



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 19, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 203—The Correctional Services
Amendment Act**

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 203, The Correctional Services Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House—I think that's the wrong motion. So be now read a first time. Yes.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Fort—okay.

Mr. Wasyliv: I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 203, The Correctional Services Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wasyliv: I'm pleased to introduce The Correctional Services Amendment Act, a bill that would require the Province to provide programming that helps inmates reintegrate into the communities after release.

Many people in Manitoba's correctional centres are on remand, have not been convicted of a crime, yet many receive little to no programming while in custody. Auditor General has found that inmates are often released without meaningful transitional support, many times returning to homelessness or to the same circumstances that led them into conflict with the law.

This bill would require the Province to create a reintegration plan, publicly report on the programming being offered and how many inmates are participating. Addressing the root causes of crime means ensuring people leaving custody have the tools and support they need to succeed.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 216—The Elections Amendment Act
(Election Day on Saturday)**

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 216, The Elections Amendment 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 (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 216, The Elections Amendment Act (Election Day on Saturday), be now read a first time.

Mr. Wasyliv: I'm pleased to introduce The Elections Amendment Act, a bill that would move Manitoba's general and by-election days from Tuesday to Saturday.

Our democracy works best when participation is accessible, yet today, nearly half of Manitobans do not vote and participation is at risk of declining even further. For many Manitobans, voting on a weekday can mean balancing work schedules, child care, school commitments and other responsibilities. This bill would modernize our election system; holding elections on a Saturday would give working families, shift workers, students and caregivers a more convenient opportunity to cast their ballot.

Democracy should fit into people's lives, not compete with them. This legislation will make a practical change to help ensure every Manitoban has the opportunity to participate.

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

**Standing Committee on Justice
First Report**

MLA Carla Compton (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Your Standing Committee on Justice—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Speaker: No?

I hear a no. The Clerk will read the—*[interjection]*
Order.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its first report.

Meetings: Your committee met on March 18, 2026, at 6 o'clock p.m. in room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under consideration: 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 30, The Intimate Partner Violence Death Review Committee Act; Bill 31, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Committee membership: Mr. Balcaen, Mr. Bereza, MLA Compton, Mrs. Schott, Honourable Mr. Simard, Honourable Mr. Wiebe.

Your committee elected MLA Compton as the Chairperson. Your committee elected Mrs. Schott as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public presentations: Your committee heard the following two presentations on Bill 2, The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Amendment Act: Fernando *[phonetic]* Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Incorporated; Ben McGillivary, private citizen.

Your committee heard the following seven presentations on Bill 3, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act: Mary Johnson, private citizen; Douglas Houghton, Coalition of Manitoba Motorcycle Groups Incorporated; David Grant, private citizen; Zainab Mansaray, Canada Sierra Leone Friendship Society Incorporated; Ben McGillivary, private citizen; Peggy Barker, Consumers' Association of Canada, Manitoba Branch; Monique Curci, private citizen.

Your committee heard the following four presentations on Bill 4, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act: Paul Moist, Manitoba Federation of Union Retirees; Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour; Chris Barsanti, private citizen; Ben McGillivary, private citizen.

Your committee heard the following two presentations on Bill 30, The Intimate Partner Violence Death Review Committee Act: Fernando *[phonetic]* Vallejo,

Latinas Manitoba Incorporated; David Grant, private citizen.

Your committee heard the following two presentations on Bill 31, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act: David Grant, private citizen; Karen Reimer, private citizen.

Written submissions: Your committee received the following—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Clerk: —committee received the following written submission on Bill 2, The Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Amendment Act: Monique St. Germain, Canadian Centre for Child Protection Incorporated. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Clerk: Your committee received the following three written submissions on Bill 4, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act: Chris Turyk, Rainbow Resource Centre; Chris Gamby, Criminal Defense Lawyers Association of Manitoba; Marianne Hladun—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The Honourable Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) needs to come to order.

Clerk: —Marianne Hladun, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Prairies.

Bills considered and reported:

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

Your committee agreed to report this bill with the following amendments:

THAT Clause 6 of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 12(2) by striking out "For certainty, a person has" and substituting "A person may have".

THAT Clause 7 of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 13(2), in the part before clause (a)—adding "in good faith" after "distribution occurred".

THAT Clause 8 of the Bill be amended in the proposed clause 14(1)(b.2) by striking out "remove or de-index" and substituting "remove and, where applicable, de-index".

Bill 3, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act. Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment, on a recorded vote of ayes 3, nays 2.

Bill 4, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act. Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 30, The Intimate Partner Violence Death Review Committee Act. Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 31, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Submitted by MLA Carla Compton, Chairperson, March 18, 2026.

The Speaker: Thank you.

* (13:40)

MLA Compton: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Transcona (MLA Corbett), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: The motion is accordingly passed.

Further committee reports?

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development First Report

MLA David Pankratz (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Tim Abbott): Your Standing Committee—

The Speaker: Dispense.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no. The Deputy Clerk will read the motion.

Deputy Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its first report.

Meetings. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I've asked you once to come to order. Now you will need to come to order so that I can hear. Somebody wants it read and we need to listen.

The honourable Deputy Clerk.

Deputy Clerk: Your committee met on March 18, 2026, at 6 p.m. in the Legislative Chamber—in the Chamber of the Legislative Building.

Matters under consideration: Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week); Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy); Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act; Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act.

Committee membership: Mr. Blashko, Ms. Byram, Mr. Guenter, Honourable Minister Marcelino, Mr. Oxenham, MLA Pankratz.

Your committee elected MLA Pankratz as Chairperson. Your committee elected Mr. Blashko as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings: Honourable Minister Fontaine for Honourable Minister Marcelino.

Public presentations: Your committee heard the following five presentations on Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week): Allen Mankewich, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities; Samuel Unrau, private citizen; Angie Conrad, Barrier Free Manitoba; Monique Curci, private citizen; Patrick Stewart, Independent Living Resource Centre.

Your committee heard the following presentation on Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy): Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour.

Your committee heard the following one presentation on Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act: Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Your committee heard the following presentation on Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act: Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Written submissions: Your committee received the following three written submissions on Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week): Caryn Birch, Inclusion Winnipeg; Rhonda Svendsen, private citizen; Randie Locken, private citizen.

Bills considered and reported:

Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week). Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy). Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act. Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act. Your committee agreed to report this bill without amendment.

Submitted by MLA David Pankratz, Chairperson, March 18, 2026.

MLA Pankratz: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Richmond (MLA Chen), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: The motion is accordingly passed.

Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Eid al-Fitr

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): As-salamu alaykum [*Peace be upon you*], Honourable Speaker.

Tomorrow our Muslim neighbours and friends will mark the joyous occasion of Eid al-Fitr, following a month-long fast during the holy month of Ramadan. This sacred tradition continues to beautifully enrich the cultural fabric of Manitoba.

As a Muslim, I can share that at its core, Ramadan is a time of profound unity. While Muslims abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset, the true essence of the fast lies in its power to bring people together: in our homes, in our mosques and across our communities.

In times where our society can feel increasingly divided, the Muslim community offers a meaningful example of how faith and tradition can help bridge differences. With over 26,000 Muslim Manitobans from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, our

community is an integral part of the strength and diversity of this province.

Honourable Speaker, the generosity displayed through charitable giving, an essential pillar of the Islamic faith, toward those most vulnerable reminds us that our responsibilities to one another transcend our differences. The values of compassion, humility and service that are elevated during Ramadan are not unique to one faith; they are values that resonate deeply across communities and help hold Manitoba together.

At the same time, as we celebrate Eid, we must also take a moment to recognize that many Muslims around the world are facing profound hardship, conflict and displacement. For them, this season is marked not only by faith and resilience, but also by uncertainty and devastating loss. In acknowledging this reality, we are reminded of our shared humanity and the importance of extending compassion, solidarity and hope beyond our borders.

The conclusion of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid offer an important opportunity for all Manitobans to connect with their Muslim neighbours and colleagues. These moments of shared understanding and dialogue are vital to breaking down barriers and fostering stronger community connections.

Now, more than ever, we are called to embrace this spirit of collective responsibility. Manitoba is strongest when we resist division and instead choose a path of respect, understanding and peaceful dialogue.

* (13:50)

Honourable Speaker, I extend my sincere appreciation to Muslim Manitobans for their leadership in fostering connection across faiths and cultures. By standing shoulder to shoulder, we affirm that our diversity is not a barrier but a shared strength that binds us together in building a more inclusive and resilient society.

I invite all members of this House and all Manitobans to join me in wishing those celebrating a peaceful and joyful Eid mubarak [*have a blessed Eid*].

Shukran [*Thank you*], Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, as-salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh. [*May the peace and mercy of Allah be with you.*] Translation: In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Benificent.

I rise today to recognize Eid, a celebration that is happening tomorrow to mark the end of Ramadan for thousands of Muslims here in Manitoba and millions and billions across the world.

As a Muslim, this day carries significant meaning to me. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of this blessed month of fasting, sacrifice, prayer, reflection, charity and devotion.

This year is especially meaningful because of two sacred observances that coincided for not only thousands of Muslims but also thousands of Christians and millions and billions of Christians around the world celebrating, observing Lent.

While distinct from one another, both mark a time of reflection, generosity and sacrifice, one to the sound of church bells and to the other to the sound of the call to prayer. Today stands a testament to the vibrant cultural and religious diversity that makes Manitoba strong.

Throughout Ramadan, Muslims come together to worship, in service and in community. And throughout Lent, Christians have come together to fast, give alms and prayer.

This Ramadan, I had the honour and pleasure of attending numerous iftars, which is the breaking of the fast at sunset, with many of my colleagues from both sides of the Chamber, across all of Manitoba. It is a time of generosity, unity and compassion.

As Ramadan comes to an end tonight, and as Lent continues, I believe, for the next 14 days towards Easter, we are reminded of the shared values that unite us: faith, compassion, service and community.

At a time when so much of the world is facing pain, uncertainty and hardship, these prayers carry even greater meaning.

Both of these religious observances remind us of the values of the heart of our faith: charity, humility, gratitude, family and service to others. These are the values that strengthen not only the Muslim community, not only the Christian community, Jewish community or any community of faith, it strengthens all of Manitoba and Canada.

To all those celebrating Eid, I say Eid mubarak [*have a blessed Eid*]. To those Christians observing Lent, I say happy Easter. And to all Manitobans, I say have a blessed and safe holiday season.

Journée Internationale de la Francophonie

French spoken

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Monsieur le Président, je suis heureux de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Chaque 20 mars, des millions de personnes à travers le monde se rassemblent pour célébrer la langue française.

Le thème de cette année, Active ta Francophonie, nous lance à un appel à l'action. C'est une invitation à parler français, à transmettre la langue, à la choisir et à vivre en français au quotidien.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to mark International Francophonie Day. Every March 20, millions of people around the world come together to celebrate the French language.

