community, including the proposed location at 200 Disraeli Fwy.

* (15:20)

(2) To urge the provincial government to legislate that no further site will be proposed without community support.

This has been signed by Jim Lopez, Connie Brum, Manuel Pimentel and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is

used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Brent Caister, Virginia Lee, Thomas *[phonetic]* Huhn and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Location of Safe Injection Sites

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The Province of Manitoba has filed paperwork with the federal government proposing the establishment of a drug injection site for illegal drugs at 200 Disraeli Fwy. without sufficient public consultation.

(2) The decision to locate the facility at 200 Disraeli was made despite that the site is located in the immediate vicinity of a daycare centre, a high school and multiple community gathering sites, including churches and multicultural institutions.

(3) Residents, business owners and community organizations have raised concerns that the location is incompatible with nearby institutions serving thousands of youths and families, and believe it will erode public safety and confidence in the area.

(4) Existing community consultations specifically ignored concerns about public safety and were criticized by community members for being artificial and scripted.

(5) The provincial government has failed to introduce legislation and regulations to control where drug injection sites can be located.

(6) Other provinces are closing drug injection sites and adopting a recovery model, following the expertise of groups such as the Canadian centre for recovery of excellence.

(7) This decision to ignore the experts will leave people suspended in addiction and will not give Manitobans their lives back or their loved ones back.

(8) The provincial government has failed to fund and operate any treatment or additional Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinics to break this cycle.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to cancel drug injection sites at the Point Douglas community—in the Point Douglas community, including the proposed location at 200 Disraeli Fwy.

(2) To urge the provincial government to legislate that no future sites will be proposed without community support.

This petition was signed by Denise C. Loewen, Arielle Lambert, Lindsay Polnick and many, many other Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Business

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

* (15:30)

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

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

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

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

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Reed Sutherland, Luke Lovenjak, Harlan Perchotte and many other fine Manitobans.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Sandra Miller, Shawn Tosh, Lori Cameron and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

The Speaker in the Chair

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Honourable Speaker, this petition has been signed by Brady Burla, E. Tait and Pat MacIsaac, as well as many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as-of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Candace Gee, Daryl Devos, and Leonard Van Spiegle [*phonetic*] and many, many more great Canadians—or, Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, on a matter of urgent public importance.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert), that in accordance with subrule 39(1), the regular business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance,

specifically Manitoba's affordability crisis and the province's deteriorating economic position. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

* (15:40)

It's been moved by the honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth), seconded by the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert), that in accordance with subrule 39(1), the regular business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of 'urgic'—urgent public importance, specifically Manitoba's affordability crisis and the province's deteriorating economic position.

And prior to recognizing the member for La Vérendrye, I will remind all members that will be speaking to this that they need to speak only to the urgency of why this needs to be debated today. They are not to speak about the actual substance. They can only speak about the urgency of why it has to be debated today, or why it should not be debated today.

Mr. Narth: I rise today to request an immediate debate on a matter of urgent public importance: affordability and Manitoba's collapsing economic position.

Honourable Speaker, this House exists to debate pressing issues when a crisis emerges. Today, we are not at the edge of one; we are in the middle of one. The affordability crisis in Manitoba has reached a scale that is no longer cyclical, theoretical or temporary. It is systemic, escalating and urgent, and it is being compounded daily by government-made economic decline.

Families are struggling to afford groceries, rent, heat, utilities and transportation: basic pillars of household survival. And at the exact same moment these costs rise, the engines that provide family income are being driven out of this province. And that's why this is a matter of a very urgent public importance.

Because affordability is not only about what Manitobans spend, it's about what Manitobans earn. And right now, Manitobans cannot afford the cost of living because industry cannot afford the cost of doing business in this province. Investment is leaving every single day, and I keep highlighting it, whether it be in question period or in debate. Jobs are leaving every day and opportunity is leaving every day.

And that's why this is so urgent. Not because Manitoban workers lack talent, and not—it's because Manitoba ministers lack action.

Let's look at the economic landscape objectively, Honourable Speaker. Statistics Canada confirms Manitoba is the last in economic growth in this entire country, just 1.1 per cent.

