



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	Ind.
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, March 12, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

An Honourable Member: On a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Yesterday during question period, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) rose in this Chamber and made a personal attack on me, and I'll quote from Hansard.

The context of it—he was making comments about the MLA from Dawson Trail leaving the PC caucus. Heckling ensued, including my full name being shouted out in this House, which was recorded in Hansard and appears in Hansard, to which the Premier responds: "Yes, we ejected an unethical NDP MLA. You did not have the courage to do the same."

Well, there's a long-standing rule in this Chamber that remarks which question a member's integrity, honesty or character are not in order. The Premier was not called to order, nor asked to withdraw the offensive remarks as is the custom in this House. Unparliamentary language is also not allowed, and members must respect the integrity for all members. Personal attacks, insults are not allowed.

A direct charge or accusation against a member may be only by way of a substantive motion for which a notice is required. There have been no allegations ever made against me, and there has never been any substantive motions involving me. And, of course, for support of this is House of Commons in—Procedure and Practice, page 620, 623, third edition, Bosc and Gagnon.

The Premier has long established a pattern of demeaning and disrespectful behaviour in this House. It's been allowed to continue without comment or correction. It sets the tone for this Chamber, and many of his members mimic the Premier's behaviour. It seems to provide a permission structure for the worst elements in this Chamber.

None of this is in the public interest. Manitobans are losing faith in this government. A serious government doesn't need to demean and insult their opposition. The freedom of speech that we enjoy this Chamber

comes with a responsibility, and the first responsibility is to not abuse the right. The public isn't served by mean-spirited and petty insults.

The Premier has dishonoured his office and dishonours Manitobans by acting in this manner. He brings this proud institution into disrepute. I make this motion at the earliest opportunity, having consulted with Hansard and reviewed the authorities.

The comments of the Premier amounts to an obstruction, interference or intimidation of a sitting MLA. It is a form of bullying. The purpose of a matter of privilege is to maintain the respect and credibility of this Chamber, to uphold its authority and to enforce the enjoyment of privilege by all of its members. No member, especially the Premier, can insult, demean or question the integrity of another member. To allow that would diminish this Chamber and the important work we do here. These comments would not be allowed in a respectful workplace, nor are they allowed here.

I moved, seconded by the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), that the matter be referred to a standing committee of this House.

The Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would caution all members to make sure they keep comments relevant to the matter of privilege.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): It's unfortunate that the member, once again, is getting up in this Chamber to highlight for Manitobans his obsession of the Premier. Quite honestly, Honourable Speaker, at this point it's getting quite sad and ridiculous that the member is so utterly obsessed with the Premier, anything the Premier says, anything the Premier does; he's just obsessed with it.

And so here we are, we've got a lot of business to do today, and once again the member has shown why he was ejected from our caucus. It's not our fault and it's not the Premier's fault that, day in and day out, he shows why he was ejected by our good caucus.

I want to say this, as well: The member, you know, put on the record that the Premier, dishonoured this space, he—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask all members who don't presently have the floor to remain quiet during matters of privilege, because I do need to hear everything that's being said.

MLA Fontaine: I appreciate that, Honourable Speaker.

So once again, the member is putting words on the record like—that the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has dishonoured this space. He's diminished the Chamber. It's a form of billing—bullying and not abusing the right that we have as legislators.

I want to remind the member and everybody in this Chamber that the member has twice now, or maybe even more than that, abused his right in this Chamber. When he missed his spot in rotation to respond to Throne Speech or budget—I can't remember what it was. And when he knew that our colleague, Nello, who was dying, who he knew was dying, and he knew that our beloved colleague was watching the procedures, chose to get up in the Chamber and not allow the Premier to give what were his final honouring remarks to Nello. He knew that, and yet he strategically wasted everybody's time in this Chamber talking about whatever that nobody in the history of Manitoba is actually going to remember what he said in those 30 minutes.

But you know who remembers those 30 minutes? Every single member on this side of the House, and more importantly, Nello's family. So if the member opposite wants to get up and talk about dishonouring and diminishing this space, he should look in the mirror.

The Speaker: No further members wishing to speak? Then I will advise members that I will take this under advisement.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 36—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister for Health, that Bill 36, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Fontaine: The amendments in Bill 36 widen the range of young people who can access supports in the CFS system, ensuring young adults transitioning into independence are not left behind. Bill 36 also creates a practical, collaborative process for Indigenous service providers to request the termination of provincial supervision or guardianship orders, eliminating unnecessary court delays and removing barriers to Indigenous jurisdiction.

The legislation continues to reinforce our government's commitment to working to nation-to-nation with

Indigenous governments, broadening how Indigenous law is recognized within provincial child well frameworks. This is a key component in advancing my priority as Minister of Families to return the care of children and youth to their families and communities. I'm proud to bring forward Bill 36 for the House's consideration.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 40—The Elections Amendment Act

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families, that Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

* (13:40)

Mr. Wiebe: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act, to the Legislature. Bill 40 amends The Elections Act to require a candidate to disclose whether they have contravened The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act, in cases where the Ethics Commissioner imposed a fine, suspension or vacating of a member's seat.

This bill enhances transparency to the public around past ethics violations by current and former MLAs if they choose to run again for office and brings Manitoba to the forefront in Canada in accountability for elected officials.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 42—The Motor Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): I move, seconded by the Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure, that Bill 42, The Motor Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: This bill makes several improvements to MPI products and services.

First, the bill expands counselling benefits from MPI to those who have suffered serious injury in an

accident—or to a person who even witnesses a highly traumatic accident. Second, the bill will make MPI the sole regulator of driver training here in this province. Third, the bill modernizes the definition of antique vehicle from The Drivers and Vehicles Act and allows it to be set in regulation instead.

And, fourthly, the bill expands the permitted personal use of farm-plated trucks to better reflect how farm pickup trucks are used by modern farm families.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 44—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2026

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), that Bill 44, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2026, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: My pleasure to rise today to introduce 2026's version of The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act.

This annual omnibus bill corrects drafting, typographical and numbering errors. Amendments are made to the French version of various acts to update language and terminology to assure compatibility between English and French versions.

Other minor amendments are also made to various acts to provide clarity and consistency in Manitoba's statute book. I look forward to providing more detailed information on this bill at second reading.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 13—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (MLA Cable), that Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

Our government is taking historic action with the largest expansion to rent control in decades. Bill 13 will require mandatory review of rent regulation every five years. This bill also removes old orders against tenants, require landlords to file more information about their rental units, strengthen notice requirement by showing occupancy units and expand the scope of administrative penalties.

These amendments will work together with upcoming regulation changes to expand rent control and limit allowable guideline rent increases as part of our work to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 48—The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes)

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes), that Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment Act and Planning Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change, that Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes), be now read a first time.

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act. This bill will allow statutory easement on title when public reserve land is dedicated or conveyed to continue on title.

The bill also gives authority to municipalities and the Crown to grant new statutory easement after the land has become public reserve land. This will give notice to the public of easement area and the nature of the buried utilities and will 'facilitate' servicing of lands adjacent to the public reserve land.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 49—The Business Practices Amendment Act

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that bill 48, The Business Practices Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce Bill 49, The Business Practice Amendment Act. Our government is taking action on rising food prices. This will make it unfair business practice to use consumers' personal data to charge them more for any good or service. This will apply to all online platforms, as well as any electronic self-labelling and brick-and-mortar stores.

This bill will make Manitoba the first in Canada to go after these unfair practices. We are working hard to make life more affordable for all Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 20—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes), that Bill 20, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, be now read the first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: This bill gives Manitoba Hydro the ability, when approved by government, to curtail power to crypto mining operations during periods of high demand. Crypto mining remains a low-value driver to the Manitoba economy, and new operations are already ineligible under our regulations.

By giving Hydro this tool, we help protect energy reliability for Manitobans, especially during our winter peaks. This amendment ensures our grid remains reliable, stable, dependable and focused on serving the long-term needs of Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

* (13:50)

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 39—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Amendment Act

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I move, seconded by the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (Mr. Moses), that Bill 39, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba et la Loi sur l'administration des impôts et des taxes et divers impôts et taxes, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: These amendments create a new levy on large-scale data centres, cryptocurrency or other large power supply projects. They ensure that as these industries expand, they contribute their fair share to the costs of maintaining and expanding Manitoba's clean energy grid. This is a balanced, forward-looking measure that supports system planning and protects Manitoba Hydro ratepayers.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 46—The Securities Amendment Act

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, that Bill 46, The Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Sala: Our capital markets have changed and these amendments ensure the rules keep pace. Bill 46 updates Manitoba securities laws so regulators can better protect investors and hold bad actors to account, particularly in today's digital marketplace. By closing long-standing gaps and aligning with other provinces, these amendments strengthen oversight, restore confidence and ensure Manitoba's capital markets work for everyday investors.