This year's theme, Activate Your Francophonie, calls us to action. It is an invitation to speak French, to pass on the language, to choose it, and to live in French every day.

English

This year's theme, Activate your Francophonie, is a call to action. It invites us to speak French, to pass it on, to choose it and to make it part of our everyday lives.

French spoken

Pour le Manitoba, cette journée est à l'occasion de réaffirmer que la Francophonie fait partie intégrante de notre histoire, de notre identité et de notre avenir. Et elle nous rappelle aussi que la Francophonie manitobaine s'inscrit à un vaste espace international et qu'elle constitue un atout et un levier important de dialogue et de partenariats pour notre province.

C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement agit concrètement. À titre de Ministre responsable des Affaires francophones, je suis fier de nos accomplissements, tels que l'ajout de postes bilingues au sein de la fonction publique et à l'annonce de deux nouvelles écoles à la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine : une à Brandon et une autre à Saint-Boniface.

Translation

For Manitoba, this day is an opportunity to reaffirm that Francophonie is an integral part of our history, our identity, and our future. It also reminds us that Manitoba's Francophone community is part of a broad

international community and that it is an asset and an important catalyst for dialogue and partnerships for our province.

That is why our government is taking concrete action. As the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, I am proud of our accomplishments, such as the addition of bilingual positions within the public service and the announcement of two new schools in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine: one in Brandon and another in St. Boniface.

English

As the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, I am proud of what we have achieved, including adding trilingual within the public service and announcing two new schools in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine: one in Brandon and another in St. Boniface.

French spoken

Je suis particulièrement fier de la consultation publique menée par notre gouvernement sur faire du Manitoba une province véritablement bilingue. C'était la première du genre au Canada. Il y a eu 1 654 réponses avec des centaines d'autres participants lors des tables rondes à travers la province.

Ce que nous avons entendu de la part de la population manitobaine guidera l'élaboration d'une stratégie à long terme sur le bilinguisme. Le rapport issu de ces consultations sera dévoilé demain et c'est là que le vrai travail va commencer.

Translation

I am particularly proud of the public consultation our government conducted on how we can make Manitoba a truly bilingual province. It was the first of its kind in Canada. We received 1,654 responses, with hundreds more participants at roundtable discussions across the province.

What we heard from Manitobans will guide the development of a long-term strategy on bilingualism. The report resulting from these consultations will be released tomorrow, and that is when the real work begins.

English

What we heard from Manitobans will guide the development of a long term strategy on bilingualism. The report from these consultations will be released tomorrow and this is when the real work begins.

French spoken

Monsieur le Président, ces actions s'inscrivent dans une vision claire, celle d'un Manitoba pleinement engagé au sein de la Francophonie ici chez nous, mais aussi sur la scène internationale. C'est dans cet esprit que le Manitoba est fier d'accueillir en avril une visite officielle du groupe d'ambassadrices et ambassadeurs francophones au Canada.

Et nous poursuivons activement les démarches pour devenir membre observateur de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie afin de faire rayonner notre Francophonie bien au-delà de nos frontières.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives are part of a clear vision, that of a Manitoba fully engaged within Francophonie here at home, but also on the international stage. It is in this spirit that Manitoba is proud to host an official visit in April from the group of Francophone ambassadors to Canada.

And we are actively pursuing the necessary steps to become an observer member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie in order to promote our Francophone community far beyond our borders.

English

In that spirit, Manitoba is proud to welcome, in April, an official visit from the group of francophone ambassadors to Canada, and to actively continue efforts towards becoming an observer member of the OIF, so that our francophonie can reach well beyond our borders.

French spoken

Monsieur le Président, en cette Journée internationale de la Francophonie, j'invite tous les membres de cette Assemblée et l'ensemble de la population manitobaine à célébrer la richesse de notre Francophonie manitobaine.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, on this International Francophonie Day, I invite all members of this Assembly and the people of Manitoba to celebrate the richness of our Manitoba Francophonie.

English

Honourable Speaker, on this International Francophonie Day, I invite all members of this Assembly,

and all Manitobans, to celebrate the richness of our Manitoban Francophonie. Merci.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): International Francophonie Day, or Journée internationale de la Francophonie, is observed each year on March 20. It commemorates the signing of the Niamey Convention in 1970, which led to the creation of what is now the international organization of la Francophonie.

More than 369 million French speakers worldwide take part in this celebration, united by a shared language and a commitment to cultural connection.

This day is a tribute to the richness and diversity of francophone culture expressed through music, literature, art, cuisine and storytelling.

French spoken

La langue française est plus qu'un simple moyen de communication. Elle est au cœur de l'identité, de la culture et de notre histoire commune. Ici au Manitoba, cet héritage est profondément enraciné, transmis de génération en génération par la Francophonie et valorisé par les francophones et -philes qui en 'reconsont' – reconnaissent tout l'importance et la richesse durable.

Translation

The French language is more than just a means of communication. It lies at the heart of our identity, culture, and shared history. Here in Manitoba, this heritage is deeply rooted, passed down from generation to generation by the Francophone community and cherished by Francophones and Francophiles alike, who recognize its significance and enduring richness.

English

Tens of thousands of Manitobans call French their mother tongue, and many more speak it as a second language, reflecting that French 'mai'—remains a vibrant part of our incredible province.

Across our communities, French can be heard in classrooms, workplaces, cultural events and everyday conversations, reflecting a language that is not only preserved, but actively lived.

I encourage all Manitobans to learn, to engage and to take pride in the richness of our francophone roots and the many contributions of the francophone community, past, present and future.

Honourable Speaker, you don't have to be fully fluent in French to appreciate and honour the French culture, language and history.

* (14:00)

And at this time, I would like to say a great big shout-out and thank you to our ASL interpreters and of course our translation services here in the Manitoba Legislature as well.

French spoken

La Francophonie fait partie intégrante de notre identité manitobain, et le célébrant – nous célébrons notre histoire, notre diversité et notre avenir commun.

Merci.

Translation

Francophonie is an integral part of our Manitoban identity, and celebrating it—we celebrate our history, our diversity, and our shared future. Thank you.

English

Thank you. Dyakuyu [*Thank you*].

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before we get to member statements, there's some guests in the gallery that perhaps might have to leave before we're done. So, we have seated in the public gallery, from the Dr. Doug Eyolfson youth council, under the direction of Scott Ord. Also present is former page, Imogen Zemlak. And these guests—folks are guests of the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham).

And we welcome you here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Stevenson-Britannia Adult Education

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Stevenson-Britannia Adult Learning Centre and the broader Stevenson-Britannia school community.

Under the leadership of Education Director Dave Johnson, Stevenson-Britannia has become a vital hub of opportunity for adult learners working to build new lives in Manitoba. For many students, the school is their first point of connection, not only to education, but to community.

What makes Stevenson-Britannia remarkable is the team behind it. A dedicated volunteer board, committed teachers and support staff work tirelessly to ensure adult students have what they need to succeed.

That support goes beyond classroom instruction. It includes mentorship, guidance and connecting learners to essential resources such as school supplies, as well as offering practical supports that remove barriers and allow students to focus on their goals.

The impact of this work is clear, as this past year alone, 35 students graduated, a milestone that represents perseverance, determination and the promise of new opportunity. Students gain confidence, complete their studies and move forward into post-secondary education, training, and meaningful employment. In doing so, they strengthen their families and contribute even more to our local workforce and economy.

Honourable Speaker, Stevenson-Britannia reflects the very best of Manitoba values: fairness, inclusion and the belief that education opens doors.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Dave Johnson, the volunteer board and the dedicated teachers and staff of Stevenson-Britannia Adult Learning Centre for their leadership and unwavering commitment to student success. Manitoba is stronger because of their work.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Recognizing Snowmobile Club Volunteers

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Every winter, while most of us are staying warm indoors, the dedicated group of volunteers is hard at work outside, long before the first sled hits the snow. They are the keepers of the trail, the men and women of our Snoman-affiliated snowmobile clubs. And because of them, this cherished recreational pastime continues to roar across my region.

From Thunder & Ice to Snowtraxx, from the Virden Valley Runners to the Prairie Mountain Snow Drifters, these clubs groom and maintain hundreds of kilometres of trail, linking our towns, supporting our businesses and showcasing the very best of Manitoba's winter landscape. Their work connects communities like Kenton, Foxwarren, Oak River, Hamiota, Erickson, Shoal Lake and many more, through over 13,000 kilometres of provincial trails maintained by more than 50 clubs.

This commitment is no small task. It takes time, training and major financial investment. Just this year, Thunder & Ice invested over \$50,000 in a new groomer to ensure top quality trails. Volunteers mark routes, maintain signage to Snoman standards, build and service warming shelters and remove stakes in the spring. They work closely with generous landowners

who allow trails across their property, partnerships built on trust and respect.

Snoman, established in 1975, provides leadership and support to ensure trails are safe, environmentally responsible and accessible. Through Snopasses, riders directly support this vast network.

But beyond the machines and the miles, this is about community. It's about families exploring freshly fallen snow, friends gathering at warming shelters and visitors stopping in our towns for a meal or a weekend stay.

So today, I want to recognize these volunteers—environmental stewards, trail builders and ambassadors of winter. Because of them, Manitobans don't just ride; they belong.

Thank you.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): This Saturday, March 21, is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. While this day originated in the struggle against apartheid in the 1960s South Africa, its message remains unmistakably relevant today. Almost half of racialized Canadians have faced racism and discrimination in the past five years, with both of them experiencing multiple incidences. And in the Prairies, those numbers are even higher.

Racism takes many forms, from overt acts of haste to systemic barriers, that limit opportunity and belonging. In workplaces, discrimination affects hiring decisions and opportunities for career advancement. Racism also often leads to over-representation of racialized communities in our justice system, and at the same time, sadly, fewer opportunities in our education system. And I get that, as someone who's faced it personally. Having the most diverse team of MLAs ever in Manitoba's history, we get that too.

We all must confront the realities openly and honestly. We must listen to the experiences of those who continue to face discrimination and work together to actively dismantle the structures that allow discrimination to exist. My 2023 private member's bill implemented mandatory anti-racism training, enshrining anti-racist policies into the work we do every day.

We are fortunate that Manitoba is a province that is shaped by the contributions of people from many diverse cultures. But that diversity is only a strength

when we fully embrace it, recognizing that we all have a shared future.

So I call on all of us to match our commitment to diversity with that same commitment to uphold the dignity of every person who lives here and truly build one Manitoba.

Thank you.

Patricia Gibson and Marilyn Skubovius

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, it's a privilege to rise today to recognize Pat—Patricia Gibson—and Marilyn Skubovius, two extraordinary women whose vision, leadership and dedication helped shape health care in Morden-Winkler and across the Pembina Valley.