There's a projection that potentially that number may have changed slightly, but what hasn't changed is that Manitoba is still dead last in the entire country. One in five households is now making heat or eat decisions. Nearly half of adults live within \$200 of insolvency every single month. And, Honourable Speaker, that is why the topic of affordability and our economy is so urgent right now in the province.

Food banks now support 65,000 people every month: a number that has doubled since 2021. These aren't peoples that—these aren't people that rely on hampers just for the Christmas season. These are people that rely on food banks and hampers to get by every day. Honourable Speaker, those numbers point to the same conclusion: this is a cost crisis, an income crisis and a competitiveness crisis all convening at once, accelerating at once and worsening at once.

Now let's examine the root cause that requires immediate debate today: red tape, regulation, licensing friction and government indifference, not marginal barriers anymore. More characters in our economy declined. This government is chasing business out because permits sit without approval, regulatory burdens compound without consultation and sector warnings sit without response—licensing bottlenecks that stretch months and now into years.

And ministers fail to recognize that delay is a policy decision with victims. And those victims, unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, are everyday Manitobans—those same Manitobans that are accessing food banks, the same Manitobans that are making the decision whether to heat or eat.

Industry isn't asking for symbolism; they're asking for action. Industry isn't looking for speeches; they're looking for signatures. Industry doesn't want studies; they want immediate approvals.

And investors don't flee Manitoba because they prefer Saskatchewan or Ontario. They flee Manitoba because they prefer results.

And, Honourable Speaker, I've brought up many of these examples in recent days to this Legislature. Neighbouring provinces are not absorbing our industries; they're welcoming them. And the proof sits in the rear-view mirror of Manitoba, not in the proposals of Manitoba.

Take Ontario's forestry sector, for example. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources maintains competitive timber dues and reliable approvals, fuelling an investment climate that Manitoba mills—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please.

I've been pretty generous, but the member needs to really focus on why we need to debate that today—not the substance of the issue, but why we need to debate it today.

Mr. Narth: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. This is a matter of urgent public importance that must be debated today, because as I've said, the position of our economy is only worsening day by day.

And if we waste any more time, by the time we come back in the spring for the spring session, the position of our economy is only going to have gotten worse. The position of everyday Manitobans month to month is going to slide into a further state of concern.

Honourable Speaker, this also needs to be debated today, and it's urgent to be on order for debate today because this government refused to call estimates in the fall. We couldn't ask any questions of any of the departments, and we need this debate to hear from government on how they're going to address the affordability crisis.

And Honourable Speaker, I only give examples to hopefully jar this government into realizing the importance of debating the crisis that this has become today. That's an example of—such as the forestry industry, that this minister—our Minister of Natural Resources has been presented with—presented with chasing the forestry sector out of our province. And that's just one example.

We see it from other ministries of this government, as well. And they are creating an affordability crisis. They are creating the reasons for more people than ever before accessing food banks in our province. They are adding to the fact that industry is moving each and every day in the wrong direction. They're moving outside of this province instead of into this province.

* (15:50)

I've highlighted, also, the agriculture sector and examples of how the value-added sector of that economy is leaving—is leaving each and every day for where they can make a living for their own business, for the people that they hire and employ. That's why this is so urgent that is—it is for debate today by this government.

Honourable Speaker, we're concerned, Manitobans are concerned, and I request that each member on the government side and members from the Progressive Conservative side and independents have a 10-minute time to immediately debate this today because this issue is not convenient; it is critical. We have a land of plenty but we do not currently have a land of paycheques. Let's urgently debate how to restore them today.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): First of all, Honourable Speaker, I just want to begin by just cautioning members opposite when they use language like victims, and particularly on a day when we are commemorating victims of Montreal massacre. And on a day like this, I think it's important that we use that language particularly carefully and with the utmost respect of those who actually lost their lives in that terrible gender-based violence attack in Montreal.

Honourable Speaker, to the 'subjen'-'subtets' of the matter today, the proposed MUPI, I think it's very important that we first of all address the urgency, or lack thereof, of this issue. Member opposite could've raised the question during question period today on this subject. But during question period he did not rise to bring this question forward. He chose not to; chose to stand in his place and not bring this up for an issue. So I think it's important that we address the issue of urgency head-on. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: But now, Honourable Speaker, let's get to some of the substance, the failed substance, the failed member, the failed opposition, the failed former government. I think it's very important for us to address the fact that they failed economically and they failed affordability. They try to bring this up as an issue, but it's an issue that was long standing under the former PC government where they failed in their efforts to bring any sort—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —of affordability or economic success or gain to Manitoba.