Honourable Speaker, I'm very pleased to present this bill for the House's consideration.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 37—The Environmental Statutes
Amendment Act**

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (Mr. Moses), that Bill 37, The Environmental Statutes Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Moyes: Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House to introduce this bill, legislation that strengthens Manitoba's environmental governance and modernizes three important environmental statutes: the environmental—The Environment Act, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act and The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act.

The bill improves transparency, enhances enforcement tools and ensures that the cost of environmental protection are borne by those who create the risk. The bill expands The Environment Act's public registry, giving Manitobans access to information that has long been difficult to obtain.

The bill further modernizes our waste management framework by updating how the waste reduction and recycling support levy is determined under the WRAP act.

These changes align Manitoba with best practices across Canada and with the commitment from our government to protect Manitoba's environment for generations to come.

Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 37 for the consideration of the House.

Thank you.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 50—The Pharmaceutical Amendment,
Regulated Health Professions Amendment and
Public Health Amendment Act**

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith), that Bill 50, The Pharmaceutical

Amendment, Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Public Health Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Asagwara: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 50, The Pharmaceutical Amendment, Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Public Health Amendment Act.

This bill, which includes amendments to The Pharmaceutical Act, The Regulated Health Professions Act and The Public Health Act, will allow pharmacists to issue therapeutic substitutions without the authorization of the original prescriber, to align Manitoba more closely with other jurisdictions, allow two or more colleges of regulated health professions to amalgamate if it is in the interest of the colleges and the public interest and will enable individuals held pursuant to a detention order under the Public Health Act to apply to have that order altered or varied.

It will also allow medical officers to make similar requests, as well as allow for requests to extend the duration of the detention order to be heard by a Provincial Court judge rather than a judge of the Court of the King's bench.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 38—The Public Schools Amendment and
Manitoba School Boards Association
Amendment Act**

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), that Bill 38, The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des commissions scolaires du Manitoba, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Schmidt: I am pleased to introduce Bill 38, the public schools and Manitoba School Boards Association amendment act. This bill broadens the definition of bullying in the PSA to include harm to individuals, groups and the wider school community, and to include bullying through new technologies such as artificial intelligence.

It also adds the requirement for school boards to hire a superintendent and that superintendents must hold a valid teaching certificate. Finally, this bill allows Indigenous educational organizations such as the Manitoba First Nations resource education centre to become a full member of the Manitoba School Boards Association, which is yet another way our government is working towards creating one Manitoba.

This bill is an example of our government taking proactive steps to protect students and working with our sector partners on our shared priorities.

Thank you very much. Merci. Miigwech.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 41—The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training, that Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act; Loi sur la promotion de l'inclusion dans le sport amateur, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Kennedy: I am pleased to introduce Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act.

This bill requires sports organizations to develop and implement a policy on inclusion, to complete training on inclusion, and to complete an assessment of the demographic composition of their membership, with aims to identify programs and initiatives that will enhance inclusion in their sport.

This bill furthers our government's commitment to a safe and equitable sport system where every child knows they have the right to play.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

* (14:00)

Bill 47—The Apprenticeship and Certification Amendment Act

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training, that Bill 47, the apprenticeship certification—Apprenticeship

and Certification Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, seconded by the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training, that Bill 47, The Apprenticeship and Certification Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Moses: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 47, which amends the Apprenticeship and Certification Act. These amendments are essential to strengthening Manitoba's skilled trade workforce, support labour mobility across Canada and improve transparency and confidence in our apprenticeship and certification system.

The proposed amendments provide the authority to create an online registry and credential verification for those certified by Manitoba in a designated trade or occupation. Additionally, the amendments will update regulation making, information sharing and privacy requirements. By implementing this registry, Manitoba will continue to lead Canada in jurisdictions and deliver on a national target set by the forum of labour market ministers to implement digital verification of trade credentials by June 2026.

This certification verification tool will help Manitobans easily confirm qualifications of certified journeypersons while also supporting the recruitment and integration of new skilled tradespeople into Manitoba's workforce to help drive economic growth.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: It is the pleasure to the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 45—The Yellowquill University College Act and Amendments to The Advanced Education Administration Act

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures (Mr. Bushie), that Bill 45, The Yellowquill University College Act and Amendments to The Advanced Education Administration Act; Loi sur le Yellowquill University College et modification de la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Cable: I am so pleased to introduce Bill 45, The Yellowquill University College Act and Amendments

to the Advanced Education Administration Act. This is a new bill to introduce the Yellowquill University College Act to the Legislative Assembly. The intent is to propose new legislation to formally recognize Yellowquill University College as a Manitoba post-secondary institution.

Honourable Speaker, I want to sincerely thank Yellowquill University College for their patience with the Manitoba government and Manitoba Legislative legal services for embarking on a first-of-its-kind legislation co-development process. This is a true partnership which we are incredibly proud of.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: It is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 43—The Highway Traffic Amendment and Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Naylor: I am pleased to introduce Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act. The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act and the Drivers and Vehicles Act to introduce two new vehicle classifications for personal electric vehicles such as e-scooters and three-wheeled vehicles, along with rules for their use on the roads.

Additional amendments will restrict the level of automated driver assistance features that may be used on Manitoba roadways and will require overweight and over-dimensional vehicles and trailers operating under special permits to be registered and plated.

I look forward to providing many more details on this bill as it progresses through all stages of reading.

Thank you.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 204—The Timely Construction of Residential Housing Act

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I move, second by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 204, The Timely Construction of Residential Housing Act, be now read a first time.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Fort Garry, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, that Bill 204, the time—*[interjection]*

Order, please.

The Timely Construction of Residential Housing Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Wasyliv: I'm pleased to introduce the timely construction residential housing act, a bill that will encourage residential housing projects to be completed in a timely manner.

Across Manitoba, housing affordability has become a growing concern, particularly for young families and first-time home buyers trying to enter the housing market. At the same time, many approved housing developments sit stalled for years after building permits have been issued.

In my own constituency of Fort Garry, two major residential developments have remained unfinished, one of them for more than 12 years.

This bill would give municipalities the ability to revoke a building permit if developers fail to begin construction, suspend projects for extended periods or fail to complete housing within a reasonable time frame.

Housing permits should lead to housing being built. This legislation would create an incentive for projects to move forward so that Manitobans can see homes constructed, communities grow and more families gain access to housing.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 205—The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I move, second by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 205, The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wasyliv: I'm pleased to introduce The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act, a bill that strengthens transparency and consumer protection in Manitoba milk pricing system. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: Milk is a staple in nearly every Manitoba household, but right now it is difficult for consumers to know what the official price of milk is supposed to be or whether they are paying a fair price at the checkout.

This bill restores transparency by requiring the Manitoba Farm Products Marketing Council to clearly publish milk prices in—pricing orders and present them in language that's easy for consumers to understand. Manitobans should be able to see the price of a basic staple and know whether they're being charged fairly.

This legislation would ensure that milk pricing information is publicly available, clearly communicated and accessible to everyone. When it comes to essential groceries, transparency is one of the simplest and most effective forms of consumer protection.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

No further introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to mark Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation are abominable crimes occurring here in Manitoba, across Canada and across the globe.

These deplorable, disgusting crimes are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men and their associates, who form networks that sexually prey on the most vulnerable, predominantly women and girls. Black and Indigenous women and girls face the highest risk.

The men who profit from and take pleasure in violating women and girls come from every socio-economic and cultural background. This really means men can no longer hide between—behind the excuse of, it's not me.

* (14:10)

Men must take responsibility for confronting the violence within their own ranks. Ending this crisis requires men speaking openly about why so many men commit acts of violence and challenging their culture of domination and entitlement that fuels it.

Human trafficking also exposes the complicity of privilege. The scandals surrounding Jeffrey Epstein and our unfortunately own Peter Nygård are stark reminders of how deeply embedded these networks can be. Powerful men, and those around them, facilitated and enabled horrible exploitation across the globe.

In Manitoba, we recognize Human Trafficking Awareness Day alongside Stop Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Week, reflecting the clear and devastating connection between these crimes. Since 2014, reports of online child sexual exploitation in Canada have increased by more than 347 per cent.

We know women will always stand up to raise awareness and fight against this and surround survivors with protection, healing, recognition and love.

But my question is really to men, or men that call themselves allies—whether or not it's men in this Chamber, or in this city, or men across Manitoba, or across Canada, or men across the globe. What are you going to do about this? How are you going to work to end male violence and the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of the most vulnerable?

Today, I also remember Tracia Owen, whose story inspired Manitoba's Tracia's Trust strategy. Our government is revitalizing this strategy to respond to the evolving tactics of traffickers, pedophiles and abusers, and the work—to work with community more closely.

I dedicate this statement to survivors, who courage drives us forward. Our government continues to stand with survivors and remains steadfast in protecting Manitobans, especially our youth, from these crimes.