Pat began her career as a registered nurse in 1971 and went on to play a pivotal role in uniting surrounding municipalities to establish the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation, giving communities a shared voice in building and supporting their hospital. Alongside her, Marilyn has been a tireless champion for regional health care, founding board member and passionate advocate who has always looked ahead, ensuring not only the construction of facilities but strengthening the people and programs within them.

Together, their leadership helped transform the Boundary Trails Health Centre into a vital hub it is today. From its opening in 2021 to its recent expansion with more beds, enhanced surgical, neonatal and emergency services and expanded cancer and community care, their impact is felt by tens of thousands of Manitobans.

This progress took vision, persistence and collaboration. Pat and Marilyn brought communities together and inspired a shared commitment to bring better health care close to home. Their legacy is one of compassion, leadership and lasting impact, one that will benefit generations to come.

Thank you so much for what you have done for our community.

Please join me in recognizing and making these—and thanking these remarkable women. You are both true community champions.

Thank you.

* (14:10)

Support for the National Energy Grid

MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood): On November 28, 2025, Manitoba took an important step forward by signing on to the national energy grid memorandum of understanding. In doing so, our Province answered the call to strengthen Canada's energy security while promoting our clean, reliable hydroelectric power.

As a long-time advocate for an east-west power grid, both as an MLA and a member of Parliament, I firmly believe Manitoba is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in Canada's electricity future.

We are home to 15 generating stations, many large-scale hydro facilities in northern Manitoba, supplying the vast majority of our electricity. For decades, our transmission system has been oriented north-south, delivering power to our population centres and exporting US—to US markets like Minnesota and Wisconsin.

But the future demands more. Strengthening east-west transmission links with Saskatchewan and Ontario will open markets for Manitoba's clean energy. It will allow us to sell more electricity across Canada, support other provinces in reducing their reliance on fossil fuels and to help finance future hydro development here at home.

An expanded east-west grid will improve reliability, ensuring provinces can support one another during peak demand or unexpected outages. It will help power 'emerging'—emerging opportunities, including critical mineral development in northern Ontario's Ring of Fire.

Honourable Speaker, this vision is not new; it's been a national goal since the 1970s. While challenges remain, including costs, regulatory alignment and co-ordination, the benefits are clear.

Manitoba's clean energy advantage and central location make us a key player in building a stronger, more connected and low-carbon Canadian electricity grid.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

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

I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Pauly Kleinsasser from Springfield Hutterite Colony, who is the guest of the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott). We all welcome you here today.

Further, I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today, from the Winnipeg West Youth Advisory Council, Kali Lawrence, Gabriel Aiken, Geneah Mahor, Cam Liu, Jonas Kaster [*phonetic*], Nathan Varghese, Rayid Abdullah, Imogen Zemlak. And they are here today, along with Scott Ord, who are the guests of the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here again.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Growth in Manitoba Business Investment Concerns

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Before we start, I want to take a second and pause. I saw a post this morning from the member from The Pas-Kameesak's daughter, and the request was that we hold a place in our prayers for her mother, and we are doing that just here across party lines.

The Premier pretends that a cent and a half off of your gas will make all the difference in the world when it comes to affordability. He pretends that two cents off a litre of milk will help you pay your bills. The reality is the Premier has done nothing to make life more affordable, and he has only driven our economy worse in Manitoba. We are the worst economy in Canada under this NDP government.

In 2023, under the PCs, Manitoba was ranked sixth, and now, under the NDP government, they are ranked 26th, the second worst in Canada, Honourable Speaker. Fraser Institute states, and I quote: Manitoba is the worst performer with all of its respondents for the province claiming the time to permit, approval and lengthen development.

Why is the Premier destroying Manitoba?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Amanda Lathlin was the first First Nations woman ever elected to this Chamber, and it's really something to understand that it took until 2015 for that to happen. And so, you know, obviously I withdraw her name and say the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin) instead.

And I would just say you've done a hell of a job raising your daughter, Elyse, and I'm very proud of the granddaughter that you recently welcomed into this world, and everybody who's been visiting you over the past little while wishes you well. As for the member opposite, we just wish you would do better.

The Speaker: Just before moving on, I appreciate the fact that the First Minister apologized for using a name.

Mr. Khan: To the Premier, all of Manitoba wishes he would do better when it grows to growing our economy. We are dead last in Canada for economic growth under this NDP government. Forty per cent of those surveyed as industry experts said they would not pursue investments in Manitoba because of this NDP government. In no other province was the government's lack of transparency a deal breaker but right here in Manitoba under this NDP government. Four out of five companies found that this government to be a detriment to development and growth under this NDP government.

This Premier and his entire caucus, NDP government, is destroying Manitoba's economy.

Why is the Premier done—everything he can to undermine industry and destroy Manitoba's economy?

Mr. Kinew: Well, you know, we came in after the member was thrown out of Cabinet by the good people of Manitoba, and we said, all right, what have we got in the way of major projects that we can get going here? And they said, absolutely nothing. The PCs left absolutely nothing on the economic development portfolio.

So you know what we did? We went to Churchill. We said, why don't we open up trade with the rest of the world? And you know who agreed with us? Mark Carney in Ottawa.

So we're working together to bring private-sector investment to Manitoba, to kick our whole economy into the next gear.

What are they up to on the other side of the House? Well, they recently sold the PC Party headquarters. Now, I do—I regret to share with the House, while they listed the PC headquarters for \$800,000, they were forced to take a haircut and only landed \$600,000.

You know, I'd like to ask the member opposite, why should we take any advice when he's running his party like a pawnshop?

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

Mr. Khan: All talk, talk, talk and jokes, jokes, jokes by this Premier. He is not a serious premier and industry know it.

When Manitoba's ranked dead last for economic growth, when four out five investors are saying they're not going to invest under this NDP government, he

needs to get his facts straight. When we left government, there was 36 major projects in the queue for development, and under this NDP they had taken that number—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan:—and driven it to a zero, Honourable Speaker.

At a time when we have to grow Manitoba and harness the materials we have, this Premier wants to stand up and make jokes. Manitobans are struggling, our economy is dying under this NDP. Manitobans are losing jobs at historic rates and they can't pay bills because of this NDP government.

Two and a half years, the Premier has destroyed this economy and killed the economic horse he so supposedly loved and cherished. That horse is dead and Manitobans' dreams are dying under this Premier.

So I ask the Premier: What is he going to do to turn around this province, or will he continue to just destroy it?

Mr. Kinew: You know, I don't know what the member has against horses, but on this side of the House we love all horses: economic horses, stallions, horses in carriages. Bring it on. We love our four-legged friends.

Now, when it comes to the member opposite, though, selling off his party headquarters at a 25 per cent discount, maybe next time you sell a property, don't go telling CBC News that it has mice in it. That's what he did at the start of the year, so, of course, that there would be a discount there.

But for the members of the PC Party who just found out about the fact their headquarters was just sold—donors as well, probably—do they know who purchased their headquarters? Oh, you're going to love this one, Honourable Speaker. It's the guy who got the most votes in the recent PC Party leadership, and, of course, as we all know, the person who got the most votes in the last leadership contest is not the Leader of the Opposition.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

* (14:20)

Debbie's Law Request for Support

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Not one serious answer on economic growth when it comes to this Premier. I've asked three questions and all he did was stand up and make jokes in the light of the situation that our economy is ranked dead last

under this NDP. Maybe he'll take a second and pause when it comes to someone dying in a hospital.

Debbie Fewster and her family were failed by this NDP government. They have come forward and asked this NDP government to do better by supporting Debbie's law, and yet this Premier and his entire government refused to help Debbie's family. Her death wasn't a human error; it was evidence of a system that is broken. Systematic failures require systematic solutions.

Why is the Premier not committing to pass Debbie's law so no other family has to go through the passing away of a loved one in the way Debbie Fewster's family had to?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to reach out to the family of Debbie Fewster and to let you know that your provincial government grieves alongside you, and we send you our sincere condolences. Anytime a family in Manitoba loses a loved one in a situation like this, the grief is compounded by those questions of what if. What if the Cardiac Centre of Excellence had been there? What if there were the referrals given in a timely fashion?

These are all important things that our government is committed to working on for you and for everyone in the province of Manitoba. So we thank you for bringing forward your advocacy because it's through working together that all of us as Manitobans will build the health-care system that we all deserve.

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

Mr. Khan: Sincere condolences don't bring Debbie back. Doesn't help the family when the family is asking for this Premier to pass Debbie's law. Premier stands up and says he wants to work together, so let's work together.

The MLA from Roblin has brought Debbie's law forward and we ask that this government, this Premier, this NDP government that says they're listening but refuses to act on it, now is an opportunity to work together.

Debbie's family is asking for this. There was a mistake made at the hospital. It's a systematic mistake that can be fixed with measures like Debbie's law.

Why will the Premier not commit to passing Debbie's law when he says he wants to work together?

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, you know, speaking through you, the Chair, to the family in question

here: of course, we offer you our condolences, but talk is not enough. It has to be followed by action, and action is exactly what our Health Minister took on your behalf.

In March of last year, they issued a directive upholding the exact thing that this family has been asking for. I'll table for the House today a memo from Shared Health dated April 11, 2025, sent by Dr. Ed Buchel, the provincial specialty lead for surgery in the province of Manitoba, again outlining that patients will receive in writing information about the acuity and the targeted wait time, that they'll be given the contact information if clinical symptoms change and, of course, that the other asks that these families have will be implemented.

Now, I will also table for the House an anonymized letter—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Once again, talk is not enough. Action is required. Why is the Premier refusing to take action on Debbie's law? Debbie Fewster's family wants it. The MLA from Roblin has brought it forward. This is the perfect time to have action, like he says, so that no other family has to go through the loss of a loved one due to a clerical error of putting a file on the wrong page.

That could be your family, your mother, your loved one, your child—because of a clerical error. Debbie's law will put measures in place to make sure this doesn't happen. It's a simple action the Premier can do today by standing up and saying he supports Debbie's law so this doesn't have to happen to anyone else in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, to Debbie's family and to people right across the province, we have taken action to ensure that people who are deserving surgeries get clear communication in writing from the surgeons as well as the other forms of information that the Fewster family has been advocating for. I just tabled the proof for the member opposite that this action was taken a year ago.

However, what he neglects to mention is that when he was at the Cabinet table and when his Health critic was advising Heather Stefanson, they dismantled the cardiac program at St. Boniface. That is the root cause of so many issues that we see for cardiac care in Manitoba.

So when he talks about a systemic cause, it was his government. When he talks about a systemic solution, it is the investments that we'll be announcing in the cardiac centre of elect-of excellence next Tuesday, budget day 2026, in Manitoba.

We're going to keep repairing health care, fixing their damage, but more importantly, delivering on our commitment to you.

