



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Tom Lindsey  
Speaker*



Vol. LXXX No. 39 – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 9, 2026

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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.
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
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas-Kameesak	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 9, 2026

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

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

Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I'm pleased to table the Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care for the fiscal year '26-27.

**The Speaker:** Further tabling of reports?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** I am pleased to table the 2026-2027 Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation.

**The Speaker:** Further tabling?

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** I am pleased to table the '26-27 supplement of the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-27 Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Families.

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-2027 Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology):** I am pleased to table the 2026-27 supplement to the expenditure—Estimates for expenditure for the Department of Innovation and New Technology.

**The Speaker:** Further tabling of reports?

**Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-27 Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

**Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-27 supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures.

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-2027 Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-27 supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Justice.

**Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-27 supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Public Service Delivery.

**The Speaker:** No further tabling of reports?

**Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Acting Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I'm pleased to table the 2026-27 Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure for the Manitoba—sorry, Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister—that's it?

No further tabling of reports?

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

### House Business

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

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

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** It's been announced that pursuant to rule 34(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one previously put forward by the honourable member for Midland. And the title of the resolution is calling on the provincial government to increase personal tax exemption.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Jessica Houle

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I rise today in honour of Jessica Houle: a survivor, a mother, an MMIWG family member and a woman I'm proud to call my little sister.

In May of 2009, Jessica's sister Cherisse Houle was tragically murdered at just 17 years old.

I first met Jess at Cherisse's funeral, where I also had the honour of meeting her brother, Jordan, a young man so articulate and so full of love for his little sister Cherisse. Tragically, Jordan was also murdered in September of 2012.

Jessica has known incredible grief and trauma. And yet, she still rises.

In the summer of 2012, I was the special adviser on Indigenous women's issues. That summer, I drove Jess and her mom Barb out to visit Cherisse's and Jordan's resting place just outside the city.

On the way home, we talked about how MMIWG family members needed somewhere to go to honour

their missing and murdered loved ones. Most people don't realize that that one drive and that one conversation with Jessica and Barb planted the seed that led me to pursue funding, design and the creation of the MMIWG2S monument erected in 2014 at The Forks. Jessica is a part of Manitoba's history. She helped create a space to recognize and memorialize MMIWG2S.

Three years ago, Jessica enrolled in Alberta's Yellowhead Tribal College, pursuing a diploma in Indigenous social work. When she started, I made a promise that I would be there when she walked across that stage. And this past October, I kept that promise, flying out to Edmonton alongside other supporters to watch Jessica receive her diploma. It was an incredibly proud moment.

\* (13:40)

Jessica and her boys have recently returned home to Treaty 1 safe, grounded and stepping into a new chapter as a devoted mother, a strong leader and a survivor.

I'm so proud of you, Jess, and I love you so much.

#### Ashley MacLennan

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** I rise today to recognize an exceptional talent from southeast Manitoba: Sprague's own Ashley MacLennan.

Ashley has just released her 41st novel, *Tell Me Her Name*, launching the new FBI cold case thriller series. It is an incredible milestone that reflects both her creativity and discipline.

A graduate of both the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba, Ashley published her first book in 2010 and has now spent over 16 years writing professionally. In that time, she has authored more than 40 novels, with several more on their way this year.

Her work spans multiple genres and audiences, writing under three pen names—Sierra Dean, Gretchen Rue and Kate Wiley—and her books have been published internationally in four languages.

Ashley's talent has been recognized by major literacy reviewers, including *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly* and *Kirkus*, and her work has been featured in the women's world book club.

Beyond her novels, she has shared her passion through writing seminars at the Winnipeg Public Library and by teaching young writers, while also building a career as a professional baseball journalist.

Ashley is a proud Manitoban whose passion, discipline and creativity has built an extraordinary career, all while calling rural Manitoba home.

Honourable Speaker, I am incredibly proud of Ashley and equally proud of the tremendous talent that exists in the small towns and communities across La Vérendrye.

I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Ashley MacLennan and wishing her continued success, while also welcoming her friends, Kristyn Dunn and Jessica Janz Cote.

Congratulations.

### Vimy Ridge

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** Honourable Speaker, standing here in the Manitoba Legislative Building, it is easy to feel far removed from a ridge in France where Canadians fought their way into history. And yet, the meaning of what happened there 109 years ago still reaches us today.

In April of 1917, thousands of Canadians moved forward together through mud, smoke, relentless fire. They came from different backgrounds, spoke different languages and were raised in different communities, but in that moment they advanced as one. Most had never even heard of Vimy Ridge before they were called to take it.

And among them were Manitobans; young Canadians who left farms, small towns and cities across this province, carrying with them the hopes of their families and the quiet strength of their communities. They stepped forward without knowing what lay ahead, guided by duty and by something larger than themselves.

Vimy Ridge has come to symbolize courage and unity. But it also reminds us of something deeply human. Families waited. Letters stopped coming and lives were interrupted and communities were changed forever. A country still finding its place in the world came to understand itself through sacrifice in a conflict that changed the world.