Miigwech.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize Human Trafficking Awareness Day and to reaffirm our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Human trafficking is a grave and disturbing crime. It is the exploitation of another human being for profit through force, manipulation or coercion.

While many believe this is a problem that happens somewhere else, the harsh reality is this happens here in Canada, right here in our home province of Manitoba.

Nationally, 93 per cent of identified trafficking victims are women and girls, and approximately one quarter are under the age of 18. These are not just statistics. These are daughters, sisters, friends and members of our communities whose trust has been betrayed and whose freedom has been stolen.

As PCs, we believe that public safety is a core responsibility of government. Protecting women, children, vulnerable Manitobans must always be a priority. Human Trafficking Awareness Day is about more

than recognition. It is about prevention, enforcement and meaningful support for survivors.

Traffickers are often not strangers: 34 per cent of police-reported human-trafficking victims and accused persons were trafficked by an intimate partner. They frequently build calculated relationships with their victims, gaining trust before exploiting it. That is why awareness and education are very critical. Parents, teachers, community leaders and young people themselves must understand the warning signs so exploitation can be stopped before it takes hold.

There are steps every Manitoban can take. Report suspicious activity to law enforcement. Learn the signs of exploitation. Support organizations working on the front lines. By staying informed and vigilant, we strengthen our collective ability to prevent this crime.

Human trafficking has no place in our province. By standing united, through strong laws, effective enforcement and compassionate support, we can protect vulnerable Manitobans and ensure that those who commit these crimes are held accountable.

Together, we can build safer communities and send a clear message: Exploitation will not be tolerated here in Manitoba.

And I do want to give a shout-out to The Joy Smith Foundation and acknowledge the work that that organization does to bring awareness and to raise funds to support the awareness and the protection of these young people and those that are trafficked.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Umunna Igbo Cultural Association of Manitoba

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, this year marks a meaningful milestone for a community organization that has helped strengthen Manitoba's cultural fabric for decades: the 40th anniversary of the Umunna Igbo Cultural Association of Manitoba.

The story of Umunna began simply when five Igbos living in Winnipeg gathered in a Transcona home for a social visit. That evening, they began discussing the idea of creating a formal association where Igbo families in Manitoba could remain connected to their culture, language and traditions. What began as rotating meetings in one another's homes, homes that I remember distinctly as a child being in, Honourable Speaker, soon grew into something enduring. The Umunna association was eventually registered and formally

incorporated in 1990, and today, the vision continues to flourish.

Igbo peoples, whose roots trace back to south-eastern Nigeria and whose global population numbers in the tens of millions, have made significant contributions to life here in Manitoba. Across public service, education, arts and community leadership, Igbo Manitobans continue to shape and strengthen our great province.

Through cultural performances, such as the vibrant Igbo masquerade, dance groups and entrepreneurship, audiences across Manitoba have been able to experience the depth and the beauty and the strength of Igbo traditions. And the Umunna association has helped shape important Igbo history with the wider public through contributions to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights' exhibition reflecting on the Nigeria-Biafra civil war.

For more than two decades, Umunna has also been bringing together scholars, leaders and community members to explore themes of belonging, understanding and cultural exchange through the Igbo Educational Lecture Series, hosted in partnership with the University of Winnipeg Global College.

We have Dr. Chigbo, president of the Umunna Igbo Cultural Association, and members from Umunna joining us here in the gallery, including community matriarchs, chiefs and elders who made it possible for me to be standing in this Chamber, delivering this statement.

I'd ask all members to join me, stand in this House and recognize the amazing leaders of Umunna, 40 years. Let's all show them our congratulations and thanks for strengthening our province, fostering understanding and making Manitoba a beautiful place to call home. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I'd remind visitors—*[interjection]* Order, please.

I would remind visitors that they are not allowed to participate in what's going on, so I'd ask them to not do that anymore.

Ronald McDonald House Manitoba

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): It is truly an honour to speak today about the incredible impact of the Ronald McDonald House of Manitoba.

At its heart, this organization is about something that is very simple but profoundly important. It's about

keeping families together during some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

When a child becomes seriously ill or injured and must travel to Winnipeg for treatment, families are often faced with overly whelming stress: emotional, logistical and financial. The Ronald McDonald House of Manitoba provides a home away from home, allowing families to stay close to the child while they receive the care at the Children's Hospital.

Located just steps from the Health Sciences Centre, the house can support up to 40 families at a time, offering comfortable rooms, meals and everyday supports that make an incredibly difficult situation just a little easier.

* (14:20)

But the Ronald McDonald offers more than just a place to stay. It offers compassion, community and the reassurance that families are not facing these challenges alone. By removing the barriers such as travel and accommodation costs, the organization helps families focus on what truly matters: the health and well-being of their children.

The work of the Ronald McDonald House is made simple—is made possible by dedicated staff, volunteers, generous supporters across our province who believe deeply in caring for one another. Their commitment strengthens families and strengthens our communities.

Last night at the gala, at the fundraiser for the home, they had—which I've been to for many years—it was a great evening. And the advocate family, Derrick and Katie Kerkowich, Mack and Evie are from Brandon. And some here might know Katie Lee. She worked here in the Leg. for the MLA Leanne Rowat.

Evie was diagnosed with leukemia, and the good news is, Evie will be ringing the chemo bell in April.

So I'd like my fellow colleagues to stand up and welcome Wendy Galagan, the CEO of Manitoba house, and her leadership team: Freddie Ty, Eden Ramsay, Cam McGregor joining us in the gallery. Your work truly makes a difference.

Bilal Community and Family Resource Centre

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Honourable Speaker, I have the humble privilege of welcoming Somali elders and youth from the Bilal Community and Family Resource Centre.

Earlier this winter, the world watched as President Donald Trump began his reverse migration policy

targeting refugees and foreign nationals. ICE raids ensued. Temporary protected status revoked. Fear, violence rocked communities. And, even with the President's long history of deriding minorities, it was still a shocking blow in the way that he repeatedly singled out one nationality in particular: Somalis.

Abiding by the rules of this House, I'm unable to quote completely the degrading language used, but he said: We're at a tipping point. We could go one way or the other and we're going to go the wrong way if we keep taking in garbage into our country.

Here in Canada, in response to rising anti-immigrant sentiment, the federal government is also drastically reducing the amount of newcomers here. Deep cuts to language training and settlement programs have followed. The message is received even without the xenophobic tirades.

Somali elders have raised concerns about youth who have internalized sustained, racist, dehumanizing language and continue to experience racial and religious discrimination at school. They raised concerns about job discrimination, underemployment, the need for more basic job training and better accreditation pathways.

Somali elders want Manitobans to know that they are a generous and resilient people that do their part to contribute to Manitoba. At Bilal, I met labourers, business owners, social workers, truck drivers, city workers, doctors, child-care workers, gig workers who are all doing their part to contribute to Manitoba.

Under the exceptional leadership of our Premier (Mr. Kinew), our government's message has been clear: We are one—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd just remind members that when they're doing a member's statement, if they're a minister, they're not allowed to comment on the government.

MLA Marcelino: My message has been clear. We are one Manitoba, we are one people and we have one shared destiny. We are all newcomers who have been graciously welcomed by the Indigenous peoples of this land. We live in tough prairie towns and together, we are thriving to make our communities safe places with good-paying jobs, a place where we uphold Canadian values of respect and dignity for all.

Today, I'm proud to stand with the Somali—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

The Speaker: Is there a leave for the minister to conclude her statement? *[Agreed]*

MLA Marcelino: Today, I'm proud to stand with the Somali community in Manitoba to say that you are a treasure, that you are a valuable part of our mosaic and that Manitoba is a richer place because you have made it home.

I ask all members to acknowledge our guests: Mudaidin Sheikh Omar, Kadar Ahmed, Anteneh Abraha, Janick Thacker, Khadija Maiga, Shivani Mohan, Aisha Ali, Saad Chaudhary, Magalie Sibomana.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Growing Years Family Resource Centre

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): The Growing Years Family Resource Centre originally started as part of the Selkirk Friendship Centre.

Growing Years has been a trusted resource in the community for 27 years, supporting families who are prenatal and those with children who are up to six years old.

All of their resources, services and programs are free and they offer many different programs, most on a drop-in basis so families can come when it works for them.

They have a prenatal program, postnatal mental health program, specific programs for both infants and toddlers, a drop-in playgroup where families get to come and talk to a pediatric physiotherapist, a group specifically for those children who are neurodiverse and a Circle of Security Parenting program.

All of the programs include an in-educational component where they have presentations to parents and caregivers on topics related to their children's health and development.

They work with preschool children in the community, providing them with health and therapy services that provide early intervention for many different challenges before they get into the school system, which gives them the best chance at success when they get there.

Last year, they served 257 parents and guardians, as well as 348 children. Their goal is to build lasting, trusting relationships. Most people don't care how much they know until they know how much they care. It's through these relationships that they build lasting trust.