Manitoba Jobs Agreement—Remittance Request for Auditor General to Review

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Today, three major construction associations representing the majority of Manitoba's construction sector formally requested the Auditor General to review this government's handling of contracts issued under their so-called Manitoba jobs agreement. The industry leaders specifically focused on the NDP collecting 85 cents per hour, per worker, on public projects, and I quote, potentially millions of dollars diverted from public investment with zero transparency, end quote.

Now that the NDP have been caught with their hands in the cookie jar, will this minister finally rise in this House and cancel the terrible Manitoba jobs agreement?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): We are building schools and hospitals and making sure those projects create good Manitoba jobs. When we—when you put in your hard day's work, you should be able to earn good wages and build a good life.

And that's why the Manitoba jobs agreement is all about. They help us deliver while ensuring all workers have fair wages, good benefits and safe work sites where—whether they are unionized or ununionized. They help—also help train the next generation of skilled trade workers.

We are creating apprenticeship opportunities, building long-term workforce capacity right here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: The NDP jobs agreement is so riddled with red flags and potential for massive government fraud that Manitoba's construction leaders are now asking the Auditor General to investigate this hidden fee and the, quote, broader accountability failures of the provincial government when it comes to the Manitoba jobs agreement.

Here's Chris Lorenc, president of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, and I quote: Transparency

and accountability for public funds are absolutely critical. Neither the industry nor Manitoba taxpayers have been given a clear explanation of how this fee was determined or what it is intended to fund. That is not acceptable.

Will this NDP government come clean today?

The Speaker: Order, please.

If I could ask the member for Borderland what he was quoting from. Was it a public or a private document? Stop the clock.

Mr. Guenter: It's a public document and will be increasingly so.

MLA Sandhu: We have made a record \$3.7-billion investment in building Manitoba, and we are investing in the future of workers. We are making sure those investments create thousands of good jobs right here at home today and next generations.

We respect the people, want to understand how the approach works. But the reality is this: Manitoba job agreements are open, competitive and already delivering results. We are not shutting anyone out; we are setting clear, fair rules so the projects run smoothly and workers are treated fairly. Public investments are creating good jobs for Manitoba workers and building up the skilled workforce we need here for the future.

We are going to keep working with industry, contractors, workers to make sure the approach continues to deliver strong results for Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

* (14:30)

Mr. Guenter: This NDP government brought in this terrible Manitoba jobs agreement without any consultation with the construction industry. They have set it up in such a way as to enrich their political friends and grease their own political pockets.

Now that Manitoba's construction industry leaders have called on the Auditor General—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —to investigate this government and this agreement, will this NDP government commit to co-operating with the Auditor General in an investigation—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Stop the clock.

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt), please come to order.

Mr. Guenter: Will the NDP government commit to co-operating with the Auditor General in an investigation, and will they walk away from the corruption and end this crooked deal?

MLA Sandhu: We are listening to Manitobans and we are listening to Manitoba workers, Honourable Speaker. The 100 per cent people who work on MJA projects are better off under MJA.

What the PCs want to do, they want to bring the workforce from out of province, which is not going to happen under our watch, Honourable Speaker. We will always put Manitoba workers first.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Government Record on Economy and Affordability Claim the MJA Negatively Impacts Workers Financially

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): We've already seen that this NDP government failed to build the economy, but now it's failing to efficiently build the projects that we need as Manitobans. This morning, we saw that from a letter from Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, the Winnipeg Construction Association and the Construction Association of Rural Manitoba, who released a joint letter calling on the Auditor General to investigate the Manitoba jobs agreement.

They outlined that the MJA is broken at the structural level and that this NDP backroom deal locks out 88 per cent of Manitoba construction workforce. This agreement clearly doesn't do what the government says it sets out to.

When will this minister—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, for years, Manitoba economy suffered under their terrible plan, where they went to Saskatchewan, they went to Ontario and said, we've got projects here, bring your workers into Manitoba and take the jobs from Manitobans. That was their plan. That's what they did for—with construction projects.

Instead, no, we're going to change the approach. We're going to actually look at projects that are built here in Manitoba—schools, health-care facilities—and

say, we want to prioritize Manitobans for the jobs here in Manitoba. That's a good economic plan that puts Manitobans to work, that builds our economy, that builds schools, health-care facilities that help all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, we're hearing from the industry and we're hearing from the workers that this jobs agreement is shutting out 88 per cent of Manitoba workers. Not only is this agreement shutting out those workers from earning a living, we now learn that it's taking money directly out of our economy and funneling it into NDP political allies. Honourable Speaker, this is at a time that the government is growing government spending five times that of economic growth.

Why is this Premier (Mr. Kinew) more interested in feeding government and the campaign slush funds rather than helping construction workers feed their own families?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, working people are our allies. We work to help working people. Let me be clear, with Manitoba jobs agreement, 100 per cent of workers will get better benefits—100 per cent.

And what we're doing, Honourable Speaker, is to support our economy right here. When projects happen in Manitoba, who do we want to prioritize? Manitoba workers. That's what we're doing with the Manitoba jobs agreement. So when projects happen here, we invest in our own economy for schools, for hospitals. That's what moves our province ahead. That's what moves our economy ahead.

Instead of seeing Saskatchewan and Ontario licence plates on job sets, we're seeing more Manitoba plates. It moves our economy ahead, ensuring that we make the investments we need to move our economy. We won't take lessons from a former failed—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, the only thing that we've seen is economic stagnation under this government. Under the NDP, Manitoba is leading the country on two things. You know what those two things are? Food inflation and tax inflation.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans are experiencing an all-out affordability crisis right now, and rather than

helping struggling families with good-paying jobs, the NDP are too busy creating a slush fund to benefit the back door buddies.

Honourable Speaker, why does the NDP continue to play politics with the affordability crisis?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, the former failed government and the members who sit in opposition know all too well about deals. When they rammed through a controversial project after they lost the election, that's what they tried to do.

They got fined by the Commissioner for unethical procedures, and they still didn't even kick out members out of the caucus who were fined in that proceeding. As a result, they learned nothing. They learned absolutely nothing. They don't know how to build an economy.

On our side of the House, when projects come here, we build them with Manitoba workers: \$3.7-billion capital project, the largest spend in Manitoba's history, that happens with Manitoba workers. That's what MJA is all about: Manitoba projects for Manitoba workers. That's how we build one strong economy.

Winnipeg School Division Funding Property Tax Increase Concerns

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Winnipeg school divisions have hiked property taxes by up to 43 per cent since this NDP took office, a direct hit to hard-working families that are already stretched under a cost-of-living crisis. This oblivious NDP removed all the guardrails, they let school division taxes spiral out of control, and then they pretend to be surprised. It happened last year, it's happening this year and it's going to happen again next year under this NDP government.

So how can this NDP justify slamming families with historic increases to school taxes while they're already struggling?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): We know for years, under the members opposite, education was underfunded, and underfunded in a really big way. And I know the members opposite probably have conversations in their communities with leaders in the division, and we know they're hearing this.

For years, cuts after cuts after cuts. And, again, finally, after a long seven and a half years, this team came in and started funding education above the rate of inflation for three years in a row.

And while we do that, we're offering affordability relief, targeted affordability relief and education property tax credit: \$1,500 last year, \$1,600 this most recent tax season. And Honourable Speaker, we can't wait for Tuesday, when we're going to talk about the extra work we're doing to reduce costs for Manitobans.

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

Mrs. Stone: The numbers tell a very different story, Honourable Speaker. A 43 per cent increase in Louis Riel School Division, a 37 per cent increase in Pembina Trails and a 36 per cent increase in River East Transcona.

Since the minister is refusing to take accountability for his decisions, school trustees, superintendents across the province are saying that their funding model and their funding is not enough. So will the MLA for Southdale stand up for her constituents that have been slammed with a 43 per cent increase since she was elected?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, the Minister for Advanced Education and training stands up for her constituents every single day, just like everyone on this team. The members opposite don't take any accountability for their actions.

Again, for years they cut education. The ridiculousness of them coming in here and suggesting that this team isn't doing the work is beyond belief. For years they cut education. We know that had a horrible impact on divisions and their ability to serve our students. Finally, under the leadership of the best Education minister in the country, we're getting the job done. And while we invest in education, we're lowering your costs.

Honourable Speaker, next Tuesday we can't wait to share how we're going to do more cost reductions—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Stone: Rather than developing a fair and sustainable and equitable funding model for education, this NDP government continues to push it into the future, despite the fact that tax bills come every year, despite the fact that—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —continue to need funding, and despite the fact that again next year, we're going to have a general assessment as increasing property values continuing to rise. Yet their only plan is band-aid

solutions. Have they not learned their lesson, year after year, where homeowners continue to be slammed because of decisions that they have made.

* (14:40)

When will school divisions, teachers and taxpayers finally get a funding model that is sustainable for the long term?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, the members opposite were in government for seven and a half years. Did they bring forward a new education funding model? No. Of course they didn't, just like they didn't take action in almost every single other policy area across the province.

We know that Manitobans are facing affordability challenges, and that's why this team has brought forward targeted relief. Whether it's on your fuel costs, whether it's on your electricity costs, whether it's on your education property taxes, we are lowering costs for Manitobans across the board.

What are they bringing forward? Absolutely crazy proposals that will hit the—hit our deficit, a billion-dollar cost. They didn't even know what it was going to cost the provincial Treasury.

So again, we ask them, what are they going to cut? Health care? Are they going to cut hospitals?

It's not credible, it's not serious, just like the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan).

Health Care for the Westman Region Primary-Care Paramedics—Staffing Levels

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, the number of primary-care paramedics in western Manitoba has dropped from 149 to 124 over the last two years, a 20 per cent reduction according to documents obtained from Shared Health by the Brandon Sun. That's 25 fewer paramedics working today than in 2023.

Why is this failing Health Minister risking the lives of residents of western Manitoba?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank the member for that question.

When we're talking about care in rural Manitoba, we take that very seriously on this side of the House. No matter where you live, you deserve to have access to the emergency response services that you need.

We do know that all over the province, but specifically in rural and northern communities, the

former PC government cut EMS services year over year over year, and that resulted in a loss of over 90 paramedics in rural communities.

Honourable Speaker, we're doing the work of fixing the damage the former failed PC government did, including in the Westman and specifically regarding paramedics.

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

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, this minister's blame game is not working. A 39-year veteran paramedic in Virden is speaking out about the horrendous wait times residents of the region face.

I quote from the Brandon Sun: It's difficult for the medics, knowing that somebody is waiting and needing their care, and it's going to take them a long time to get there. Who said that, Honourable Speaker? Two-time NDP candidate in the Riding Mountain constituency, Wayne Chacun.

If this Health Minister won't listen to us, will they at least listen to one of their candidates?