For years, Manitobans were fleeing the province under Brian Pallister—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I just remind the minister that we need to talk about the urgency of the debate today.

Mr. Moses: I appreciate that guidance, Honourable Speaker, and it's important for us to actually look at what's happening today.

So today we know that our GDP in Manitoba was revised up, showing that we will have a higher and faster rate of growth than Ontario. The province that the member opposite points to as being this sort of beacon of economic success, we're going to have a higher rate of growth than Ontario. That shows that our policies, our economic framework, our landscape of creating an economic environment of success, is one that is going to be stronger than our neighbours to the east in Ontario.

On top of that, the recent report by the Conference Board of Canada, their outlook says that Manitoba will join Ontario and Alberta in leading non-residential investment gains from 2027 to 2030. That very much says we're in the driver's seat for economic growth and success. People are coming to Manitoba to invest.

Why did the Conference Board of Canada point that out? It was because of two significant projects that are coming up in Manitoba: the Alamos Gold project, which was stagnant under the former government, which they did nothing on. They couldn't get it over the finish line. People refused to work with them.

Under our government, we worked with the First Nations, Marcel Colomb, Mathias Colomb. We worked with Lynn Lake. We worked with Alamos Gold, and we stood up a brand new gold mine, billion-dollar investment, right here in Manitoba. Never happened under this failed PC government, never happened, but it happened under us.

The Speaker: Order, please.

There. Now maybe you can hear me.

I would remind the minister to keep his comments relevant to the urgency, or lack thereof, of the issue, not the issue itself.

Mr. Moses: All Manitobans know how they failed when it came to economic development and how our government is finding success. That's the urgency of the words I'm speaking and putting on the record today.

Honourable Speaker, they have no leg to stand on when it comes to critical minerals. In fact, the only thing they dug was a hole in our economy. Instead, we're putting critical mineral projects on the ground so more Manitobans have opportunity to work.

The Manitobans in northern Manitoba, in central Manitoba and the south—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —the east are all working because of our government's effort to provide an economic framework for success.

I'm so excited about the work we've done in logging to bring together people for the Louisiana-Pacific line and the work we're doing in western Manitoba on the logging front. That puts real Manitobans, that protects real Manitoba jobs, unlike anything members opposite ever, ever did in the forestry sector. We're actually bringing long-term sustainability in the forestry sector.

When it comes to natural resources, oh, we're making sure that we do a great job of developing them in the right way, sustainably, environmentally friendly to make sure Manitobans have the economic success for the future.

Where were members opposite on the Port of Churchill? They were calling for—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

So, once again, I have to caution the minister about keeping his comments relevant to the urgency. And I realize that with the rules the way they are around MUPIs that that is a challenge. I would be more than happy to entertain a change to the rules so that something like this can be used as it should be.

Mr. Moses: If this matter was urgent, the member opposite would've brought up Churchill today. If this matter was urgent, he would've brought up critical minerals today. If this matter was urgent, he would've brought our booming and cultural sector up today. If this matter was urgent, Honourable Speaker, he would've brought up our life sciences sector today. If this matter was urgent, he would've brought up our manufacturing sector today. He didn't. And that's why it's important for me to put these words on the record, that we are supporting these industries to make sure we have the economic success not just for us but for generations to come.

And manufacturing, I've got to call the member out on what he said this morning regarding manufacturing, saying that manufacturing didn't take place in a strong way here in Manitoba, saying that we weren't a manufacturing hub; that's what he put on the record this morning, Honourable Speaker.

I take that—offence to that, and I think people right across the province take offence to that. We are a manufacturing hub. We are manufacturing excellence here in Manitoba. The innovation here in Manitoba in manufacturing, we should be proud of that, and I am proud of that. Member opposite doesn't seem to be proud of that.