Growing Years are often the bridge to other support programs and services in the community.

Honourable Speaker, I would like to ask all of my colleagues to thank the wonderful people of Growing Years for the hard work that they have done and continue to do.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to recognizing the next member to speak, we have some guests seated in the public gallery from Silverwoods *[phonetic]* school. We have seven grade 9 students under the direction of Blayne Stobbe-Wiebe. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Midland (Mrs. Stone).

We welcome you here today.

Art Programs at Westwood Collegiate

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize the outstanding arts programs and teachers at Westwood Collegiate, a long-time leader in performing arts education and a true point of pride for the Westwood community.

Band teacher Darrell Chrisp is new to Westwood but has taught in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division for 24 years. In just a short time, she's made her mark: the senior jazz band earned a trophy at the 2026 Manitoba Band Association jazz festival, and three ensembles were invited to the National Music Festival.

Choir director Heather Neufeld has taught at Westwood for six years. A highlight for her was when the concert choir performed with singer-songwriter JP Hoe at Union Station during Winnipeg's 150 celebrations. The choir is now preparing to perform at the Whistler Cantando Festival.

Drama teacher Kelly Loewen, now in his seventh year, takes great pride in his students' growth. His department staged the 2025 production of Puffs, featuring more than 20 performers and over 200 sound and lighting cues.

Finally, dance teacher Brian Toms has inspired the students for 19 years, taking them to New York, Florida, Toronto and Chicago to experience the arts first-hand.

This past December, his senior musical theatre ensemble wowed sold-out audiences with Sister Act, a show that I was very fortunate to attend. It was fantastic. The talent and energy were incredible.

Thanks to Mrs. Chrisp, Ms. Neufeld, Mr. Loewen, Mr. Toms and the entire Westwood staff and the students who continue to thrive and express themselves artistically and at the highest level.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Basic Personal Tax Rate—Exemption Increase Request for Government to Support Resolution

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, on this side of House, we focus on Manitoba families, enabling their success and trusting their vision for the future of our province.

* (14:30)

This is why this morning, I introduced a motion to increase the basic personal exemption to \$30,000. This means someone making \$30,000 would pay no provincial income tax. This means families could save up to \$3,000 a year. This means more families can keep more of their hard-earned income.

Will the Premier join us in a real affordability measure today and pass—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, we're always going to be there to help you with the cost of living. That's why the first thing we did when we came into office was we cut the gas taxes. We also cut taxes by raising the basic personal exemption in our first year in office. We've been there cutting the price of energy, cutting the price of groceries, and there'll be more good news when we bring our budget—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —on March 24.

Now the PCs, on the other hand, what did they cut? They cut emergency rooms. They cut hospitals. They cut nurses. Any time they announce a cut, it means that you're going to get worse health care, so just ask them at the doorstep, which emergency room are you going to close this time?

We'll work together with you when it comes to our tax measures, like raising the basic personal exemption. When it comes to the members opposite, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

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

Mrs. Stone: This Premier promised indexation on income taxes. He promised he would increase the 'brasic' personal amount, but what did he do? He broke both of those promises. We know that Manitobans are struggling, and they are struggling deeply.

A single mother earning just \$40,000 would keep an extra \$130 a month or \$1,500 a year under our plan. This is money for rent, food and just a little extra to go to the movies with their children.

Why is this Premier refusing Manitobans from keeping their hard-earned money?

Mr. Kinew: We've been there for all of Manitoba, for the single mother that they talked about, when we cut the gas tax, when we raised the basic personal exemption, when we made the tax credit system in Manitoba more fair and just.

And you know what we did as part of our one Manitoba approach? We said to those who are well off, those who've been given so much in our society, why don't you contribute your fair share along the way?

What did the PC's announce today? Tax cuts for millionaires, back up to the same old tricks, shame on them. Let's help real Manitobans with real assistance on the cost of living. That's what you'll see on March 24. Not more handouts for millionaires like the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

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

Mrs. Stone: Perhaps the Premier should get his figures correct. A \$30,000 basic personal exemption would mean individuals earning just \$30,000 would pay no provincial income tax. A single mom could keep—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —up to \$1,500 a year. A dual-income family can keep up to \$3,000 a year. This is not a Premier who wants people to have. This is a Premier who punishes hard-working Manitobans.

On our side of the House—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —we want to reward those Manitobans.

Why does this Premier expect so little from himself, his Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), and his entire government caucus?

Mr. Kinew: You know, everybody that the member talks about, we're there to help you. We were there to help the single mom, we were there to help the family of three when we cut the gas tax, when we tackled grocery prices, when we made tax credits fairer in the province of Manitoba.

But, again, what did the members opposite do when they were sitting around the Cabinet table? What did the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) do when he was at the Cabinet table and that single mom was facing 8 per cent inflation? Absolutely nothing. They didn't do a single thing in office except mail out cheques to millionaires.

We said, you know what, millionaires have been given so much by our society, why don't you join us in investing in the future? What did the member for Midland say? That's the complete opposite direction that we should be going.

Well, why don't we have a vote in Manitoba and see who thinks millionaires should pay their fair share so that the rest of us can get some help with the cost of living?

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

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, 90 cents is what Manitobans save every time they fill up under this Premier's plan. That does not even buy—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —a can of soup with the cost of living crisis that—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —Manitobans are facing today. Gone are the days where Manitoba could—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —compete with other provinces. This Premier is happy that Manitoba's economy is stagnant. He's happy that other provinces are outperforming Manitoba.

We say, no more. We want to stand with Manitoba families. We want to give them their hard-earned dollars back so they can make the decisions of how they spend their own money for their families.

Why does this Premier refuse to—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —allow Manitobans to keep their own dollars?

Mr. Kinew: Coming into office, our team cut the gas tax to put more money in your pocket every time you go to the pump. That was \$350 million put back into the pockets of the people of Manitoba.

We raised the basic personal exemption. We cut income taxes. We cut corporate taxes. We even cut the payroll tax.

They cut health care. They cut emergency rooms. They cut the number of nurses working in the province. And they don't want you to save money when you go to the grocery store. In fact, their recent leader, the member for Fort Whyte, said, and I quote, on February 28 of this year: We don't want to give you two cents savings on milk for one litre. End quote.

Why not? Why not help people out at the grocery store? I guess that's not—that's why he doesn't do the lead in question period anymore.

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

Mrs. Stone: Does the Premier have an issue with the fact that this PC team wants to save—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The front bench of the government needs to come to order.

Mrs. Stone: Does this Premier have an issue with the fact that our PC team wants to save struggling Manitobans up to \$3,000 a year? Or does this Premier have an issue with the fact that our Leader of the Opposition actually encourages females to ask questions in question period?

Increasing the basic personal amount to \$30,000 will not only help struggling Manitobans, but it will also fuel our stagnant economy.

Why does this Premier oppose such a virtuous cycle?

Mr. Kinew: What I oppose is the fact that rich people like Heather Stefanson will benefit the most from the tax policy being brought forward by the Progressive Conservatives.

We stand for helping you and your family with real relief when you go to the gas station, when you go to the grocery store and when you have to pay your mortgage or your rent payments. More good news coming on March 24, budget day in Manitoba.

But the members opposite, always standing up for Heather Stefanson: not only trying to give her a big tax break here with this supposed announcement; but their leader, in the media just yesterday, when pressed about Sio Silica—because PC MLAs left their caucus this very week because of Sio Silica—he said, and I quote: As far as I'm concerned, the issue is resolved. End quote.

News flash for the Leader of the Opposition: Sio is not resolved; this is a live issue. The drinking water of people in southeastern Manitoba depends on it, and your political future depends on addressing the issues it has raised in your caucus. Sio Silica—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Stone: Our PC team is standing up for that single mom who is going to a food bank because she cannot afford to put food on the table for her family. Our PC team—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —is standing up for seniors who cannot afford medication or quality-of-life aids. We are standing up for the Manitobans that are within \$200 of bankruptcy. That's what this basic personal exemption increase does. It stands up for those Manitobans who are deeply struggling.

Why does this Premier want to refuse Manitobans their hard-earned dollars?

The Speaker: Order, please.

* (14:40)

The honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care needs to come to order.

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, we are the party of people who had to earn it. We are the party of people who had to fight for what we have. And that's why we're here in government, every single day, fighting for you, the good people of Manitoba.

We cut the gas tax. They did nothing when gas prices shot through the roof and inflation was at 8 per cent. We're bringing competition to the grocery sector. In Steinbach, right now, there's a grocery store that is keeping four other locations empty to raise prices on you. We're going to knock that down.

We're taking steps each and every day. What have they done on that side of the House to help with the cost of living? Well, they gave the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) 500 grand. And now they're back proposing a tax cut that will benefit millionaires the most in our society.