MLA Asagwara: Of course, we work with all paramedics. I want to congratulate Wayne, he was actually recognized last year for being an outstanding paramedic. I had the privilege of being there when he received his award.

And I want to thank Wayne and other paramedics for working directly with our government to ensure that, for the first time ever in Manitoba's history, we have advanced-care paramedics working in rural Manitoba. That is a direct result of working with our partners and with experts like Wayne.

And, Honourable Speaker, that could have happened years ago, but you know who wouldn't allow ACPs to work in rural Manitoba? The former failed PCs.

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

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, this NDP government has failed residents of Manitoba. They promised to add 200 new paramedics in their first term of office, but only 18 net-new paramedics have been hired by Shared Health since October 2023.

What immediate actions will the Health Minister take to ensure residents of western Manitoba get the EMS services they need, when they need it?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, our government is working every single day to not only repair the

damage done by the previous government but to make sure that we strengthen health-care services for generations to come. We are working with AMBM, AMM, Shared Health, all of our partners, to ensure that we're training paramedics.

We, for the first time in years, have full seats—seats are full in our paramedic training program at Red River College. For the first time, we have ACPs in rural Manitoba. And, for the first time—not my words, his words—we are retaining net-new paramedics in this province—net-new paramedics after years of them cutting them, firing them and treating them with disrespect.

Honourable Speaker, they froze their wages for over four years, including during COVID. We'll—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Individual Leaving Abusive Relationship Landlord Breach of Confidentiality

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I rise today to ask about a specific issue that was raised with me by a constituent.

She and her children lived with her domestic abuser under the same lease. When she made the decision to leave her abuser, she had to find legal means to break their lease. She obtained a domestic violence certificate from Manitoba Justice, which was delivered to her landlord. It was clearly marked confidential for her protection. However, her landlord shared it in an email with her abuser.

When she learned of this, she contacted the RTB who confirmed that the landlord violated the section of the act designed to protect her. However, she was informed that there are no consequences for the landlord's actions.

Can the government clarify if this would be considered an RTB issue or a Justice issue?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I appreciate the member opposite bringing the issue forward.

It wasn't clear in her question, or maybe I just didn't catch it, exactly who—which office she corresponded with on behalf of her constituent. I'd just like to offer that if the issue lies with Justice, we'd be happy to look into the issue more deeply, or if it's an issue with another department.

Of course, we're always happy to do—work with her on casework for her constituents, and it doesn't need to come to the floor of Legislature; we can work together offline as well.

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

**Certificate to End Tenancy in Family Violence Cases
Consequences for Landlord Breach of Confidentiality**

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the minister for his answer.

With Manitoba having some of the highest rates of intimate partner and family violence in the country, protecting victims and survivors of these crimes, who are primarily women and children, need to be top of mind in every case.

It is often very difficult for women to escape abusive situations, and in this case, the domestic violence certificate is one tool that was available to protect her. Throughout this process and layers of bureaucracy, people are facing further difficulties and barriers at a time when they need support.

Because it appears that there should be consequences for those who break the necessary confidentiality, will the minister look into this gap and direct efforts to change it moving forward?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I appreciate the member's question that she's asking today and the issue that she's raising here that I think everyone in the Chamber knows is a serious issue that we face here in Manitoba, with exponential levels of GBV and IPV violence.

I'm really proud that our minister brought forward the IPV death review law. It's just passed committee, so we're looking forward to that becoming part of our Manitoba infrastructure in dealing with IPV.

I'll remind the House that that was a review committee that the failed PCs dissolved for whatever reason. I don't know if they didn't want to do the work or didn't simply care, but our government is committed to ending gender-based violence and IPV violence. It has no place—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, my constituent, like any survivor, is upset—any survivor, is upset by the betrayal of the required confidentiality in place to protect her. We are very concerned that this may not be the only instance of such breach of trust and safety.

Would the minister be amenable, whether through regulation or legislation, to introducing mechanisms

to impose penalties or other consequences on landlords who violate confidentiality protections of domestic abuse survivors?

MLA Fontaine: Once again, I want to say miigwech to the member for bringing forward a really important issue and, as I've said previously many times and just now, our government takes very seriously the issue of IPV and gender-based violence.

One of the things that we've done since we've had the honour of having government is we've put \$22 million into 32 organizations that work on the front lines with folks that are escaping GBV and IPV. We've got \$13.7-million investments that are strictly for folks that are escaping GBV, and we've invested almost \$40 million into our Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag strategy to ensure that there is the infrastructure—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

**New Personal Care Home
Bridgwater Location**

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Honourable Speaker, the previous government promised Manitobans that they'd open new personal-care-home beds and then they never did, meaning seniors were left without the care they needed.

* (14:50)

Instead of closing personal-care homes, we're opening them across Manitoba. We've already announced plans to open personal-care homes in Lac du Bonnet, in Arborg, in Transcona. And just a couple hours ago, we had some very exciting news in Waverley.

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

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, the failed PC government was elected on a promise to add 1,200 new personal-care-home beds, but instead they closed over 200 personal-care-home beds. Manitobans know that they deserve better than cuts, closure and chaos.

That's why, today, we were so honoured to stand with seniors to announce that we're building our fourth new personal-care home in Bridgwater. This means more beds, shorter wait lists and seniors getting the care that they need close to home. Honourable Speaker, we are rebuilding capacity. We are treating seniors with the respect, care and dignity they deserve, that they were denied by the failed PCs.

Much done, more to do.

Cost of Living for Manitobans Affordability Concerns

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Families from across Manitoba are facing relentless pressure from rising grocery costs, increasing rent, higher utility payments and stagnant wages. Many are working full-time, even multiple jobs, and still can't keep up with the basic cost of living.

After years of these growing pressures, why has this government failed to deliver real, measurable relief for working families who are falling further behind every month?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, we're making progress in reducing costs for Manitobans across Manitoba. Doing it in a number of ways, of course, starting with the fuel tax holiday, which we offered for Manitobans for a full year, turned into a permanent 10 per cent cut; a hydro rate freeze and continued low hydro rates; and, of course, we've started to increase the renter's tax credit, which we know the members opposite raised. They raised taxes on renters by \$175.

We're doing the work of, of course, reducing those pressures for renters, who in many cases are those who are struggling the most. This team on this side of the House is going to continue to focus on lowering costs. We cannot wait, Honourable Speaker, for next Tuesday where we're going to talk about the next steps we're going to take to lower grocery prices, lower your education property tax bill and make life more affordable for—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Byram: I continue to hear from families, from parents who are skipping their own meals just in order to feed their children. They rely on credit to cover the essentials and living with constant financial stress. These are not isolated cases. This is becoming the reality for many families across Manitoba.

Why does this NDP government feel this level of hardship is acceptable in a province as resource wealthy as we are here in Manitoba?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I'm really happy to announce to the House that, just a mere couple of hours ago, I stood with Harvest Manitoba and announced a \$300,000 investment into their First

Steps program that works with 130 service providers to ensure that new mums have diapers and baby food and formula as they're making their way in this new path of motherhood.

We're very proud to stand with Harvest Manitoba and support the good work that they do, including providing nutrition for mums and babies.

Miigwech.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Okay, apparently there's time for one more question.

Ms. Byram: Despite repeated claims from the government that affordability is improving, the reality on the ground tells a very different story. Food bank usage continues to rise, housing costs remain out of reach for many and everyday essentials are becoming more and more expensive for families. Manitobans are asking where the promised relief actually is.

If this government's plan is working, can the minister explain why so many Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet here today in the province of Manitoba?

MLA Fontaine: I want to, once again, just remind Manitobans that are watching that the failed PC caucus—when they were in their failed government—didn't want to feed children that were going to school. They thought that a universal school nutrition program was a bad idea. They had the premier get up and say that it was a bad idea and shame parents that were struggling to be able to feed their children. They didn't care then and they certainly don't care now.

I know that members opposite kind of get up and want Manitobans to think that they changed, but they have not changed. We're really proud of our universal school nutrition program I'm really proud of the work that we introduced today in our partnership with Harvest Manitoba; still more—

The Speaker: Time has expired.

And the time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative service 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.

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.

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/Saint 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 Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains and 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.

Around Portage la Prairie—oh, read that line.

(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 aerodrome—this would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

* (15:00)

(7) The average wait time 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 care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Roger Brueger [*phonetic*], Joy Bray and Sheila Rendeau [*phonetic*]

An Honourable Member: Riendeau.

Mr. Khan: —Riendeau—Sheila Riendeau, Honourable Speaker, and many, many other Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Lisa Sawatzky, Susan Peters, Rachel Hildebrand and many, many Manitobans.

Phoenix School

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

(6) There are currently hundreds of children on a wait-list for child care in Headingley. The daycare operator in Phoenix School has been told that they will continue to have space within the school for the

2024-2025 school year only, that further expansion of child-care space within the school is not possible and that space may be reduced moving forward due to a shortage of classrooms. If new space is not constructed as planned, many families may be left without child care.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Katarzyna James, Emily Laycock, Brian Polonski and many, many other Manitobans.

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) These 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:

* (15:10)

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 Adrian Fast, J. Lyr *[phonetic]*, Vinh Nguyen, and many, many, many more Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Before moving on to the next petition, I'll remind all members that there are three names that you read out at the end of your petitions and you get two manys.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Thank you. *[interjection]* Yes, exactly.

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 of the region.

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

(3) Roads meeting the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, RTAC, standards improve both safety and efficiency, as they can handle heavier loads, reducing the number of trips 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 Highway 10 to meet RTAC standards.

This petition has been signed by Lorna Cloud, Daniel Oudre *[phonetic]*, Dolores Gambler *[phonetic]* and many other Manitobans.

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) 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 the 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 petition is signed by Anita Janzen-Gemmel, Dawn Orton, Carla Schmidt, and many Manitobans.

Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The intersection of Provincial Trunk Highway 75, PTH 75, and Provincial Road 305, PR 305, at Ste. Agathe, has become increasingly dangerous for motorists and pedestrians.

(2) Over the past seven years there have been at least 20 accidents at this location resulting in injuries and fatalities.

(3) This intersection is heavily used by community members, commuters and commercial traffic, making safety improvements critical.

(4) Immediate action is needed to mitigate accidents and prevent further loss of life.

(5) An in-service road safety review was completed in 2022, which included recommended improvements but no action plan.

(6) Immediate action and implementation on the maintenance issues and short-term strategies identified in the 2022 study are needed.

* (15:20)

(7) Development of an action plan with timelines for the medium-term strategies identified in the 2022 study is required.

(8) Installation of traffic lights or a controlled signal system will make the intersection safer.

(9) Additional strategies, such as reduced speed limits approaching the intersection and the addition of rumble strips to alert drivers of the upcoming intersection, will save lives.

(10) Construction of dedicated turning lanes to reduce collision risk and other traffic calming designs will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities at the intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to undertake safety improvements at the intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305 at Ste. Agathe.