He doesn't seem to understand the complex advanced, innovative manufacturing we do here in Manitoba. But we get it on this side of the House. Manitobans get it. They understand the type of excellence we provide in the manufacturing—advanced specialized manufacturing we do. Whether that comes to aerospace sector, electric vehicles, buses, tractors, fire trucks, ambulances, these are all things we build with expertise, with 'preticision'. And it is important we acknowledge these things; that's the urgency, Honourable Speaker. That's the urgency of Manitobans. They ought to know how we defend our economy.

What is the greatest threat to our economy, Honourable Speaker? It is the Donald Trump tariffs. And who were the people who were bringing—saying bring on the—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order.

Once again—[interjection] As many as I decide.

The honourable minister needs to keep his comments relevant to the urgency of the debate today. While other issues he's bringing up may be important, we need to hear why it should or should not be debated today, nothing else.

Mr. Moses: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the guidance.

This very clearly is a fictitious MUPI brought forward by members 'oppit'. It's fictitious. In the words of some of my great colleagues, fictitious.

* (16:00)

Now, the urgency for our economy, it's important that we talk about the real challenges. Like I mentioned, tariffs are a real challenge to our economy, and members opposite are thanking Donald Trump for that. The reality is we're defending businesses here in the face of tariffs.

What have we done? We've invested in companies like Duha who are bringing US jobs and bringing those manufacturing jobs right here to Winnipeg. That is, on our government, supporting industry in the face

of tariffs that they thanked Donald Trump for. They thanked him for that.

It's unconscionable, their approach to economic development. Instead, we work with businesses and bring them here to Manitoba. The urgency, honourable Deputy Speaker, is in companies like Sapphire Spring; they're going to be a world-leading fish farm. Urgency's in companies like Magellan, like Aerospace, who are leading in the aerospace sector. The urgency's in MoveMobility, an ambulance company making groundbreaking vehicles for health-care services across the country. Like Alamos Gold who is putting forward a billion-dollar investment into our province, growing our economy for all Manitobans and particularly northern Manitobans.

That, Honourable Speaker, is the urgency of us building an economy for all Manitobans.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Order.

So I thank the honourable members for the advice to the Chair on the motion proposed by the honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) for a matter of urgent public importance. The 90-minute notice required prior to the start of routine proceedings by subrule 39(1) was provided, and I thank the member for that.

Under our rules and practices, the subject matter referenced in the member's motion must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention. Crucially, there must also be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter.

I've listened very carefully to the arguments put forward, and although affordability and the province's economic position are indeed very serious topics and worthy of consideration and discussion—[interjection]

I would ask that the Speaker be heard in silence.

My duty in this moment is to determine if there are other opportunities for debate on such matters. With that in mind, I must note that members do have the opportunity to speak on this job—topic during members' statements or when raising a grievance. Earlier today, the member for La Vérendrye spoke about it during his private member's resolution. Members can also quest—ask questions on this topic during oral questions. Further, those opportunities and others will continue to be available every sitting day in this House.

Accordingly, I do not believe the motion meets the criteria as a matter of urgent public importance, as there are other opportunities to debate the matter. And with the greatest of respect, then, I must rule this motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance. And, again, I would reiterate if there was an interest in changing the rule around matters of urgent public importance, I would be more than happy to hear it.

* * *

The Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Would you please call second reading debate—resume second reading debate on Bill 2, followed by the commencement of second reading debate on Bill 3. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The member for Steinbach needs to come to order.

So it has been announced that we will now resume debate on second reading of Bill 2, The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Amendment Act; followed by debate on second reading of Bill 3, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Amendment Act

The Speaker: So now we will resume debate on Bill 2, standing in the name of the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mrs. Robbins), who has 16 minutes remaining.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods—no. The honourable member for Steinbach.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I thank my colleague from Spruce Woods, who put some tremendous words on the record and inspired me to speak briefly before this bill comes to a vote later today, Honourable Speaker. And it is an important bill to come to a vote.

I want to acknowledge right at the beginning, as others have already, the many women and men in law enforcement and other places, like the Child Protection Centre, who every day are dealing with these

horrendous crimes, and have to as part of their job view these incredibly harmful and hurtful images. And I recall, now many years ago, visiting the ICE unit of the Winnipeg Police Service, the Integrated Child Exploitation Unit, and I was not only moved by the incredible work that the men and women were doing in the ICE unit, but very, very moved by the mental toll that it took on them.