And those echoes still reach us today in this Chamber, in the freedoms that we carry forward. And so we remember Vimy so that we understand the price of peace and never take it for granted.

Lest we forget.

### Member for Dawson Trail

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Good afternoon. Today marks another important milestone for me: my first private member's statement as an independent MLA. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak to the people of Dawson Trail and, indeed, all Manitobans.

When we enter this Chamber, our purpose is to serve the people of this province. Above all, we must ensure that their voices are heard clearly and represented faithfully and reflected in every decision we make in the Legislature. Too often, partisan constraints stand in the way.

Partisan politics puts party ideology ahead of the needs of Manitobans and the constituents we are elected to serve. Party politics delay meaningful legislation and obscures our true responsibilities. Our debates should be grounded in facts and focused on real impacts, asking who benefits, who may—perhaps be harming and who might be overlooked.

As an independent, I have the freedom to approach each issue without those partisan pressures. This allows me to assess every decision based on what is genuinely in the best interests of Dawson Trail and Manitoba as a whole. I intend to use this independence thoughtfully, working constructively with all members of this House, regardless of affiliation and striving to find common ground wherever possible.

Above all, my commitment remains the same: to ensure that the voices of my constituents are heard and respected and reflected in the work I do here.

#### *French spoken*

Avant tout, mon engagement reste le même. Je veux m'assurer que les voix des résidents de ma circonscription sont entendues, respectées et réfléchies dans le travail qu'on fait.

Merci.

#### *Translation*

*Above all, my commitment remains the same. I want to ensure that the voices of the residents in my constituency are heard, respected and reflected in the work we do.*

*Thank you.*

#### **Investments in Child Care and Affordability**

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** Honourable Speaker, I rise today to speak about the real progress my constituents are seeing as our government continues the work of building a stronger, more affordable province for everyone.

Across Manitoba, that progress is taking shape in communities like mine. On March 10, I was very proud to break ground for École Meadowlands School in West St. Paul. This new kindergarten to grade 8 school will welcome hundreds of students and include a much-needed child-care spaces for local families. And that's just one example.

We're also making life more affordable for families. This year, we are opening up 21 new child-care centres and adding more than 2,300 new spaces. And for families who need it most, we are making child care free. This is a historic step that will help parents return to the workforce and help grow our economy.

We are also putting money back into the pockets of Manitobans by removing the PST on grocery items. From prepared meals, snacks—from prepared meals to snacks, this change will make a real difference at the checkout for Manitoban families.

Looking to the future, we're also investing in Churchill. We are unlocking one of the biggest economic opportunities Manitoba has seen in decades.

Folks in McPhillips, I know, are excited about what lies ahead. With new schools, more child-care spaces, lower costs and growing economic opportunities, Manitoba has a very bright future.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing this progress and the work that is being done to build a better Manitoba for tomorrow.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition—or, the honourable Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** I just want to seek leave for a moment of silent after that passionate private member state from the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz). It'll give us a moment to recognize and appreciate all the freedoms that we have from the people that have given their lives.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave as requested? *[Agreed]*

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Just while I have everyone's attention, I would draw members' attention to the loge to my left,

where we have with us today Marianne Cerilli, who was the former member for Radisson.

And we welcome you here today.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Child and Family Services Call for Systemic Review

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Two months after 18-year-old Avontai Hartleib was killed, workers are speaking out and highlighting systemic issues that led to this young woman falling through the cracks.

\* (13:50)

Avontai's father, David, says his daughter had struggled with addictions and depression under CFS care, and he fought for years to get her back.

Once again, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) is investigating after systemic failures: means yet another family has been shattered under her watch. For months, we have called for transparency and review, and all we receive are heckles and deflection.

Will the Premier commit today that the findings of this investigation will be made public so Manitobans can restore their faith in our CFS system?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, my heart goes out to this young woman, to her family and, of course, to generations of Manitobans who have been impacted by the child-welfare system.

Coming into government, I know that our Minister of Families and the rest of our team has viewed this as a sacred responsibility, to get right the things that were wrong under the PCs but were also wrong under past NDP governments as well, too, and to make sure that the future for Manitoban children will be very, very bright and that those among us who need the most help will get it.

We have a budget before the House which brings forward many, many resources, but there will always be more work to do, so long as young Manitobans need help.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Manitobans are still waiting for the results of the review after the death of Myah-Lee Gratton. The Premier committed to being open then, but his minister has had other plans.

A former caseworker who worked with Pathways Forward for a decade says staff were hamstrung by CFS agencies, limiting the ability of the administration to safely run group homes. In a CBC article, I'll quote for you: I can attest that those group home rules were not enforced or strict. More often than not, those rules were broken. They were supposed to go home or meet with their therapist, but again, not mandatory and no repercussions. End quote.