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize measures that will reduce accidents and fatalities including, but not limited to, those outlined in the 2022 in-service road safety review.

This is signed by Gilbert Dupuis, Aurore Courcelles, Noel Courcelles and many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition—pardon me, honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Illegal border crossings into Manitoba have increased 14 per cent in 2024, raising significant public safety and security concerns, particular in border communities.

(2) Changes to the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement have driven migrants deeper into hiding to avoid apprehension, making law enforcement efforts more difficult.

(3) Border patrol officials believe that criminal organizations, including Mexican cartels, are involved in smuggling operations at the border, posing serious security threats to Manitoba.

(4) Human smuggling networks are abandoning vulnerable migrants, including families, in isolated and dangerous locations, exposing them to severe risks, especially during Manitoba's harsh winters.

(5) Border communities are preparing for a possible surge in illegal border crossings, which could overwhelm local resources and emergency search-and-rescue services.

(6) Despite these challenges, there has been little communication or support from the provincial and federal governments regarding their plans to assist border communities, leaving them under-resourced and unprepared to manage this escalating crisis.

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

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to assist border communities in managing the rise in illegal border crossings into Manitoba.

(2) Honourable Deputy Speaker, to urge the provincial government to work closely with federal and local authorities to ensure adequate resources, including funding and support for emergency services, are available to protect local communities; and that immediate measures will be taken to dismantle and destroy all smuggling networks operating in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Rick Rivers, Dylan Quilty, Marcel Lemire and many, many more Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Deputy Speaker, 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 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

* (15:30)

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

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition has been signed by Debbie Drain, Don *[phonetic]* Drain, David Mulaire and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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 repeatedly violating his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets, ultimately claiming Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, responsibility for the administration of justice has been given to provinces, thus 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 of the tools available to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens, ensuring that violent repeat 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, putting innocent Manitobans at risk.

(7) This government must prioritize public safety over leniency towards repeat offenders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

To call on the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This petition has been signed by Emily Desjarlais, David Breed, Disa Tomanek-Pomanski and many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll once again remind all members that you get two manys at the end of your petition.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government is selective—has—let me do that again: (4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of the home heating oil in Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans that are heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitoba, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is the only provincial jurisdiction to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This amazing petition was signed by Bill River, Marcel Lemire, Janet Lemire and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

* (15:40)

(1) Beginning March 17, 2024, a person struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access mental—or, sorry, medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition was signed by John Klassen, Esther Klassen and Rosie Martens and many, many of other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Education Property Taxes

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): 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 was enabled and encouraged—let me restart that: (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-dollar 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) These 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 fund—and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Joseph Sitter, Daniel Martin, Cara Palmeiro and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

* (15:50)

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

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

This petition has been signed by Richard Hanson, Colleen Prawdzik and Cindy Foster and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Location of Safe Injection Sites

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

The background to this petition as-is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition—sorry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

The Speaker in the Chair

This is signed by Laura Alex, Divine Samson and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: No further petitions? Grievances?

Then, orders of the day.

So in accordance with the Sessional Order passed in the House on November 26, 2025, as today is the 10th sitting day after an Ethics Commissioner report has been tabled, and as routine proceedings has now—no—routine proceedings not concluded 60 minutes prior, so now we'll skip—let me just start again.

In accordance with the Sessional Order—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ETHICS REPORT MOTIONS

Motion Presented

MLA Sandhu (The Maples)

The Speaker: In accordance with the Sessional Order passed on the House on November 26, 2025, as today is the 10th sitting day after an Ethics Commissioner report has been tabled, I'm calling for debate of the

outstanding ethics report motion listed on today's Order Paper.

Before we begin debate on the ethics report motion today, I will remind members of the process for the consideration of these motions—motions:

The debate shall be limited to one sitting day.

The House shall not adjourn until all members have had an opportunity to speak to the motion.

An ethics report motion cannot be amended.

The Speaker shall read the motion to the House to open the debate.

During the debate, no member shall speak longer than 10 minutes.

All members may speak to the motion, in the following sequence: first, the subject of the complaint or a member of their party; followed by the complainant or a member of their party; followed by a rotation between speakers from each recognized party; followed by an independent member; followed by any members wishing to speak, repeating this rotation.

Before reading the motion to open the debate, I will read into the record the recommendation contained in the report from the Ethics Commissioner regarding the Honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery, dated December 4, 2025.

On page 6 of that report, the Ethics Commissioner wrote: I therefore conclude that the Minister of Public Service Delivery has not breached The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act as alleged by the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter).

The motion before the House is:

THAT the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for The Maples in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated December 4, 2025.

The floor is now open for debate.

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): It is my pleasure to rise today in response to the report of the Ethics Commissioner regarding this matter.

First, I want to say clearly, I have a great deal of respect for the commissioner and the—for the important role the office plays in the maintaining trust and accountability in our democratic institutions. Our entire government respects the commissioners and the

independence of the office. That is why I fully accept the finding of this report.

* (16:00)

And, Honourable Speaker, the findings are clear. The commissioner concluded unequivocally that, I quote: The minister has not breached The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act. End quote. That not ambiguous; that is a clear, definitive finding.

The report also make it something else very clear. The decision in question, the awarding of this contract was not—was made before I became minister. As the commissioner outlined, the procurement process was carried out by public servants, evaluated through established process and provided—and approved at the deputy minister level prior to my appointment to the Cabinet. In fact, the commissioner stated directly that, I quote: At no time did minister has participated in the decision. End quote.

Honourable Speaker, those are the facts. Serving as the Minister of Public Service Delivery is the honour of my life. Every single day, I have the privilege of working alongside dedicated public servants who show up for Manitobans, delivering the services people rely on, keeping government running and helping families get through their day. And together we have been focused on making life more affordable, more fair and more accessible for people across the province.

We have taken action to protect Manitobans from unfair business practices, including moving forward with legislation to crack down on predatory pricing and ensure people are treated fairly, whether they shop online or in person.

We have taken—we have been working to modernize services, reducing barriers and making it easier for Manitobans to access the support they need without red tape and without necessary delays. And we have been focused on strengthening trust, making sure government services are delivered with the transparency, accountability and the respect for every Manitoban.

The Speaker: Order, please.

If I could just remind the honourable minister that all comments at this point in time are supposed to be strictly relevant to the motion of the Ethics Commissioner. So if you could just bring your comments back to that, it would be appreciated.

MLA Sandhu: That is the work I'm focused on.

But there's another important point in the report that I believe all members of this House should reflect

on. The commissioner reminded us that making a complaint under the act is a very serious matter. He writes that such a complaint must be based on, I quote, reasonable grounds and not on suspicions, speculations, hunch or 'conjecion.'

Honourable Speaker, that standard exists for a reason. It exists to protect the integrity of this House. It exists to ensure fairness and it exists to maintain public confidence in our democratic institution. When that standard is not met, the commissioner is clear that it cannot undermine public trust—it can undermine public trust, the very thing this process is meant to uphold.

So, today, I think it is important that we take a step back. The independent office of this legislation has done his work. He reviewed the facts, examined the evidence and reached a clear conclusion and I accept that conclusion fully.

I want to thank the commissioner for his thoughtful investigation, for a professionalism with which this report was prepared.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans expect us to conduct ourselves with integrity. They expect us to respect the institution that served them and they expect us to focus on work that matters most in their daily lives. That is exactly what I will continue to do.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): We accept the findings of the report and look forward to the vote.

The Speaker: No further members wishing to debate?

The House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So the question before us is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for The Maples in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner dated December 4, 2025.

All those—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

The motion is accordingly passed.

* * *

The Speaker: Orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you please call for the start of second reading of Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act; followed by

the start of second reading of Bill 15, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act.

The Speaker: Been announced that we will now proceed to second reading of Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act; followed by second reading of Bill 15, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 40—The Elections Amendment Act

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister for Labour and Immigration, that Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: I'm pleased to rise in the House today for second reading of Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act, and it's an appropriate time, I believe, to rise on this important bill as we deal with issues of the Ethics Commissioner here in the House this afternoon.

Of course, this bill builds off of the work of the Ethics Commissioner in ensuring that all members of this House are held to the highest ethical standards in all cases. Currently, we know that section 55 of The Elections Act prescribes that information required for nomination of election includes such things as a statement disclosing any offence which you—which a member has pled guilty to or is—has been convicted of under the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the Income Tax Act, or any other laws that are designated by regulation.

This bill will amend that legislation and section 55 to add an additional requirement for disclosure. If the candidate has been found by the Ethics Commissioner to have contravened The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act and the Assembly has ordered one of the following penalties: a fine; suspending the member's right to sit and vote in the Assembly; or declaring the member's seat as vacant. Disclosure is not required if the Assembly ordered that the member only be reprimanded because of the contravention. The Chief Electoral Officer would be required to publish any statements made under this new requirement, thereby enhancing transparency to the public. These amendments would apply to any election after they are proclaimed to be in force.

Honourable Speaker, we have seen incredibly blatant ethics concerns involving the party and members of the Legislative Assembly that occupies the opposition benches here today. The pattern that has been

displayed is unmistakable: questions around financial disclosure, campaign conduct, government advertising, compliance with election rules and violating the caretaker convention after losing an election.

There's no question that these violations, especially the ones of the former premier, Heather Stefanson, her deputy premier Cliff Cullen and the Cabinet ministers, including the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), who were fined for wrongdoing around the Sio Silica scandal, have eroded public confidence. I'm certain, Honourable Speaker, that these findings have shaken Manitobans to their very core, and those who believe that the individuals can—that they vote to office will go forward in good faith to represent them and their constituencies as best they can.

* (16:10)

Ethical campaigning in elections is paramount to our free and fair democracy. And corruption in all its forms undermines public faith in our elections. It can erode confidence, leaving Manitobans unsure if they can trust even our electoral system. It may leave them disillusioned with voting or with politics in general, perhaps leaving individuals feeling like their vote doesn't even matter.

And, Honourable Speaker, that is not in the best interest of Manitobans. Every individual needs to feel that their voice matters and that their vote is important, that they can trust our elections and that the individuals that they help to elect will go on to represent their area faithfully and ethically.

Honourable Speaker, the conduct of former and, in fact, a current member of the opposition caucus around the Sio Silica deal that they attempted to push through after they had lost the election was an egregious violation of the trust of Manitobans.

And so, Manitobans deserve to know exactly who they are electing to the Manitoba Legislature. They deserve accountability from their elected officials and the transparency from those who wish to be elected about those transgressions.