In fact, it—maybe the policy has changed, because as I mentioned, Honourable Speaker, it was some time ago—but there was a limited amount of time that those individuals could serve in the ICE unit of the Winnipeg Police Service, because it was so traumatic.

And what I actually found interesting and somewhat surprising at that time is that most of the folks who were working in the ICE unit were parents. They had children; many of them had young children. And I remember asking of that—at that time, how they could do this job, looking at these horrific images of young children who in many cases were the same age of their own children, and they said clearly, that's why they did it. That's why they were motivated to do that work.

And of course it extends to organizations that I mentioned, like the child exploitation—or the Child Protection Centre in Winnipeg, that is housed in Winnipeg, that its home is in Winnipeg. We're very, very proud of that centre being in Winnipeg. I've had the opportunity in various roles to visit them; in fact I invited them to the Justice minister's meeting a few years ago to make a presentation to all the ministers of Justice from around the country, and they did a fantastic job of telling all the Attorney Generals and ministers of Justice from across Canada the kind of work that they do, and how important that work is.

And so I want to thank them as well for the continued work that they do. And there have been many people in this House, I know, who have had interaction with them. I believe that your predecessor, Myrna Driedger, the former Speaker of the House, was involved with the creation of the Child Protection Centre as well, and often spoke in this House about how critically important it was, and the work that they did. And so I commend people like Myrna and many others who've been involved in the organization.

And I really do believe that this is one of those issues that is just not political, when it comes to protecting children. Many, many years ago I brought forward legislation that created a tort that was relative, so when we were in opposition previously, it was relative to child exploitation. At that time I was sitting

with Dave Chomiak, who was then the minister of Justice, and it was an opposition bill that was passed, and I would encourage my friend from St. Johns to also look at opposition bills that are worthy of passing, because there are many issues that are not political, that are apolitical, and I actually think it reflects well upon this Assembly when bills from all members of the House, regardless if they're in government or not, are passed.

And at times when I'm not sure that there's always great honour that is shined on the Assembly because of a variety of different things, those are the sort of things that I think are helpful, that people can see that bills from across the aisle, government and opposition and independent members are moving through the Legislature because they're not political bills, because they are something that's important.

But of course—and so I would preface my upcoming comments with the clear understanding, Honourable Speaker, that I believe that every member of this House, regardless of political stripe, believes very strongly in the importance of protecting children from child exploitation, and I wouldn't want anybody to ever suggest otherwise.

* (16:10)

But there are questionable things that happen, and things that are sort of—leave one to wonder where exactly the government is on certain issues. We've had lots of discussion, and it happened after a Supreme Court decision a couple of weeks ago regarding child exploitation, where many premiers and Attorney Generals from across Canada were calling on the use of the notwithstanding clause to uphold legislation that brought in a mandatory minimum sentence of one year for those who were in possession of child pornography.

And I think it was almost a universal call. I mean, not every premier was in favour of the suggestion of the notwithstanding clause, but certainly I think the majority of them were and the majority representing the majority of population in Canada.

Our Premier (Mr. Kinew) here in the province, after having spent the previous week talking about how they would never use the notwithstanding clause, did an amazing one-eighty, one of the fastest one-eighties I've ever seen a premier do—it probably is leaving him still dizzy—and came forward and started promoting the notwithstanding clause to protect children and to protect that particular piece of legislation.

Now, I think there was many of us who have concerns with that particular court ruling. I think there are people who are much more knowledgeable legal scholars than I am who read that case that was a 4-3 case where there was a strong dissent on the decision, but who said the court could have sent a similar message in a different way. The court could have simply said to Parliament: there are situations in—where this might not be appropriate and you should rewrite the legislation to reflect that, without striking down the legislation.

But the legislation got struck down, and so the use of the notwithstanding clause was promoted by many premiers across Canada to uphold that legislation to protect children. And this Premier did an amazing one-eighty on the use of the notwithstanding clause.

And so I suspect that even members of his own caucus have no idea what their government position is on the use of the notwithstanding clause for things such as protecting children when legislation is deemed to be unconstitutional by the courts because they went from never—the Premier was saying they were never going to use the notwithstanding clause, to the next week saying they've been in favour of it since 1999 when Gary Doer made some sort of a mention about the notwithstanding clause in the Throne Speech.