Why is the Premier showing so little concern for kids in care that workers have to speak to the media to highlight systemic failures of the CFS system under this Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine)?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, I viewed it as my sacred responsibility to the people of Manitoba to address the terrible tragedy that took the life of Myah-Lee and four other wonderful people in our province. When I did so, I invoked a book that is sacred to many, many Manitobans.

And the Minister of Families, other members of our team were on the ground to grieve alongside people in Carman, as well as people who came from many other communities across Manitoba, both in the city, the Interlake, southern Manitoba, all over the place.

We have to work together when it comes to addressing family violence, when it comes to the child-welfare system. These cases should not be invoked by a politician who's trying to escape accountability for his own failures, which is what the member opposite is doing.

We're not going to take that path. Instead, we're going to keep working with you to make sure that children, our sacred gift, are kept safe and that folks who we've lost too soon, their memory is honoured by action on behalf of your government.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Workers are blowing the whistle because they're worried that more children will be at risk. These staff identified issues before Avontai was killed, and now one worker has told media that she fears another tragedy like this could happen again unless systemic changes are made immediately.

Whistle-blowers do not come forward lightly. They do so only when the consequences of their silence is so much worse than the repercussions they may experience. The minister has had two months.

What work has been done to address the systematic issues these workers are referring to?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, Honourable Speaker, my heart really goes out to Avontai Hartleib and to their family and to the workers who are invested in so many of these children and who deeply feel the pain when these children encounter tragic harms. That includes CFS workers, that includes the administrative staff and that includes the social workers who work at these agencies across the province of Manitoba.

The member opposite will know that, in a normal week, his hateful comments against social workers would have probably carried the day as the scandal of the week. However, only he could find a way to dig a hole even deeper than that. I'll let him try to go talk to the social workers to apologize for his terrible words against their profession, and instead, we will work with social workers. We'll work together to help kids. We'll work together to make sure that you have the resources and, more importantly, that our school system, our recreation centres and our towns and reserves have the resources to—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

### **Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Mental Health Crisis Supports**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** On April 7, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, or NCN, declared a state of emergency in their First Nation. Angela—Chief Angela Levasseur declared a state of emergency in response to a devastating and ongoing mental health crisis marked by multiple recent studies—sorry—multiple recent suicides and suicide attempts within the community.

NCN has lost three of its members to suicide in the last two weeks and four in the last month. Chief Levasseur is requesting the provincial government to act, and as of yesterday, the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith) has not even spoken to the chief or any members of the community.

Will the Premier commit that his minister will finally call Chief Levasseur today?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I love Chief Angela Levasseur. She's such a strong leader for her community. I was speaking with her this morning via text, and I said, anything that you need on behalf of the

provincial government. By the way, our Minister of Housing, Addictions, Homelessness has been trying to reach you, so it'd be amazing if you connected with her. And she said, of course, Premier. I support the work of the minister in charge of HAH, and I'm going to reach out to her today.

This is what it looks like when you have a government that collaborates with local leaders, be they in towns and municipalities or on reserves and Métis settlements in the province of Manitoba.

We're going to keep working together because for too long, people have turned away from the crisis of suicide and the causes that lead to hopelessness and unaddressed mental health issues amongst our young people. And so by working together, we hope to not only deliver the services and resources that are needed, but also to provide that example of collaboration, positivity and hope to inspire future generations.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Chief Levasseur has said to media, and I quote: We're short on nurses, we're short on counsellors. What we're hoping for is to get additional supports in order to support the continuity of care. Everyone is tired, everyone is overwhelmed. End quote.

NKO already deployed members of its mobile crisis response team Tuesday. The provincial government under this Premier has yet to act. Chief Levasseur has asked for the deployment of mobile crisis response teams, access to mental health clinicians, therapists, cultural support workers, child- and youth-specific mental health services and long-term sustainable investments in prevention and community healing.

Will the Premier commit to providing NCN with these supports today?

**Mr. Kinew:** We already have. And I'd like to share with the House that our Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith) has spoken to Angela, Chief Levasseur.

And I want to encourage the member opposite, yes, take the shots at me; don't take the shots at the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness. Because she's an advocate for the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit folks.

Elon Musk can say some crazy stuff online, and we denounce that fully, for the record. But what they did in the last election causes real harm to real

families, including the very families that this member is trying to invoke today to get himself out of Dodge. We have seen his character, Honourable Speaker. All of Manitoba has, even his colleagues—well, at least those who continue to show up for work—have seen his character.

That has nothing to do with the future of Manitoba. That's the past. We're going to work together to uplift every single person, including Indigenous women, girls and—

\* (14:00)

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Khan:** The RCMP are responding to 500 mental health-related calls annually in N-C-C-N-NCN, 80 per cent of which were individuals experiencing suicidal intentions. These community members need access to specialized experts and supports. The community's call for action was urgent and showed just how time sensitive this is, and I'll quote: Our front-line workers are—and health staff are exhausted and grieving alongside the community. We need additional supports to address this crisis. Our people cannot carry this alone. End quote.