We love millionaires, but they've been lucky; they should pay their fair share. And the rest of Manitobans, the middle class, the hard-working people who power the economy, you should finally get a break—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Basic Personal Tax Rate—Exemption Increase Request for Government to Support Resolution

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Manitobans and everyone out there can hear the sheer hypocrisy by this Premier and that entire government.

They have been heckling non-stop when our member from Midland, a strong female, stands up and asks the first question. What does the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) do? *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Heckles and attacks.

Minister of Health heckles and attacks because I, as a leader, am strong and capable enough to know—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —how to support a strong woman to ask the first question of the Premier.

Unlike the Premier—he goes low—I will empower and lift up everyone on this side of the House.

Why is the Premier so opposed to a tax cut, the basic personal tax exemption being doubled and allowing families to save \$3,000? The family that barely gets by, that makes 30 or 40 thousand dollars a year, will double their savings.

Why is the Premier so opposed to making life actually affordable for Manitobans?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, I'm going to be Captain Obvious over here, in addition to my responsibility for Health, and say that the Premier of Manitoba works so hard for all Manitobans, encourages representation, encourages people to aspire for their dreams; that we have the most representative and diverse caucus in Manitoba's history on this side of the House, working for all Manitobans, making sure the voices of all Manitobans are heard, making sure the needs of all Manitobans are being addressed.

This Premier has made sure that we're taking real action on affordability and making life more affordable for all those families, especially those who need it after eight years of a failed PC government that made life more expensive and didn't care about single moms—or any moms, for that matter.

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

Mr. Khan: I will agree with the Health Minister on one thing, is that Premier is full of hot air and empty announcements.

For two and a half years, this Premier has refused to deliver any results for families, making life less affordable in Manitoba. Honourable Speaker, it's time for results. Manitobans want actions.

On this side of the House, the member from Midland has proposed a real resolution that will double the level of basic personal tax exemption, allowing families to keep \$3,000 more in their pockets, not 2 cents a litre like the Premier is heckling from over there. He thinks 2 cents a litre of milk makes a difference. We think \$3,000 a year for a family makes a difference.

Will this Premier stand up today and support the member for Midland's (Mrs. Stone) resolution today?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I know that the Leader of the Opposition was gifted \$500,000 by Heather Stefanson, the same person who just forgot about \$31 million that she had in her back pocket.

But on this side of the House, we're led by a Premier that understands that every single day, Manitobans are making tough choices. And so when we freeze the hydro rates, when we cut the gas tax, when we freeze the cost of milk, when we take real actions that make life more affordable for Manitobans, it's really important that the Leader of the Opposition—who's probably still spending that \$500,000—doesn't minimize that for Manitobans.

That's real action, real results. More to come on March 24.

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

Mr. Khan: I can honestly say I'm disappointed in that response and the response by the—I'm not surprised, but I'm actually disappointed that they wouldn't support this.

This is a common sense resolution that would double the level of basic personal tax exemption, doubling how much money families can save. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) wants to heckle me, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), the Minister of Health, the entire front bench is—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —they're not listening, they're not taking this serious. All the attacks, all insults, all heckles and jokes—the Speaker can hear it, we can all hear it in here.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Stop the clock. I've called the Minister of Families to order and I'm calling her to order again, but I'm also cautioning all members on the government side that the heckling is getting out of hand.

Mr. Khan: Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker, for acknowledging that the Minister of Families is completely outrageous today when she continues to heckle and insult me for empowering and encouraging a strong member from Midland to stand up and bring this resolution forward.

So I'll ask the Premier once again: Why is the NDP government so against saving Manitobans \$3,000 a year—Manitoban families who are struggling under grocery price inflation, under higher education property taxes?

Will the Premier today support the member for Midland's resolution to double the basic personal tax exemption?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I see here that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to position himself as someone who uplifts women.

I find it really concerning, however, that he currently has allowed two people to bring their names forward to run for the PC party who are openly, publicly and proudly anti-choice; people who have advocated for the rights of women to make choices about their own essential health care to be stripped away from them.

The Leader of the Opposition is championing people who celebrated the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Honourable Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition doesn't care about single mothers, doesn't care about the rights of women, certainly doesn't care about how mothers in this province are going to afford to feed their families.

On this side of the House, we respect Manitobans, we're making life more affordable. And of course, for women in every—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: To the Minister of Health, there's no pretending to empower women on this side of the House. I am not the one with a criminal record for assaulting a woman, Honourable Speaker.

A penny saved is a penny earned; thousands of dollars that Manitoban families will save. *[interjection]* I guess that hit a nerve with the Premier (Mr. Kinew), as he wants to heckle me while I talk about real savings for families.

Doubling the basic personal tax exemption—

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —would allow families to save up to \$3,000, Honourable Speaker. Instead of that, this Premier wants to heckle, he wants to attack, he wants to insult.

He's not taking this seriously; it's not a serious Premier. Under this Premier, food inflation is the second highest in the country at 6.1 per cent. Families are struggling to get by, and this common sense resolution will increase the amount of money families will save to \$3,000.

So I'll ask again, will the Premier stop heckling and support this resolution today?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and members on that side of the House continue to show Manitobans that they have learned nothing.

They haven't changed. They focused on sending checks to millionaires and billionaires, and their actions in this House show that they still only continue to care about the most well-off Manitobans. That is no surprise. The Leader of the Opposition—very happily, during a COVID crisis—accepted \$500,000 from Heather Stefanson. So, of course, he continues to look out for her best interests.

We are focused on the best interests of Manitobans. We are focused on budget after budget after soon-to-come budget, making life more affordable for Manitobans. We've done this the first time, the second time, the third time. The best Finance Minister in Canada is going to make sure that good work continues in our province.

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, yes, we support businesses and we support a strong growing economy. Under this NDP government, the Premier and his failed Finance Minister have killed the economic horse that he so highly spoke about.

Honourable Speaker, we realize that stronger businesses pay stronger wages. Those wages pay more taxes. That grows the economy. Under this NDP government, Manitoba has the worst economy in the entire country. That is a complete failure of this NDP government.

* (14:50)

Stronger businesses, stronger jobs, stronger pay-cheques and, with a common sense resolution brought forward by the member from Midland—if the Premier would stop heckling and just listen—double the basic personal tax exemption, families will save up to \$3,000.

Will the Premier support that common sense resolution and make life more affordable for Manitobans today?

MLA Asagwara: I want to remind Manitobans that the Leader of the Opposition is the same person who thanked Donald Trump—thanked Donald Trump—for attacking our democracy, our sovereignty; for tariffs.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to endorse and, quite frankly, champion Donald Trump's behaviours. He's allowing two people to run for his party who are openly anti-choice and anti-women in this province. The Leader of the Opposition continues to bring forward resolutions that would see middle-class working women in this province not do better. He wants to advance the needs of rich people like Heather Stefanson.

The Leader of the Opposition and every PC member is out of touch, Honourable Speaker. We're going to focus on Manitobans. Maybe he should focus on getting—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Khan: I know it comes as a shock for the NDP caucus that, surprisingly, if they work hard, they will have success. That's what we've been raised with our entire life. The harder the work, the better opportunities, the more success you will have, Honourable Speaker.

It comes as a shock to the NDP and their social thinking, socialist ideology that if you actually work hard—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —you will be provided more opportunities.

We believe on this side of the House that families that work hard, families under this affordability crisis under this NDP government, are working hard. They need help. On this side of the House, we believe that this common-sense resolution to double the level of

the basic personal 'dax' exemption would do that. Let Manitobans keep more of their paycheques.

Why is the Premier and the entire NDP government against hard-working Manitobans keeping more of their paycheques?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I've got to correct the PC Leader. There's a lot of poor people who work way harder than him and everyone else on the PC benches every single day of the year. And they need direct help, not help for millionaires like they're trying to do yet again. That's what they did last time they were in office. That's what they're trying to propose to people out there.

We're helping you directly. Property tax help, help at the gas station, help at the grocery store, help making the cost of living easier. And yes, we're going to ask the millionaires to contribute their fair share. They got a lot of help on the way to the top. They can contribute to help you get a little bit more help with the cost of living.

We're on your side. They're on the side of the rich folks down the street at the Manitoba Club. You want to have a vote on this? Bring it on.

Basic Personal Tax Rate—Exemption Increase Request for Government to Support Resolution

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Food inflation in Manitoba is worse than anywhere else in Canada. Today, \$200 in groceries barely covers the bottom of your shopping cart. Food bank usage is at an all-time—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook:—high. Raising the basic personal exemption to \$30,000 will lower taxes for thousands of Manitoba families and could make a real, tangible difference for parents struggling to feed their children. *[interjection]*

The member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott) loves to heckle. Maybe she doesn't do her own grocery shopping. I do. Groceries are expensive.