And so—and of course, then about a week later, the Premier was again saying that they're not in favour of that notwithstanding clause, so who knows where they stand on that. I don't doubt for a second that the Premier and all members of the opposition absolutely are concerned about the exploitation of children. That is not my point.

My point is you actually have to have a consistent position, though, when the application of the law comes into place and we have no idea. Premier stood in this House and he said things like: you know, we should turn people who are in isolation units who are convicted of child pornography loose into the prison system. He said if it was up to him, that that is what he would do.

The strange thing is it is kind of up to him because if you look at the Headingley prison, there are isolation units where there are people who are convicted of child pornography. So that left a lot of people in the penal system—and I've talked to a couple of them—who were scratching their heads and wondering if there was a new policy coming from the Premier because the Premier said that they should be turned loose in general population.

And of course, the guards weren't really commenting on those particular people who were convicted but they work in this facility and they were worried about their own safety if there was going to be some sort of new policy. Because members would know that within our provincial jail system, there's all sorts of people who are separated from each other, including gang members who are isolated and separated by the virtue of the gang that they're in so that they're not mixing with other gangs.

And that's not to protect necessarily—I mean, there's an element of it. It's not necessarily just to protect those individuals who are incarcerated; it's to protect the staff. And if anybody has any wonderings about what would actually happen in situations where that wasn't always the case, there are some of us who are old enough to remember the Headingley riot. And you can look it up and see what would happen.

So I don't actually believe—and I didn't believe when I heard the Premier (Mr. Kinew) say it, that he—if it was up to him, that he was going to turn these folks loose into general population at great risk to the staff. I didn't think he would do it, even though it is actually up to him to some degree when it comes to Headingley.

But he was trying to make some sort of a political point. And I don't know that when it comes to issues of child safety and child exploitation that that is the time to be trying to make political points without actual fact and actual evidence about what you're going to be doing from a legislative perspective.

So I would again, and I—because it's amazing how often words that are quite innocent get misconstrued in this place. I have no doubt that every member of this House, regardless of political party or whether they're in no political party at all and they're sitting as independents, have concern about child exploitation. That is not my opinion.

I know that everybody is concerned about it but you have to be careful about how you express your words and you have to be consistent. You can't one day say we're going to apply—we're never going to apply the notwithstanding clause to anything, and then the other day—or the next day, be demanding that it be applied to a Supreme Court decision that you clearly didn't know what was coming down. You have to leave yourself some flexibility and understanding of what's going on.

And you shouldn't be speculating about what you may or might—you may not do in the judicial system,

in the penal system, when it comes to these individuals who are rightly incarcerated—and we all believe that they should be incarcerated for a very, very long time—when it is actually within your authority to do the things you're threatening to do. And it causes all sorts of questions for those who are working in the justice system.

So again, we know that we're going to bring this bill to a vote today, and I would ask the government to continue, as opposition members will, to look for different ways to protect children who are otherwise the victim of child exploitation. The world is changing—as it always has—in a rapid pace. And it seems that, the older you get, the faster it seems to be changing.

For those of us who have children in our lives, regardless of what age they are, whether they're younger—my son's a teenager, almost about to leave his teenage years. We've seen the rapid change when it comes to technology, when we—how fast things are happening in the world, how fast young people get information, how the simple click of a button can change their lives forever in devastating ways.

Information is now not only sometimes transmitted to another individual, and intimate images can be transmitted to another individual, but you never get them back. It's not like the days when me and my friend from Portage la Prairie—when you would take a picture to a place and actually get it developed and you had to, sort of, wait for a week for it to come back. These things are very different, and you can't just simply destroy those images; they are there forever.

And the impact that it could have on a child's life is immeasurable, and we've heard these heart-wrenching cases of young people who've taken their life because they can't see any other way past it; they can't believe that there's any other way that they can get past that particular humiliation that they're feeling.

So even the threat of distributing intimate images with this particular legislation deals with is something that should absolutely be codified, and there should be a tort against it as a way to have a deterrence against individuals who would use that particular threat.