Will the Premier answer the call today?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, one of the first things that happened when I voted—when I visited the NCN is that they said, our community is pronounced: Nisichawayasihk—Nisichawayasihk.

But I want the member to reflect on his terrible actions over the past few weeks here. I'm not privy to any knowledge of the specific cases of the families who've been affected at NCN, but having visited many northern communities, northern First Nations, who have issues with suicide, I can tell you that it's gay kids, it's queer kids, it's two-spirit kids, who, after living through trauma and bullying and abuse are disproportionately more likely to face suicide.

That's why our team stands up against hate, against the second most powerful person in the provincial government, because if the PC leader will attack a queer person in this role of power, imagine what he would do to a small child from a northern reserve. And now, today, he wants to invoke that young person so that he doesn't have to face accountability—

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

Member's time is expired.

### **Business Investment Concerns Permitting and Regulatory Environment**

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Honourable Speaker, I've sounded the alarms before. Investors looking to start or expand a project in Manitoba face a maze of departments, overlapping approvals, poor communication and no clear timelines. In other provinces, businesses can go to a single point of contact, receive clear, co-ordinated guidance and move projects forward.

Under our government we made tremendous moves forward. We set clear timelines—10 to 30 days—and then we delivered. Under this government, delays, duplication and then silence.

Why does this minister continue to put up road-blocks and red tape for those who want to create jobs in our province?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I don't care if you're on the left or if you're on the right wing, what I do expect is that you have integrity and that you have courage and that you tell the truth.

We can't say any of those things about the member opposite, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan). Again, he had the opportunity to accept responsibility for his hate-spewing here in the Chamber against a queer person. And then he has the temerity, he has the audacity, he has the nerve to come in here and to try and invoke vulnerable Manitobans just so that he won't have to face the wrath of an enraged—rightfully so, I would say—government. You deserve to wallow in the shame that is your life, Honourable Speaker.

When it comes to those who continue to stand by him, I ask them through you, the Chair, how is it that they can continue to sit with him? They heard the comment that he said. They heard the comments that were made. They heard his refusal to accept the truth, Honourable Speaker.

And then you come into the Chamber and then you try to act like it's all good. No, it's not good. It's—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

And I would just remind all members to make sure they're always directing their comments through the Chair.

**Mr. Narth:** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans and businesses deserve answers. We're hearing it directly from businesses across Manitoba, including mining, agriculture and manufacturing: projects are being delayed not because they lack merit but because

approvals are unclear, inconsistent and spread across multiple departments, with zero co-ordination.

Other provinces have created centralized, co-ordinated permitting approaches to move projects faster and attract the investment we need.

Why has this government failed to modernize Manitoba's permitting system while other provinces are pulling ahead?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, we're building mines; they're digging themselves holes deeper into the ground.

When it comes to the members opposite, they try to invoke the question of suicide today to protect their leader. Well, where is the courage to be able to address hate against queer kids, against gay kids, against kids who are just trying to figure out who they are? Where is the courage there? Whatever happened to a Conservative with integrity? Wouldn't somebody with integrity hear a leader such as the member for Fort Whyte say something hateful and then act to intervene?

This isn't an issue about LGBT; this is an issue about people who use their positions to act terribly and then to evade responsibility.

But, since we are talking about queer kids in Manitoba, I would say: Why is it that every time the member opposite puts his foot in this mouth, it's about trans kids?

**The Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Narth:** Honourable Speaker, this Premier is using his privilege to withhold the information that Manitobans deserve. This is not theoretical. The consequences are real. Delayed approvals mean delayed investment, delayed jobs and, in too many cases, those projects are now leaving our great province.

At a time when our growth is already lagging behind, government should be making it easier, not harder, to build, invest and create jobs.

Why won't this Premier take responsibility to ensure Manitoba is open for business and competitive with the rest of our country?

**Mr. Kinew:** I take responsibility each and every single day. That's why you'd never see me behave the way the member that Fort Whyte has behaved today, this week, for the past three weeks.

When it comes to business, we're surrounded by a wonderful team, and that's why we have the lowest deficit in the entire country and that's why we have created tens of thousands of jobs.

One job that it can't protect, however, is the job for the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan). He says—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —something hateful about a queer member of the Legislative Assembly and then he comes in here to try to talk about suicide.

Well, how about the reality that queer youth disproportionately face suicide within their lives? I wonder what it does to a young queer person to see the anti-trans ads of the last election, for which he was the poster boy. I wonder what it does to a young queer person when they have to hear the hateful, dehumanizing rhetoric that he said and that I will not repeat on this day. What does it do to a queer kid—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

#### **Construction Sector Apprenticeship Ratio Concern Over Decline in Skilled Trades Workers**

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** The shift from a two-to-one to one-to-one apprenticeship ratio in 2024 by this NDP government has led to a measurable contraction in training capacity across Manitoba's construction sector and the first decline in the number of new apprentices in Manitoba in years.