Why does the NDP oppose our resolution to raise the basic personal exemption?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): If the members opposite support reducing grocery prices, they should support the good work that's happening on this side of the House, Honourable Speaker.

Freezing the price of a one-litre milk, more competition in our communities and the first-of-its-kind

provincially led study to determine how we can do more to reduce the costs of groceries for Manitobans. We know that they don't take that stuff seriously, but on this side of the House, we do. And we're doing that important work to determine a path forward on how we can do more to lower costs further on groceries for Manitobans.

And, of course, that builds on all of the other measures we've brought in since we got into government, including our hydro rate freeze, our fuel tax cut, our personal income tax cuts. We are doing the work of lowering costs for Manitobans, and Manitobans can count on more of that in our upcoming budget on March 24.

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

Mrs. Cook: The NDP government is forcing Manitoba families to make impossible choices. Not only are they failing to make life more affordable, they are actively making the problem worse by hiking income taxes, property taxes and, now, hydro rates. Raising the basic personal exemption to \$30,000 would leave Manitoba families with more money to give their children opportunities to participate in sports, music or the arts.

Why do the NDP continue to force families to make a choice between their kids or paying their bills?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, we know that the PCs like to help out their friends in millionaire class. On this side of the House, we like to work to ensure we support everyday Manitobans.

It's the same with how—with their approach on education property taxes. What did they do? They brought in a measure that wrote cheques for billionaires, cheques to folks on Bay Street, where on this side, we're sending more money to everyday Manitobans with our \$1,500 education property tax rebate. And, of course, in this lax—tax season, went up to \$1,600.

Honourable Speaker, we know that Manitobans continue to face affordability challenges, and for years, they had a government that didn't take action. They had a government that didn't care about those challenges. They didn't take action on energy costs, on fuel. They actually worked to make those things more expensive.

On almost every—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Cook: Raising a family in 2026 is more expensive than it has ever been. Families are struggling. The NDP government is actively making the problem worse by hiking income taxes, hiking property taxes and hiking hydro rates.

But raising the basic personal exemption is a real tangible thing that this government could do to make life more affordable for Manitobans: more money for groceries, more money for your children's activities.

Why is this NDP government refusing to lower taxes for thousands of Manitoba families?

MLA Sala: Again, Honourable Speaker, on almost every single thing she identified there in her question, we are doing the work of lowering those costs, whether it's personal income taxes, whether it's taxes on businesses.

We also, of course, have taken other important measures that we don't get the opportunity to speak too often about in this House, but I'll raise a couple here: free birth control, a prenatal benefit, \$10-a-day child care all year round. That's the work this team is going to continue to do. More to come in our March 24 budget.

Economic Growth for Manitoba Request to Support Affordability Measures

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): All Manitobans agree that our economy needs a kick-start, but under this NDP government, we're doing the exact opposite.

The NDP want to bring everybody down, and they call that equity. On this side of the House, we want to bring everybody up because that's what we consider equity.

They're taking more from families through higher taxes, cancelled indexation and rising costs, leaving Manitobans with less money to spend in their local economy. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: So my question, Honourable Speaker: Why is this government taking more money out of the budgets of Manitobans and leaving them without the tax relief that they deserve?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, the member couldn't be more wrong. We're building this province's economy, and we do it every day.

Honourable Speaker, \$3.7-billion capital plan in our last budget; investments in CentrePort, in Churchill; investing in trade-supporting infrastructure; a critical minerals plan; finally, a plan on energy. For years, these guys come in here—for years, what did they do? They failed to make a single additional megawatt so that our businesses and our homes could be powered.

We are doing the work of moving the province ahead, and what's the result, Honourable Speaker? Over 30,000 net-new jobs in Manitoba since we've taken government.

While we move this economy forward, an incredible plan to reduce costs for Manitobans when it comes to groceries, personal income taxes, the cost of fuel—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: Affordability is very simple. Every dollar that's left in a family's pocket is a dollar that they can spend at local businesses: that's on groceries, that's on their children, on needs for their households and transportation. That spending supports jobs that keeps our economy moving.

* (15:00)

Under this government, we're seeing a 5.3 per cent increase in government spending while only a 1.1 increase in our GDP.

So my question, Honourable Speaker: Why is this government so determined to grow the government revenues but not grow the Manitoba economy?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, the member, the—stands in this House and talks about wanting to see us make life more affordable when our measure, as it relates to education and property taxes, brings—nine out of 10 people in his community are better off as a function of our measure.

What is he saying when he goes to the grocery store, when he goes to the hockey game or wherever he's going? What does he say to people in his community?

Nine out of 10 are better off. He should get on board with our measure, get on board with the savings we're people bringing—we're bringing to people in his community and recognize that this team is doing the work of lowering costs for Manitobans. We're doing it every single day.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, you know what I'm hearing from Manitobans? That they're sick and tired of the equity that this NDP government portrays, bringing every Manitoban down.

If this government really cared about fixing our—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The government bench needs to come to order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Perhaps, maybe, the government bench didn't hear me. They need to come to order.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, instead of the equity of every Manitoba being poor at an equal level, I think every Manitoban would prefer to kick-start our economy. And it starts by making life less expensive and start helping Manitobans keep more of the money that they've earned.

My question, Honourable Speaker: Why is this— why will this government not support real affordability measures like we've brought forward and put more money back into the pockets of Manitobans?

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Sala: Again, Honourable Speaker, I invite the member opposite to come on board with this team and the good work we're doing to make life more affordable in Manitoba.

There's so many great things we've brought forward in our last two budgets. Of course, we talk about some of those measures in this House. I'm going to name a couple more for the member. We brought in, of course, our rebates on EVs—\$4,000 rebate for EVs and plug-in hybrids, the \$10-a-day all-year-round child care, the prenatal benefit, the payroll tax cut, free park passes for a year.

This is in addition to the real reductions in costs that we brought in on personal income taxes, on education property taxes, on the cost of energy. Literally every single cost that Manitobans face, we're reducing them.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Children in CFS Care High Numbers for Manitoba

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Manitoba continues to have the highest number of children in

care in the country, roughly five times the national average according to census data and reporting on the Province's child-welfare system in 2024.

According to the Province's own Department of Families 2024-2025 report, there are 9,172 children in care. These unacceptably high numbers, according to advocates, have only continued to rise despite recent changes and efforts.

Can the minister please explain why Manitoba still has the highest number of children in care?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): Miigwech to the member for Tyndall Park for that important question.

You know, it's unfortunate that during the PCs' time in government, they cut services and funding to child welfare and to the organizations that support children and families that are in care. Since we formed government, I'm proud to say that we've put \$40 million into child welfare to attempt to fix the mess that members opposite made.

It really is indicative of the lack of concern and compassion and care that members have for the most vulnerable, be it mothers or single mothers, including children in care. And I'll remind folks in this Chamber that it was members opposite that actually wanted to legislate the rights of Indigenous children away, and it's us—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Housing Instability Prevention

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, Manitoba's child-welfare system continues to place thousands of children in foster homes and other temporary arrangements. According to the Province's own Department of Families, many children in care experience multiple placement changes during their time in the system. These moves can often disrupt education, undermine stability and negatively impact mental health and long-term development.

With the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs calling for deeper, systemic changes focused on prevention and family reunification, can the minister share what she is currently doing to better provide stability and predictable housing?

MLA Fontaine: Miigwech for that question. And again, once again, an important question, a question that wasn't

considered in the seven and a half years of that failed, callous government.

What I can share is that, as folks know because I've said it many, many times in this Chamber, we proclaimed kinship and customary care agreements. What that is, is agreements with bio families, agencies and caregivers to ensure that children are not formally apprehended into the system. We are actually reducing numbers of children that are coming formally into the system by apprehension and supporting families to be able to take on and care for children so that they remain in community, they remain in family—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Placement Monitoring

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, the Manitoba Foster Parents Association and First Nations leadership continue to advocate for overworked CFS staff and consistent monthly visits. We have seen the impact and need for this through recent situations resulting in tragedies and criminal charges.

What is the government doing to ensure that children placed in care are adequately monitored by CFS authorities?

MLA Fontaine: Since I came on to the role of minister responsible for child welfare, I can assure the House that I have had so many meetings with agencies, authorities, rights holders, grand chiefs of all of the authorities, political organizations, to work together to ensure that the system, first off, is repaired from what—the disaster of that former failed government, but to ensure that we're all working together in the best way to ensure that the protections of children—that Manitoba children have the best possible life that they deserve and that they're entitled to.

We've put money to that endeavour here in Manitoba, something that members opposite didn't do, and we have put legislation to ensure that we're moving in a good path towards jurisdiction—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Grace Hospital Surgery Clinic Opening Announcement

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Honourable Speaker, after years of closed ERs and surgical backlogs under the previous government, we're focused on staffing up health care and reducing wait times.