And I would, again, ask the government to not only continue their work—there are many fine people in the Department of Justice, I know, who each and every day are looking for ways, who are scanning the environment, who are looking at different ideas from other provinces and other countries and bringing them forward to the policy department and policy individuals within the Department of Justice. They then bring them

forward to the minister, and the minister can consider them.

And I would encourage those folks in the Department of Justice to continue to do that good work. And then I would encourage the minister and other members of the government to take suggestions from the opposition. Not everything here has to be a zero-sum game. Not every time somebody gains something in this House does it have to come at the expense of somebody else. I actually believe that sometimes, everybody can gain from pieces of legislation.

And I know that our House leader believes very strongly in having those discussions and looking at bills that not only should be supported from the government side, but it should be supported from the opposition side as well, whether they deal with topics like this or other topics. Because that, ultimately, is a benefit to all of us. It doesn't come at the expense of another party.

And I do think it's important for the government, led in this particular situation by the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), to not look at everything as a loss if something is given. I use that word in quotations—given—to the opposition. Because it's not given to us, it's not for the benefit of opposition; it's for the benefit of Manitobans. And too much of that is lost, I think, sometimes here when we're having these discussions in the House.

So I would, again, you know, ask that, as we continue to see the world evolve and we continue to see things change in ways that we can't quite expect and that we can't quite predict, that all of us redouble our efforts to find ways to, as much as you can, have legislation to protect children.

* (16:20)

And then we have to go beyond that because you can't always legislate common sense and you can't always legislate away inappropriate or criminal behaviour. Then we have a responsibility beyond that, as individuals who are elected but also who live in Manitoba, who are parents, who are grandparents, to impart that knowledge to the people that we have an influence is—on. And we have, as MLAs, we have more influence on people than others might because we're fortunate to be elected into these positions.

And so we have ways to amplify our voice and we have ways to amplify our concerns in situations. So, quite beyond legislation that we might be bringing

forward, we also have the ability to go and to say that this is something that's crucially important for us as individuals and speak to the young people and others who have influence on young people with their lives.

So I don't want to belabour this point too long because I do know we want to move this bill forward for a vote in this House, and I have no doubt that it is going to pass unanimously because I don't think that there's anybody in this House who isn't concerned about this particular situation.

But at the risk of running into relevance, Honourable Speaker, as this will be my last time to speak in this House before the end of the session, I do want to wish all members and yourself as Speaker and the clerks who are at the table and those who might be listening or who might be listening at another point, I want to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy holiday. However you celebrate the season, I hope that you have a great opportunity to be with your family and that you can have a relaxing time and decompress from a place that sometimes has a lot of pressure in it. And it is important that all of us take that time to decompress and to get some perspective on things that are important in our lives.

So I want to wish that to all the staff—Hansard staff, security staff, everybody who is working in this building.

And because I didn't get the opportunity—this is one thing the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and I have in common; we both didn't get to speak to the Throne Speech, maybe for different reasons—but I do want to also thank the great constituents of Steinbach for their continued support for me and to thank my family, my wife, Kim, and my son, Malachi, for the incredible, incredible support they've been to me throughout my elected life.

So with those, I know, irrelevant words, but I think important, Honourable Speaker, I want to wish everybody a great holiday and I look forward to this bill passing.

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So the question before the House is second reading of Bill 2, The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Amendment Act.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, please, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Please call in the members.

* (17:00)

Order, please.

The question before the House is second reading of bill 2, The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act.

All those in the House in favour of the motion, please rise.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Ayes

Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Goertzen, Hiebert, Johnson, Kennedy, Khan, King, Kostyshyn, Lathlin, Loiselle, Maloway, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Robbins, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Simard, Wiebe.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Ayes 42, Nays 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

The Speaker: Now, before we rise, I would once again remind members, if you have not already done so, please remove the contents of your desk before you leave the Chamber.

At this point in time, I extend an invitation to all members to come to the Speaker's office as have—we have a little get-together just to wind up the session and wish everyone all the best as they go back to their constituencies. I hate when we call this a break, because if we're doing our jobs right, it's really not a break.

So the hour being 5 p.m.—well, past 5 p.m.—this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, or to the call of the Speaker

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 4, 2025

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GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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