This bill will help restore that trust that may have been lost by Manitobans, by those Manitobans who were disturbed by the actions and the conduct of the opposition party. It will allow them to make an informed choice when choosing with whom they decide to give their very valuable vote. And that is an incredibly important thing in the world where, at times, democracy feels that it's being threatened abroad and even here in Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, I look forward to seeing all members step up, show that they support an ethical and a transparent process and vote in favour of Bill 40 here today.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

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

And the floor is now open for questions.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does this bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Can you imagine members opposite standing up on this bill while they still have one of the people that was fined by the Ethics Commissioner in their caucus. They can't even bring themselves to kick him out of their caucus, let alone stand up and stand in an ethical way for Manitobans. This is shameful, Honourable Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): A reprimand is one of the formal sanctions available to the Assembly under The Conflict of Interest Act. Why should the sanction be treated differently from a fine or suspension when it comes to disclosure to voters?

Mr. Wiebe: You know, as I said, today being the day that we're actually dealing with one of these ethical complaints really highlights the important work of the Ethics Commissioner. The Ethics Commissioner has made it clear: he's willing to step up to protect Manitobans to give them the information that they need in order to ensure that their elected officials are conducting themselves in an ethical way.

But, of course, members opposite, they don't want that process to work as intended. They want to flood the zone. They want to pull a Trump, and they want to ensure that every accusation is simply a confession of their own crimes.

Honourable Speaker, we see who has been unethical; it's the members opposite.

MLA Bereza: I didn't hear an answer to my question, so I'll ask it again.

If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

Mr. Wiebe: Member opposite's not listening. We just dealt with that in the ethics report that was issued to the House. The Ethics Commissioner is warning members opposite: Don't play politics with this. This is about transparency; it's about ethics. You need to be upfront with people. You need to be honest with people.

Members opposite can't seem to figure this out, so they're going to play the game, they're going to make accusations, they're going to flood the zone.

Honourable Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner's been clear. It's members opposite. It's the former premier. They broke the law. They need to be held accountable.

Ms. Byram: Can the minister share with us: Why does the bill exclude cases where the Ethics Commissioner found a contravention but the Assembly chose not to impose a penalty?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, again, members opposite are, you know, keen to play games with this, and I think the Ethics Commissioner's been incredibly clear. What was—what happened with the former premier was unprecedented. It was unprecedented not only in this province, of course, but across the country. I would argue this might be unprecedented anywhere in western democracies.

This is unbelievable, Honourable Speaker. Members opposite are trying to hide. They're trying to hide from the public, not let people know that one of these people is still in their caucus and they haven't even removed them. But Manitobans deserve to know.

That's why Bill 40 will show that accountability to everyone.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, I'm going to ask the question again because Manitobans deserve to know: If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

Mr. Wiebe: Members opposite—like, we just dealt with this here in the House where the Ethics Commis-

sioner might as well have screamed it to the opposition: You got to stop playing games with this. This is important work.

We have the Ethics Commissioner for a reason so that Manitobans can see in black and white what the members opposite have done. Now, they want to flood the zone. They want to play games. They want to say, well, maybe you were unethical. Maybe you were unethical. Give them a ton of work that doesn't have anything to do with the true ethical conduct of members of this House.

And they think that, because they are flooding the zone, that Manitobans won't notice. Manitobans know what they did, so why not just stand up and say, we know, we're sorry, and we're kicking out the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton).

Ms. Byram: Did the government consider amending the disclosure rules to include criminal offences where a pardon or record suspension has been granted so that voters would have access to the fullest possible picture when evaluating candidates?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, like, here's exactly the issue. Manitobans know exactly who every single member of our party is because we are ethical, we're honest, we're straightforward, we're transparent.

You know, members opposite want to talk about the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) past: he wrote a book about it. The first speech of the last campaign was about reconciliation; it was about understanding that people need to be held to account and how we can build our province from past experiences.

So we're not running from our record. We're running because of our experiences. And members opposite, they can go out and say, we're proud of the member for Red River North, we're proud to stand behind somebody who was fined by the Ethics Commissioner. Please do that. Pass Bill 40 and you can go out and do that every single day.

MLA Bereza: We still didn't get a question, and Manitobans deserve it, so I'm going to continue to ask until we get an answer.

If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, it's embarrassing. He's out of gas. He's got one question written down by ChatGPT, and that's all he's got, I suppose. I'll keep answering the question.

* (16:20)

He's, you know, he's—honestly, he won't even listen to the Ethics Commissioner, when the member—when the Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu) reads it into the public record here today. So he didn't even have to go out and read the report; he can just listen, where the Ethics Commissioner says: Stop it, opposition, stop playing games, start being ethical and honest with Manitobans.

Look, all we're trying to do is make sure that Bill 40 reflects what Manitobans already want. They want an ethical, transparent government. They know that they're not going to get that from members opposite.

Ms. Byram: Did the minister examine whether any other Canadian province requires candidates to disclose conflict of interest violations on nomination papers?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, as I said, completely unprecedented in a very bad way. Like, we're known now, across Canada, as being the province where members opposite got voted out of office and they went back to their offices and they said: Oh, yes, well, the caretaker convention, I know we just got a presentation about that, we all know what that's about. But guess what? We're going to try and jam something through, ram something through, because it's our friends who are going to benefit from it.

So we are completely in uncharted waters here because of just how deep and dark the members opposite were willing to go to break the caretaker convention and be fined by the Ethics Commissioner.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It's unfortunate that the minister's tone is really high considering you gave sage advice yesterday, Honourable Speaker, with the level for the ASL and the interpretation division here in the Leg.

It's interesting that the minister stands up and talks about the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) fictional book that he wrote when the facts are actually in the court documents.

So would the conflict of interest violation involving the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) fall within the disclosure requirements established by Bill 40?

Mr. Wiebe: You see, members opposite want to politicize. They want to play games with this. The Ethics Commissioner just said stop it. The Ethics Commissioner is begging the opposition to just say sorry, we'll do better, we're going to kick out the

member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), and that's all they have to do.

This isn't rocket science. They're losing people from their caucus because of the presence of the member for Red River North. There are some people on that side of the House that have just a shred of ethical integrity left. But members opposite, especially the member for Lac du Bonnet, who sat there at the Cabinet table and said: Hey, what about me? I also want to break the law with Sio Silica. He wasn't even invited to the party.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, it's unfortunate that, once again, this is who the Premier has appointed as the Justice Minister. He gets up, can't answer any questions, flying off the handle, he's yelling at you. You know, it's just unfortunate.

So once again, I'll just ask in a calm way, if he can get control of himself: Would the conflict of interest violation involving the member for Keewatinook fall within the disclosure requirements established by Bill 40? Can you please answer the question for a change? These are nice, calm questions. Manitobans want to know. I want him to stop yelling at the Honourable Speaker and answer a question.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes. Do I get fired up about being accountable and ethical to the voters of Manitoba? You're darn right I do, and I'll get worked up every single time, as will every member on this side of the House.

This isn't rocket science. The Ethics Commissioner said stop playing games. The Ethics Commissioner said you're guilty. The Ethics Commissioner wants this to be public so that Manitobans know. Are they going to really re-elect the member for Red River North? Is he going to come back from Mexico to run in the election? I'd like to see that.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, Manitobans deserve answers. We're not getting any answers. I've got 10 pages of questions here.

If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation? Please tell Manitobans, please.

Mr. Wiebe: This is so embarrassing for the member opposite that he doesn't have any other questions written.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable member for Agassiz (Ms. Byram), on a point of order.

Ms. Byram: I believe the minister made reference to another member here in the Legislative in regards to attendance. And I believe that is a point of order: making reference to whether a member is here or not here.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), on the same point of order.

Mr. Wiebe: If you'll check the record, simply commenting on the physical location of a member, not whether they were attending, because I saw the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) attending the Legislature today. I think I'm not allowed to say that, but I think we all did.

And so I was not implying that he wasn't part of the proceedings here today; simply saying that I'm pretty sure he's in Mexico.

The Speaker: Give me a minute.

Well, I've reviewed the record and there is no point of order because the thing that the minister said did not reference whether the member was here or present at the moment. He merely said that he'd have to come back from Mexico to run an election. He may go to Mexico next July. We don't know.

So there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, Honourable Speaker, you know, the Ethics Commissioner does important work in this province, and so I want to ensure that his words are taken as paramount. He's warned members opposite to not play games with the ethics violation accusations that they've been making. We just dealt with that here in the House. They had nothing to say about it. They simply accepted the results. And now they're basically saying that the Ethics Commissioner is wrong.

We trust the Ethics Commissioner. We want to ensure transparency for all Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further questions?

MLA Bereza: I don't think the Ethics Commissioner said don't answer the question, so I'm going to ask it again. If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

The question is around conflict of interest—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Just give us a moment to reset the clock. You still had time to ask your question.

MLA Bereza: I'll repeat my question again.

The—if the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does this bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

We're asking the question regarding conflict of interest violation. Again, I'll state it: It's regarding a conflict of interest violation. Please answer the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I've answered the question, of course, like five times.

But it's an embarrassment. It's an embarrassment to the people of Manitoba, certainly the people of Portage la Prairie. I'm sorry you have to watch this. I'm sorry this is the guy that ended up here from your community. You got a great community and there's amazing people that I'm sure are going to represent your community well going forward, so we're looking forward to it.

* (16:30)

You know, a member opposite sits in this caucus. He stares down the member from Red River North every day. Does he say at any point, hey, we're losing people out the back door? Maybe it's time for you to move on. You broke the law. It's time for you to be accountable to Manitobans.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Did Elections Manitoba advise the government that immediate implementation of this bill was necessary in order to administer the new disclosure requirements for the upcoming election?

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, it's an important question because Elections Manitoba is ensuring that our elections are fair and that they are transparent, and this is a request that really fits with that theme of making sure that Manitobans have all the information.

You know, members opposite, of course they don't—they're hiding from the truth, and they don't want Manitobans to know, but transparency and accountability are the cornerstones of our democratic system. And, you know, we've seen what's happened in places like the United States and other jurisdictions. Even their cousins out in Alberta and Saskatchewan fall down some of these traps too.

We say to Manitobans, this government's going to stand with you and make sure you have all the information before you go to the polls.

The Speaker: Now the time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I just want to, on record again while I'm speaking here, that my question was not answered, the question being: If the stated objective of Bill 40 is transparency, why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

That's what the people want to know, and we can't get an answer from this Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe). To Manitobans, I'm sorry.

Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act, and to do so in a manner that reflects both the importance of the subject matter and the seriousness with which I believe it ought to be considered. We just asked one—I just asked one question over and over and couldn't get one single, simple answer.

Before turning to the specifics of this bill, I do want to take a moment to clearly state, in a clear and straightforward terms, that we support the underlying principle that the government says it is advancing here. Greater transparency in public life is a worthwhile objective. Providing voters with relevant information—let me say that again—relevant information about those who seek elected office is a legitimate and important goal. There is nothing controversial in the idea that Manitobans should be able to make informed decisions based on clear understanding of a candidate's record. In that respect, the direction of this bill is not something that I oppose.