The latest apprenticeship data show an 18 per cent decline in new registrations across major trades. Since the NDP imposed the ratio without any consultation with industry, there has been an almost 30 per cent decline in new carpentry apprentices, a 12 per cent decline in plumbers, a shocking 71 per cent decline in roofers and I could go on.

What more evidence does this government need before they stop killing opportunities for Manitobans and reverse course?

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, his political dad, Pierre Poilievre, loves unions. So do we. That's why we're working together to build up Manitoba.

While I recognize that the member opposite probably doesn't share the same commitment to human rights as we have on this side of the table, I wonder what value system he has allows him to stand with

somebody who denies the truth. What value system does he have to stand with somebody who would target the vulnerable? What value system does he have to target people who would not—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —only be confronted with the reality of their terrible behaviour but then would go out to you, the people of Manitoba, and say don't believe your ears; don't believe your eyes.

\* (14:10)

The member opposite—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —can come in here and talk about unions and, yes, we're happy to talk about unions every single day. But how does he look in the mirror at the end of said day knowing that he's standing behind a liar?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would ask the honourable First Minister to withdraw.

**Mr. Kinew:** Withdrawn.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Guenter:** Honourable Speaker, we could talk about this Premier's record, but I'll tell you what: my values are rooted in that sacred book that he tried to invoke earlier this question period.

Because of this NDP policy, existing apprentices are—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Guenter:** —taking longer to accumulate the required hours towards certification while fewer apprentices are being brought into the system. This is having a direct effect on Manitoba's building capacity. That endangered species, the construction crane, you know, the one that we saw around Manitoba and Winnipeg when the PCs were in government, is almost extinct under the NDP.

This sector has seen a 50 per cent—five-zero—drop in new crane operator apprentices. Manitobans know when they see—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

The honourable First Minister.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, I wonder what that book says about people who don't tell the truth or accept responsibility.

I wonder what it says in any sacred book. I wonder—  
[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:**—about other traditions around the world who may find other ways of transmitting knowledge through the generations. What do they say? Do they say, pick on people and then, after you've thrown the stone, hide your hand? No, they don't.

And they say, no matter which tradition it is that you follow, some variation of this: You may not address it in public, but the Creator will address it. You may not stand to account, but the Creator will ensure that you stand for account.

And you might be able to squirm your way through a press conference, but you can't squirm your way through your reckoning with God.

When it comes to standing up for LGBT people of any age, we will do it. And it's part of our government plan—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Guenter:** Manitoba is one of the only provinces in Canada to have a one-to-one policy. Most have a two-to-one or even three-to-one apprentice-to-journeyman ratio, and today we see the destructive effect of this NDP policy: 18 per cent fewer apprentices getting into the trades at a time when we need them more than ever and at a time when we are 3,000 construction workers short in Manitoba.

Why is this NDP government getting in the way of building homes, roads, schools and hospitals? And by the way, Manitobans know it when they see it, so I'll say it for them: When it comes to the number of apprentices in Manitoba, the minister—and today this Premier—are lying.

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

I would ask the member to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Guenter:** I withdraw.

**Mr. Kinew:** Actually, nothing could be further than the truth for what the member opposite said, which is no surprise coming from the PCs; but the number of apprentices is actually up all across the board when it comes to the building trades here in Manitoba, and it's thanks to the work of this minister as well as the Minister of Labour.

But here's the problem that that member and every single PC has if they want to make the next election about a question of credibility: verbatim, audio, video. We can stack up proof point after proof point against their leader, and you know what Manitobans will conclude? You can't believe a single word he says.

### **Industrial Sector Carbon Tax Impact on Cost of Living and Economy**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** On April 1, the carbon tax increased again, driving up the cost of producing food and fuelling our economy. As of last week, the tax went up to \$110 and is set to increase to \$170 by 2030.

Despite this Premier saying the carbon tax doesn't exist in Manitoba, it does. Manitobans are already paying more at the grocery store, with the second highest foodflation in the country under this NDP.

Why does the Premier support an escalating carbon tax to \$170 that are—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:**—costing more Manitoba businesses and Manitoba families?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, why does this member burn her own credibility following a leader who's already lost?

When it comes to the carbon tax, there is no carbon tax in Manitoba. And when it comes to saving you money at the pump, we cut the gas tax. When it comes to saving you money at the grocery store, we are cutting the sales tax on all food and drinks when it comes to the grocery store.

But it seems like you can't believe a single thing that she says, just like you can't believe a single thing that he says. When it comes to the member opposite, he's taking advice from Alberta, he's taking advice leading his team down the wrong path, and after the next election there will be much more few of them on the piddly opposition side.

When it comes to you, we're going to keep saving you money at the pump, we'll keep saving you money at the grocery store.