As part of this plan, yesterday we announced a new surgery clinic at the Grace Hospital that will expand access to surgical care so Manitobans can get the right care faster.

Can the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care please tell Manitobans a bit more about this exciting initiative?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, after eight years of cuts, closures and chaos under the PCs, our government has a plan to fix health care.

We're hiring record numbers of doctors and nurses and we're reducing wait times with innovative solutions like the new Grace Hospital surgery clinic. This new initiative brings together seven surgeons under one clinic, allowing them to assess patients sooner and co-ordinate care more efficiently. This means we're diverting patients away from emergency departments and we're reducing roadblocks and bottlenecks. It's a practical step to expanding surgical capacity and shortening wait times for Manitobans.

There's more work to do. We're going to keep working for Manitobans.

Basic Personal Tax Rate—Exemption Increase Request for Government to Support Resolution

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, under this NDP government, life has become unaffordable. A single mom who doesn't own a car won't save money on the gas tax. A single mom working two jobs shouldn't have to worry whether her children have healthy food to eat. Yet the NDP keeps taking more money from her paycheque.

* (15:10)

Why won't this NDP government give families the real relief and increase their basic personal amount to \$30,000?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, here's what we say to those families. We say that we're doing the work for you. We're doing the work to ensure that we reduce your costs with things like the prenatal benefit, with, of course, things like our free birth control—all of these measures we brought forward to support families.

We know that there's more work to do and that's why we continue to bring in more affordability measures and we're very excited about what we're going to be showing Manitobans on our upcoming budget on March 24.

But what we say again to those families is we're here for you. We're listening. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Sala: That's why we continue to do the work of reducing your costs with things like cuts to the gas tax—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

The First Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition need to come to order and quit hollering back and forth.

MLA Sala: Here's what we say to families: We will always do the work of looking out for you, and we will continue to do the work of lowering your costs each and every day. They made life more expensive. You can—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The time for oral questions has also expired.

House Business

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader—*[interjection]*—on House business. The honourable Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on next Thursday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Midland (Mrs. Stone). The title of this resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Increase the Personal Tax Exemption.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would just remind members that when the Speaker is standing they're not supposed to be moving around. It's supposed to be quiet.

So, pursuant to rule 34(8), it has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Midland and the title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Increase the Personal Tax Exemption.

PETITIONS

Autism Support Services for Rural Children

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Families across Manitoba face long waits and high out-of-pocket costs for therapies and support essential for autistic children.

(2) Manitobans' current—Manitoba's current disability services and support systems do not meet the diverse needs of families raising autistic children in rural Manitoba.

(3) Currently, families raising autistic children do not have a comprehensive support system to access information, resources and assistance without unnecessary bureaucracy.

(4) Manitoba families in need of supports related to autism spectrum disorder and associated social communication and behaviour challenges face undue barriers accessing services and funding in a timely manner.

Manitoba families in need of supports related to autism spectrum disorder and associated social communication and behavioural challenges face undue barriers accessing services and funding in a timely manner.

(5) Currently, Manitoba families are lacking supports and their local community and service access is contingent on the ability to travel to Winnipeg.

(6) All Manitoba children deserve the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential and the provincial government has a responsibility to ensure equitable service access for all, including rural and northern communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately evaluate and reform disability services to reflect the realities families are facing, including improving availability and accessibility of early intervention programs, increasing funding for therapies and support services and providing additional resources to rural communities currently lacking adequate services.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Darren Thorglassen *[phonetic]*, Gary Ferguson and Aaron—Arvin Lanzen *[phonetic]*, and many, many, many other Manitobans.

The Speaker: Just a reminder, the Speaker has previously ruled that three manys is one too many.

Education Property Taxes

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): 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 provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

(5) The increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This is signed by Brayden Robb, Carol Anne Hansen, Hugh Hansen [*phonetic*] and many, many more Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): 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 further—or will be further enhanced as improved road infrastructure

attracts businesses, encourages investment and creates job opportunities.

* (15:20)

(3) Roads meeting the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, RTAC standards, improve both safety and efficiency and 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.

(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 10 to meet RTAC standards.

This petition has been signed by Miles Parr, Jode Cook, Glen Katchin and many, many other Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken prospective steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for continued victimization of law-abiding citizens while gaining repeat offenders additional rights.

Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Anita Janzen-Gemmell, Dawn Orton, Carla Schmidt and many Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): 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 have greatly benefited 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.

* (15:30)

This is signed by Beverly Phillips, Cathy Dowd and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background for 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.

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(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.

And, honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Gordon Tidsbury, Jeanne [*phonetic*] Kreutzer, Phil Carpenter and many other fine Manitobans.

Green Valley School Expansion

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:

(1) The residents of La Vérendrye and other areas around Manitoba are extremely frustrated and concerned by the provincial government's decision to cancel the school expansion project for Green Valley School in Grunthal.

(2) In 2021, the PC provincial government committed funding to expand Green Valley School for a new gymnasium and classrooms.

(3) The school is so crowded that three mobile classrooms were added to alleviate overcrowding in classrooms.

(4) In order for construction to begin, the school removed all three portable classrooms, leaving Green Valley in a further critical state of overcrowding.

(5) As a result of overcrowding, parents are choosing to home-school their children due to safety concerns and the challenges associated with overcrowding.

(6) The current Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning have said they are committed to investing in education.

(7) The concerns of residents of La Vérendrye and the surrounding area are being ignored by the provincial government.

(8) The lack of space in the school is affecting the quality of education and extracurricular activities for students.

(9) The minister and Premier have a duty to respond to the educational needs of children and youth identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to immediately bring back the three portable classrooms to help alleviate the stress and overcrowding classrooms.

(2) To urge the provincial government to reinstate the expansion project for Green Valley School.

And this petition has been signed by Noah Doerksen, John Williamson, Cindy Broesky and many, many other Manitobans.

New Neepawa Health Centre

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

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

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

* (15:40)

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

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

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

(7) A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take

place in community, reducing wait times for patients in surrounding areas and reducing the burden of travel to other facilities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Lorraine Denbow, Daphne Hall, Pat Fedoruk and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

(2) Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

(3) Agriculture and the agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture producers. In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating livestock barns, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agricultural producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

(7) The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and local stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

(8) Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to

remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food onto the table for Manitoba consumers.

This petition has been signed by James Lazinski, Jack Cieslar and Denis Simard and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragic-tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This has been signed by Ardin Masson, Tom MacIsaac, Nicole Terrick and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

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:

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

* (15:50)

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.

Shoreline development and deforestation risks accelerating habitat loss, 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.

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

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.

This petition is signed by Sykra Lapointe, Marion Krueger, Greg Libbrecht and many, many more fine 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 government—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 are disproportionately—or sorry, 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.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition was signed by Norm Winter, Claudine Landry, Brett Dickenson and many, many other fine Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further petitions, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Chairperson, Standing Committee on Public Accounts): On House business, honourable Deputy Speaker.

I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, April 10, 2026, at 3 p.m. to consider the following: the Auditor General's report, *Managing IT Security for Remote Access*, dated March, 2024.

I'd further like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, April 10, 2026, at 5 p.m. to consider the following: the Auditor General's report, *Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations*, dated March, 2023, Vital Statistics Agency; and the Auditor General's report, *Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations*, dated February 2025, Vital Statistics Agency.

Further, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 2 p.m. to consider the following: Annual Report and Public Accounts of the Province of Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024; the Auditor General's report, Public Accounts and Other Financial Statement Audits, dated December, 2024; the Annual Report and Public Accounts of the Province of Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025; the Auditor General's report, public accounts and other fiscal—sorry, other financial statement audits, dated December, 2025; the Auditor General's report, Follow-Up of Recommendations, dated March 2019, Keeyask process costs and adverse-effects agreements with First Nations; and the Auditor General's report, Follow-Up Recommendations, dated March 2020, Keeyask process costs and adverse-effects agreements with First Nations; Public Accounts and Other Financial Statement Audits.

And, finally, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, February 15, 2026, at 4 p.m. to consider the following: the Auditor General's report, Investigations Report, dated August, 2021, Shellmouth Dam Compensation Program; and the Auditor General's report, Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February, 2024, Investigations report, Shellmouth Dam Compensation Program; and the Auditor General's report, Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February, 2026, Investigations report, Shellmouth Dam Compensation Program.

* (16:00)

The Deputy Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, April 10, 2026, at 3 p.m., to consider the following: Auditor General's report, Managing IT Security for Remote Access, dated March 2024.

It has also been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, April 10, 2026, at 5 p.m., to consider the following: Auditor General's report, Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated March 2023, Vital Statistics Agency; Auditor General's report, Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February 2025, Vital Statistics Agency.