The question, rather, is whether it has been carried through in a manner that is complete, consistent and true to the principle, just like, again, as my question asked: Why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation, that we could not get an answer to.

At the outset, I think it is important to situate this bill within a broader understanding of what we are being asked to do as legislators. We are not simply debating a technical amendment to nomination papers. We are not merely adjusting administrative requirements. We are, in a very real sense, speaking to the

standards by which those who seek public office are to be evaluated and the information that ought to be placed before voters as they make their decisions.

And, again, that's why we couldn't get past one question with this Justice Minister. It couldn't be answered today. This—that is not a small matter. It is not a peripheral issue; it goes to the heart of democratic accountability.

For that reason, I want to reiterate clearly that the principle underlying this bill is one that I support. Transparency is a necessary condition for trust. It is the means by which citizens can assess the conduct, the judgment and the integrity of those who ask for their confidence, just like the people of Manitoba ask for our confidence every day, and we can't get an answer to one simple question regarding conflict of interest.

It also means by which we, as members of the Assembly, demonstrate that we are prepared to be accountable for our actions. So there is no disagreement, at least on our part, with the proposition that voters should have access to relevant information about candidates, including information related to findings made under the conflict of interest act. Indeed, one might say that such information is amongst the most relevant that could be provided.

However, Honourable Speaker, support for the principle does not relieve us of obligation to examine the particulars. And it is in the particulars that this bill raises concerns. And we heard that today when the Minister of Justice would not answer one single, simple question.

At is—as it is clear from the bill itself, Bill 40 proposes to amend The Elections Act to require a candidate who is or was a member of the—this Assembly to member—to disclose whether the Ethics Commissioner has found that they contravened the conflict of interest act, but only in the circumstances where the Assembly imposed one of the three specific sanctions: a fine, a suspension of the right to sit and vote or the declaration that the member's seat be vacant.

That is the structure of this bill—of the bill. It is, in essence, a disclosure regime tied not to the findings of the contravention itself, but to the particular sanction that followed from the finding. Now, on its face, that may appear to be a reasonable approach. It may seem logical to focus on more serious consequences. But when one looks more closely at the legislative framework from which these sanctions arise, a certain peculiarity becomes evident.

The conflict of interest act sets out in clear and unambiguous terms the range of penalties that may be recommended by the commissioner following a finding of contravention. I think it's important for the purposes of this debate to place that language directly onto the record, and that is why we kept asking questions regarding the conflict of interest violation, and we still today have received no answer.

* (16:40)

Commissioner's recommendations in the case of contravention 50(1): if, after conducting an inquiry, the commissioner is still of the opinion that the member has contravened this act, the commissioner may recommend the following penalty to be imposed on a member: (a) a member to be reprimanded; (b) the member to be fined an amount not exceeding \$50,000; (c) the member's right to sit and vote in the Assembly be suspended for a specified period or until the fulfillment of the commission condition imposed by the commissioner; (d) the member's seat be declared vacant.

Honourable Speaker, that is the full framework established by the act. Four possible sanctions, each flowing from the same foundational determination that a contravention has occurred. Four possibilities, each reflecting a different assessment of the circumstances, but each, nonetheless, grounded in the same conclusion.

And yet, Honourable Speaker, this bill takes four possibilities and only selects three. It includes the fine, the suspension and the vacancy of the seat. It excludes the reprimand. That choice is, I think, worthy of careful reflection. And, again, it is why we ask the question today: Why does the bill exclude cases where the Assembly imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation? And we received, again, no answer.

That choice is, I think, worthy of careful reflection. A reprimand is not an incidental matter. It is not a casual observation. It is a formal sanction of this Assembly imposed following a finding by the Ethics Commissioner that a member has contravened the act. It is, in effect, the Assembly's expression of disapproval in response to the breach of the standards that govern our conduct. It may be the least severe of the available sanctions, but it is nonetheless a sanction. It carries meaning, it carries consequences and it reflects a conclusion that the law has not been complied with.

If we accept, as I believe we should, that the purpose of this bill is to enhance transparency, then it

becomes difficult to understand why the category of outcome would be excluded from the disclosure. If the objective is to ensure that voters are informed about the ethical records of the candidate, then the existence of a reprimand would seem to be directly relevant to the objective.

And, again, I hate to keep going back to the question, but it was the reason that I continued to ask the question again and again, and I want to say, on the record, we received no answer again and again.

One is left, therefore, with the impression that the bill has drawn a distinction that it is not entirely consistent with its stated purpose. It is determined that some contraventions, those accompanied by certain sanctions, are worthy of disclosure while others, those accompanied by a reprimand, are not. That is not, in my view, a principled distinction; it is a selective one. And that is why we kept asking the question.

And the selectivity becomes more pronounced when one considers a second omission in the bill, which is the absence of any requirement to disclose cases in which the Ethics Commissioner has found that a contravention occurred, but no penalty was ultimately imposed.

Again, the key point here is the finding of contravention. The commissioner, after an inquiry, has reached the conclusion that the act has been breached. That conclusion, in and of itself, speaks to the conduct of the member. It is a matter of public interest. It is a matter that the voters may reasonably wish to take into account.

And yet, under the structure of this bill, such findings would not necessarily be disclosed. Would that be fair to Manitobans if they were not disclosed? They would fall outside the scope of the requirement simply because the particular sanction that triggers disclosure was not applied.

What this means in practical terms is that the disclosure regime created by this bill is not anchored in the core question of whether a contravention occurred. It is instead anchored in a narrower question: Which of a subset of sanctions was imposed. That is, I think, a rather indirect way of approaching transparency.

If the aim is to provide voters with meaningful information, one might expect the legislation to begin with the most fundamental fact, namely that a contravention has been found. From there, the next—from there, the nature of the sanction could certainly be included as additional context, but the primary disclosure

should not—should not—depend on which sanction was selected.

By structuring the bill in this way, we risk creating a system in which the presence or absence of disclosure is not a straightforward reflection of conduct, but rather a function of how that conduct was categorized after the fact.

Honourable Speaker, I would also note that the information in the question is not in any meaningful sense hidden from the public. Ethics Commissioner reports are already public documents. They are available for anyone who wishes to review them. This bill does not bring new information into existence. It does not reveal what was previously concealed. What it does is require that certain elements of the information be restated in nomination documents and published in that context. There may well be value in that. There may be merit in ensuring that relevant information is presented. There may well be value in that, there may be merit in 'enshuing' the relevant information is presented at a point in time when voters are actively considering their choices.

* (16:50)

But if that is the rationale, then it reinforces, not diminishes, the argument for completeness. If we are to take information that already exists and place it before voters in a more direct way, then we should do so in a manner that is thorough and consistent. We should not, in the process, introduce new distinctions that limit what is disclosed. Because the moment we begin to decide that some findings are to be highlighted and others to remain in the background, we move away from transparency.

And curation, however well intentioned, is not the same as transparency. It invites questions, it invites speculations, and it certainly invites why the minister would not answer the question that was asked to him today by myself over and over. It invites the perception that the framework has been designed with particular outcomes in mind. I do not think that this is where we ought to be in the matters of this nature.

There is also a broader context that I think we would be remiss not to acknowledge. And that is the role that the information now plays in the public sphere. Increasingly, when there is a gap in the available, clear and authoritative information, that gap does not remain empty. It is filled often very quickly by commentary, by speculation and by content that circulates widely on social media platforms. In that environment, the absence of clear and complete

information can give rise to misinformation, to disinformation and, in some cases, to deliberate and organized efforts to shape narratives in the way that may not reflect the underlying facts.

That is not a theoretical concern. It is practical reality of the modern information landscape, and it's one that legislators ought to take seriously when considering how information is made available to the public. The most effective response to that reality is not to restrict information, nor to provide in a partial or selective manner like was done today with the questions not being answered, but to ensure the accurate and complete information is readily available and easily accessible.

In Manitoba, we are fortunate to have an Ethics Commissioner whose office maintains a public website where members' disclosures are posted and where reports, investigations and rulings are made available in full. That resource is important. It provides a reliable and authoritative source of information. It allows Manitobans to see for themselves what findings have been made and on what basis. Any legislative effort that seeks to enhance transparency should build upon that foundation, not narrow the scope of what is brought forward.

Honourable Speaker, if the House is prepared to reflect on how this framework could be improved, there are some clear areas where a more complete approach would strengthen the legislation. It would appear—it would be more consistent with the stated objective of transparency if the full range of outcomes recognized in the act were reflected in the disclosure requirements, rather than only a portion of them.

Where the law itself recognizes a reprimand as a formal consequence of a contravention, it is difficult to see why that outcome would not also form part of the information that is available to the voters, again, like the first question that I asked the Justice Minister over and over today. In the same way, there is a broader question about whether the emphasis that should rest on the existence of a contravention itself rather than on the particular sanction that followed. A system that turns on the finding of a breach would provide a clearer and more direct account of a candidate's record than one that depends on how that breach was ultimately categorized.

There is also a wider discussion to be had about the scope of disclosure in relation to other forms of conduct that may be relevant to voters. In certain circumstances, particularly where serious or socially troubling offences have occurred, the fact that a

pardon or record suspension has been granted does not necessarily erase the public interest in transparency. That is a complex area and it requires careful consideration, but it does point to the broader principle that disclosure frameworks should be guided by the information that voters reasonably expect to have before them.

In many other professional contexts, the standards for disclosure extend well beyond formal findings of guilt or the imposition of the sanctions. Regulatory bodies, licensing authorities and professional associations routinely ask applicants whether they have ever been the subject of an investigation, whether allegations were 'substantiated' and whether there were circumstances that could bring the profession into disrepute. The emphasis in those settings is not confined to the outcome of the process, but to the existence of conduct or certainties that may bear on the individual's suitability.

The underlying concern—the underlying principle is straightforward: The integrity of the profession and the confidence placed in it by the public depend only on absence of proven wrongdoing, but on a broader assurance that those admitted to it meet a high and consistent standard. Disclosure in that sense is about protecting the reputation of the office or the profession itself, not simply recording the most severe outcomes.

Before I finish, I want to ask the minister one more time for the record: If the stated objective of

Bill 40 is transparency, why? Why does this bill exclude cases where the 'insemply' imposed a reprimand as the sanction for a conflict of interest violation?

Honourable Speaker, I want to return, in closing, to the broader theme of transparency because it is a word that is often used but not always examined. Transparency, if it is to have meaning—*[interjection]* Now the Justice minister has come to life—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

If we could quit hollering back and forth across, I'd appreciate it so I could hear the member that's got the floor.

MLA Bereza: That concludes.

The Speaker: No further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So the question before the House is second reading of Bill 40, The Elections Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

What is the will of the House?

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 19, 2026

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