And you know what? Our Manitoba includes gay people, too. We're going to keep bringing this forward and building it up for everyone in Manitoba.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Stop the clock. I would just take a moment to remind members that some of the language that we're hearing is getting very close to being unparliamentary, so just keep an eye on it and try and be respectful as much as possible.

The honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter).

**An Honourable Member:** The industrial carbon tax does exist in Manitoba—

**The Speaker:** Sorry. The honourable member for Midland.

**Mrs. Stone:** The industrial carbon tax still exists in Manitoba today. As of April 1, it went up to \$110 and is going up to \$170 by 2030. This carbon tax is still applied to fertilizer, canola processing, steel manufacturing and mining operations, all industries that are significantly trade exposed in our province. In fact, the Fraser Institute has identified that a \$170 carbon tax will reduce Canada's GDP by 1.3 per cent by 2030.

There is still a carbon tax in Manitoba.

Why does this NDP Premier keep lying to Manitobans?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would ask the honourable member for Midland to withdraw that comment.

**Mrs. Stone:** Withdrawn.

**Mr. Kinew:** As I said, Honourable Speaker, let's make the election a question of credibility. We've got the tape, we've got the video, we've got the ads, we've got the money to run them.

Now when it comes to this member, there is no carbon tax in Manitoba. Again, we cut the carbon tax. The only Manitoba party that's ever brought forward a carbon tax was the Manitoba PCs. The member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler) was sitting right there in the front bench. He didn't last for long, mind you, but he was sitting right there in the front bench when they brought forward the carbon tax. Do you know who stopped the PC carbon tax? It was this team of Manitobans right here.

Of course, however, the question of credibility does not favour the opposition benches. Their leader is leading them into a corner from which very few of them will have a political career afterwards. I wonder when, since we see integrity won't be the motivating—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** We all know this Premier's boss, NDP leader Avi Lewis, supports an escalating carbon tax on businesses across the country. This tax could reduce Canada's GDP by 1.3 per cent, cost workers almost \$1,200 in reduced income and result in 50,000 fewer jobs across Canada. Manitoba's economy is driven by agriculture and manufacturing, sectors that are directly impacted by this escalating carbon tax.

So if this Premier is so sure that he doesn't support carbon taxes, will he today call on the federal government to immediately remove the industrial carbon tax from Manitoba businesses today?

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Kinew:** Avi Lewis thought it was great when the Leader of the Opposition mentioned his name 18 times. He needs to build the name recognition in Manitoba, so keep helping him.

When it comes to the member opposite, though, I wonder if she'll follow in the footsteps of the member for Dawson Trail (MLA Lagassé), who's chosen to sit as an independent, or even her colleague from Roblin, who we haven't heard a ton from since the terrible things that were said. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**An Honourable Member:** That's a personal issue.

**Mr. Kinew:** Okay, that's fine. But—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —I want to point out for the House, these records—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —from Hansard, when the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook) said—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —oh, I've been waiting for the opportunity to thoroughly denounce Wally Daudrich. She's showed an independent streak on that day.

Why, then, is the Leader of the Opposition letting Wally Daudrich run for that party?

### **North End Sewage Treatment Plant Funding and Timeline for Completion**

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Honourable Speaker, this government has said that the deadline for NEWPCC completion is 2032; otherwise, they're going

to penalize Winnipeg. Instead of helping the City become compliant by partnering with them to get the project across the finish line, the minister has chosen to use the stick and threaten penalties.

Why is the minister choosing to punish Winnipeggers instead of helping them?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** The question for the member opposite stands. You had the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook) denouncing Wally Daudrich—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:**—and now the leader from Fort Whyte is letting Wally Daudrich stand as a candidate in Turtle Mountain, presumably. The same Wally Daudrich, for instance, who just bought their PC headquarters, so there you go. If you got money to buy a building off the PC Party—

**An Honourable Member:** Jealousy on your anger.

**Mr. Kinew:**—maybe a nomination will open up.

And to the member of Springfield-Ritchot: No, we're not jealous. We fundraise our money the old-fashioned way, the honest way, by asking you to donate—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:**—a small amount at a time.

When it comes to the Leader of the Opposition, though, he comes in here and he's got his advice from the campaign manager in Alberta. He's going to—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:**—try and keep it cool for the next few days. But here's the thing: We know. The people of Manitoba know. Your behaviour from here on out has already been seen.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The honourable member's time has expired.

And I would remind members to always direct their comments through the Chair. *[interjection]*

Order.

**Mr. King:** Honourable Speaker, I've been asking these questions all week for the minister. The Premier gets up and he can't even answer them.

Delays to this project do not just impact Winnipeg; they put Lake Winnipeg and downstream communities at risk with real environmental and economic

consequences. The only way to protect the environment, Lake Winnipeg and the people that rely upon it is by completing NEWPCC.