It has also been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 2 p.m., to consider the following: Annual Report and Public Accounts of the Province of Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024; Auditor General's report, Public Accounts and

Other Financial Statement Audits, dated December 2024; Annual Report and Public Accounts of the Province of Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025; Auditor General's report, Public Accounts and Other Financial Statement Audits, dated December 2025; Auditor General's report, Follow-up of Recommendations, dated March 2019, Keeyask process costs and adverse effects agreements with First Nations; auditor's report general, follow-up recommendations, dated March 2020, Keeyask process costs and adverse effects agreements with First Nations; Public Accounts and Other Financial Statement Audits.

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* * *

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you please call for the start of second reading of Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 17—The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act

The Deputy Speaker: It has been called that we will move on to second reading of Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister for Education, that Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Fontaine: Bill 17 is a response to reports and recommendations over the past few years related to investigations of persons who allegedly abuse or neglect patients or adults with an intellectual disability and recommendations related to the process of placing offenders on the Adult Abuse Registry.

In July, 2023, the Office of the Auditor General released a report outlining a number of issues within the Protection of Persons in Care Office, or PPCO. The PPCO investigates allegations of abuse or neglect of patients in health facilities.

Under the former PC government, the PPCO allowed an investigation backlog to grow to more than five years, choosing to do little, if anything, to rectify the issue. The Auditor General's report was followed by an investigation and report for—from Justice William Burnett, who made recommendations for the PPCO as well as the Adult Abuse Registry Committee and the Adult Abuse Registry.

Justice Burnett's report was released last fall, and his contract with the Province concluded August of 2025. My team worked consistently and collaboratively with Justice Burnett through to July 2025 to clarify his recommendations and propose next steps. I also had the opportunity to meet with him in my office and had a very good conversation about the recommendations.

This is the first of the legislative changes the Department of Families is bringing forward with respect to The Adult Abuse Registry Act and the committee. Further policy and legislative changes are also coming later in 2026. My department staff continue to engage with the PPCO, the PPIU and the AAR to review the recommendations and develop further legislative policies, proposals for implementation.

Since the auditor's report in 2023, our government has worked tirelessly to eliminate the substantial backlog at the PPCO caused by the former government. The PPCO has increased its staffing complement, taken steps to improve internal processes and successfully eliminated its backlog. The increased capacity at PPCO, along with the coming into force of new regulatory definitions of abuse and neglect, has resulted in an increase in referrals to the Adult Abuse Registry Committee.

The way that the investigative units and the Adult Abuse Registry work together can feel complex. I'll try to explain it as clearly as possible so that we can all understand why this amendment is an important first step in building a better future.

The Adult Abuse Registry Committee is a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal established under The Adult Abuse Registry Act. It reviews reports of alleged abuse and neglect of specified adults for potential referral to the Adult Abuse Registry. A specified adult means an adult living with an intellectual disability

under—defined—as defined under The Adults with—Living with an Intellectual Disability Act, or ALIDA; and as patient, as defined under The Protection for Persons in Care Act.

While the committee's procedures are less formal than the court's, they operate on similar judicial principles of natural justice and fairness. The Department of Families, through the provincial investigative unit for adults living with an intellectual disability, investigates allegations of abuse or neglect under ALIDA. The Department of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, through PPCO, investigates allegations of abuse or neglect under the protection of persons in care act.

Substantiated investigations are referred by designated officers from the respective departments to the Adult Abuse Registry Committee for its review, which is done through hearing panels. Under section 19 of The Adult Abuse Registry Act, if the committee suspects the abuse or neglect as reported by the designated officer has occurred, the committee must give the alleged offender an opportunity to provide information to the committee. This essentially creates a two-step process where the first panel is convened to review the allegations and vote on suspected abuse.

If abuse is suspected—and in nearly all cases it is—notice is served on the alleged offender. Once served, the alleged offender has the opportunity to provide a response to the allegations, following which a second panel is scheduled where the committee will form its opinion on whether abuse/neglect has occurred and, if so, whether the offender's name should be added to the registry.

The proposed amendment of section 19 of the AARA will eliminate the procedural need for the first panel by removing the precondition of, and I quote: if the committee suspects—end quote—abuse or neglect. So the committee can instead send notice to the alleged offender on receipt of the referral from the designated officer. This change is expected to help the committee manage increasing numbers of reports that are referred to it annually, resulting in faster and more efficient assessment of AARC referrals to help keep vulnerable adults safe.

Scheduling panels can be complex. Panel members are required to be knowledgeable about abuse and neglect and the need to protect persons from abuse and neglect. Under the regulations, members are required to either be law enforcement officials, lawyers, health professionals, persons with experience in providing care or services to specified adults or those bring

other specialized skills to the table to be able to provide thoughtful and informed review.

* (16:10)

As folks can imagine, these are very busy people, and the particular skills these members bring to carefully matched to the type of cases that they will be hearing is not simply a random selection of available members. The cases they are hearing are often complex, include a considerable volume of materials and take substantial review time both in terms of preparation for the hearings and hearings themselves.

The increase in referrals from investigative units have strained the capacity of the committee, and the department has a great deal of time and effort is required to co-ordinate committee panel hearings. The proposed amendment addresses this problem by effectively cutting the number of hearings panels in half.

Eliminating the first panel hearings would mean every alleged offender would have to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect. However, in practice there have been very few instances where a referral has been dropped at the first panel stage. This is primarily because allegations are professionally investigated by a designated officer before making a referral. As a result, eliminating a first panel screening process for the committee is much less a concern in comparison to instances where complaints to other quasi-judicial bodies such as the Human Rights Commission are lodged by the public and not investigated before referral.

I believe all members of this House want to see improvements to the protections we offer people in care and other specified adults, part of our shared commitment to keep vulnerable Manitobans safe. This bill is a key component of that process, and I say miigwech to all honourable members for supporting bill—this bill.

Miigwech.

Questions

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

The floor is open for questions.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I think we all want to acknowledge the fact that we all want to protect Manitobans, our most vulnerable people, here in our province.

And I just have a question for the minister: If new information comes forward after a decision is made, are there mechanisms that exist for reviewing or maybe reconsidering a registry decision?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I think it's really important that we discussed that the Office of the Auditor General released a scathing report on the issues within the Protection of Persons in Care Office, and this report—or the recommendations from Justice William Burnett—who I want to just take a moment to say miigwech—I think will address a lot of the issues and ensure that we are putting folks that need to be on the registry, that we're putting them on; and the folks that aren't supposed to be on the registry will not be on the registry.

But this also gives an opportunity for folks—that we will skip that first panel and go immediately to where the alleged offender has an opportunity to also provide all of the information pertinent to the—whether or not they go on the adult abuse registry.

Ms. Byram: If a person has been found to been put on the registry inappropriately, is that—is there a process for removal from the registry? Is that sort of—is there something there that can have that process expedited?

MLA Fontaine: You know, I—what I—we tried to do in the notes here was try to explain the way that it works, and the best way that I think that we can explain is that the investigative processes are like the police, right? So you have these two different, you know, investigative processes like the police, and the panels are these—like, it's like the court.

And so we have extremely efficient and capable investigators that provide all of the information to the alleged offender, to the panel, and in this like quasi-judicial court piece, comes with the recommendations that is based on all of the information that was previously investigated and also with the opportunity for the alleged offender to have that say as well.

Ms. Byram: Will individuals continue to receive adequate notice and access to the evidence being considered by the committee before the hearing takes place?

MLA Fontaine: Our folks try to make sure that the alleged offender gets all of the information that they're entitled to get. And what I will share is that, as folks,

I'm sure, in the Chamber can imagine, it's not always easy to actually find these alleged offenders. Sometimes these alleged offenders move or, you know, they move out of province.

We do—we have extraordinary individuals that work in this office and, again, that investigative process is, you know, top-notch, that work with ensuring that the alleged offender gets all of the information that they are supposed to get in this process.

Debate

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further questions, the floor is open for debate.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I've already mentioned before that all of us here in this Legislature do want to work to protect our vulnerable people here in Manitoba, and the Adult Abuse Registry is a tool that we have, a mechanism that we have where we can use to—in help—in protecting those individuals.

Bill 17 does look at streamlining some of that process, maybe eliminating some of the backlog as well as the length of time it takes for an individual's name to show up on that registry.

Every Manitoban deserves to live in a space that is free of abuse, and every Manitoban to—deserves to live with dignity. Every vulnerable adult and child deserves to know their Legislature and those that are here to represent them work to take their protection very seriously, and I look forward to getting this bill sent to committee and seeing Bill 17 work to protect our most vulnerable here in our province of Manitoba.

The Deputy Speaker: No further debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill Number 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

House Business

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 2, The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Amendment Act; Bill 3, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 4, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act; Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy); Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act; Bill 30, The Intimate Partner Violence Death Review Committee Act; and finally, Bill 31, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

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* * *

MLA Fontaine: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to call it 5 p.m.?
[Agreed]

* (16:20)

The time being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 12, 2026

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