So while I will ask again: How much money is committed, when will it be delivered and where is it coming from?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, I gave a very thorough accounting of this on CBC Radio this morning. That's right: radio broadcasted is broadcast to every single part of the province. I assume that the staff in the PC caucus on a normal day would have heard that and would have been able to feed this member some more cleverly worded questions.

However, given the absolute fiasco, the disaster, the chaos that has engulfed their leader this past week, it's clear that they don't have any bandwidth to do anything else. So if that concerns you as a PC Party supporter, get used to it. That's what it's going to be like for here on in.

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

**Mr. King:** Honourable Speaker, without provincial funding, Winnipeg can't proceed with NEWPCC.

That delay is restricting new housing, driving up costs that will result in increased sewer rates, increasing housing costs and fewer economic opportunities for families. This government is choosing penalties over partnerships.

Why is the minister so committed to increasing costs for Winnipeg families, and will he commit to a clear funding plan today?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, this member is one of the few members on the other side that I'll speak to from time to time, and he strikes me as somebody that probably doesn't appreciate what his leader did.

And it's not the actions that their leader did to target the gender identity, the fact that our colleague is queer; it's also what he did this week. You ruled very clearly: hateful words; you ruled that it happened. And what did he do? Don't believe your ears, don't believe your eyes, don't believe the Speaker. This member is continuing to follow somebody who's going to lead them in a very nasty direction, a very ugly direction.

We saw it in the last campaign. Apparently they were charmed by the, oh, did you guys know that I played a little football back in the day? But the problem

is this: the integrity, the honesty, the ethics is never there.

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Brandon Regional Health Centre  
New Critical Care Centre**

**MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo):** Honourable Speaker, under the former government, patients in western Manitoba face limited access to critical care close to home, often needing to travel long distances for the services they need. This meant longer wait times and worse care.

Our government is focused on changing that, and last week, we had an exciting announcement for Westman. Can the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Compton:** —please tell Manitobans more about this important announcement?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Speaker, I was so honoured to stand with doctors, nurses and social workers in Brandon to announce that this spring, we're opening a new critical care centre right in Brandon.

This means expanded ICU and internal medicine capacity, allowing more patients to receive the care they need close to home. It's about better care for Manitobans, reducing transfers, supporting families and strengthening care in western Manitoba. This is just another step in rebuilding our health-care system and making sure that Manitobans have the highest quality care. That, they can count on. Much done, much more to do, so much to lose should we ever go back to the dark days of the failed PCs.

**Portage Regional Health Centre  
Inquiry into Opening Timeline**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Manitobans are being treated in hallways while a brand new hospital in Portage la Prairie sits dark. The Portage regional health facility is built, staff are ready, yet beds stay empty.

After waiting three and a half years for an MRI, people in Portage la Prairie know this pattern all too well. It is—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** —clear this government doesn't think the people of Portage la Prairie matter.

How can this minister defend leaving patients in corridors while 114 beds sit unused?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I love the people of Portage la Prairie. I've got many good friends in the area.

The problem that the member opposite is referring to is—well, the head of the nurses union herself has said: Without a nurse, a bed is just a bed. And that's why it was so terrible that the PCs fired nurses across Manitoba. They cut the number of people working in our health-care system.

The best Health Minister in the country has been busy hiring thousands of front-line health-care workers, including more than 60 job offers issued just yesterday. However, even an amazing minister like this cannot repair the damages of two terms of the PCs within just a few years.

But imagine what would happen if the Leader of the Opposition ever got back around the Cabinet table. It's pretty clear he won't be sitting at the head of the table or in the chair position, but after what we've seen from him this week, I don't think—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

**MLA Bereza:** Front-line staff were hired, told this new facility was completed and opening shortly. Then this minister decided people of Portage la Prairie can wait a year for it to open. And the facility would not open until next April 2027.

When did this minister know those timelines were false and why weren't those health-care workers and my constituents told the truth instead of being lied to?

**The Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:30)

Stop the clock, please. I've had just about enough of members on both sides of this Chamber accusing other members of lying. Your language is not helping the situation.

So I would ask the member for Portage la Prairie to withdraw.

**MLA Bereza:** Withdrawn.

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, problems that the PCs have with credibility is sitting to the member's left. It's their leader. He has no credibility. After the way he's told Manitobans not to believe your ears,

not to believe your eyes, not to believe yourselves, there's no credibility left.

When it comes to people in Portage la Prairie, we're working hard to ensure that you have the staff to take care of you in a beautiful new hospital.

When it comes to the PCs, we know that they fired health-care staff, making it more difficult to open facilities like this one or the new Victoria hospital in south Winnipeg. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** But the member opposite, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), has—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —brought a new level of shame to our profession in this past week. People may have had their preconceptions about politicians, but after seeing somebody stand up and look reporters in the eye and deny recordings, deny what happened on video, deny what happened in audio—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

The time for oral questions has also expired.

## PETITIONS

### Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** 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 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. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

If I could ask members to take their conversations to the loge; I'm having a hard time hearing.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** And if I could interrupt the member for a minute, there were some introductions that I should have done earlier.

So I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have

with us today, from the Seven Oaks Met School social justice program: Nancy Janelle, principal; Scott Plantje, teacher; and students Athena Diwa, Ethan Olson, Jennifer Luong, London Borromeo-Navales, Milo Kulbaba. They are guests of the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith).

We welcome you here today.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Brandon West may resume his petition.

**Mr. Balcaen:** (3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for 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 available tools to address this issue effectively.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

*Mr. Diljeet Brar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

And, honourable deputy Speaker, this petition was signed by Kathy McGregor, Jaycee Hornby, Debbie Woods and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

### **MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** I wish to present the following petition—oh, this is timely.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

\* (14:40)

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

(7) The average wait 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 better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Tony Martin, Kimberly Dinworthy [*phonetic*], Patricia McDonald and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker.

### **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 social—excuse me—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 the overall needs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

This petition has been signed by Brandy Kowal, Elizabeth Larsen, Justin Pierre [*phonetic*] and many, many more fine Manitobans.

#### **MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

closer to home and reduce the wait times for MRI scans across the province.

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

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

(7) The average wait 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 better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Piper Stayl, Deb McLeod, Lesia Case and many other Manitobans.

#### **Breast Screening**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society is now urging all provinces and territories to lower their starting age of—for breast screening to 40.

Based off of 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

\* (14:50)

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will

be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes for—in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe—in less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

This petition was signed by Pete Redekopp, Stacey Safrona [*phonetic*] and Lori [*phonetic*]-Lorin Elias and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

#### **Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305**

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

The 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.

(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'—safer; and

(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; and

(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 petition has been signed by Stéphane—this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

#### **Teaching Certification**

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoba students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

(3) These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early/middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendments removed, first bullet: senior years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; second bullet: early/middle years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; and, third bullet: early/middle years credit requirements for specific subjects, including: math; physical or biological science; English or French; and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the faculties of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without sufficient training in core academic areas, thereby compromising the education that Manitoba students receive.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation that weaken subject-area requirements for teacher certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early/middle years requirements which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

Honourable deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Jason Combe, Debasish Mukherjee, Blaine Urban and many more fine Manitobans.

### **Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** Honourable deputy–assistant deputy Speaker, I wish to present to 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.

\* (15:00)

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and 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 will allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition was signed by Tammy Axelon [*phonetic*]–Tammy Axelsson, Julianna Roberts and Melanie Specula and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** Further petitions? No more petitions?

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**  
**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**  
**BUDGET DEBATE**  
**(Sixth Day of Debate)**

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** We will now resume debate on the motion moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) to approve the general—to approve in general the budgetary policy of the government and amendment thereto, which is standing in the name of the member for Morden-Winkler.

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I'm happy to conclude my speech with a few more minutes of things that I really want to make sure I get on the record about this budget that was brought forward by the government.

One of the things I want to just make sure I speak about is the situation with health care and how there's just—more needs to be done with our health-care system and how the wait times are unacceptable and how people are waiting for surgeries.

Women's health has been something very, very on top of everybody's mind, but in rural areas, women are waiting two years for—to see a gynecologist and that's just unacceptable. And if we want to talk about women's health, I think we should start addressing some of these serious situations that are happening right now in Manitoba. And this is something that I just wanted to bring forward.

Wait times at hospitals, ERs, are taking—are far too long. Thank you to our front-line staff for what they do to help our families and our hospitals, our staff in hospitals, our doctors, our nurses, for what you do for our community and for our loved ones. What you do is so important, and we just really appreciate all the time that you put in.

But we need to provide safe spots for them to work. We need to provide them with more staffing so they can have some relief on that situation when it comes to going to work. These are all things that are very important to us that we need to do.

So, at its core, this amendment highlights something very clear: this budget is not for—does not reflect the reality of Manitoba's living in—Manitobans are living with right now.

Nearly half of Manitobans are within \$200 of being able to pay their bills. They're not getting health care, they're not being seen by doctors. One unexpected

expense can push a family into crisis. We've seen that over and over again. When we look at the long wait-lists of daycares that are happening, we need to make sure we really address what's happening in all of our community—in all areas of our communities.

Daycares weren't addressed in our—in the budget. That's something that we need to provide, both for working moms—we've heard stories about doctors who can't go back to work because they have no place to bring their children. And it's a—it hurts everyone. And so this is something we need to really focus on, getting more of those spaces available for everyone who wants to go back—that needs to go back to work.

And instead of providing relief, this government is adding that pressure. They're adding pressure to families. There's no credible plan. There's no balancing the budget, no cleared path to reduce debt and no meaningful strategy to grow the economy. How can we provide services and the social programs that we need if we don't grow the economy? That should be also top of mind for everyone is to build our economy.

In fact, this government continues to rely heavily on federal transfers, making us a welfare province. Now making—that—those transfers are now making up over a third of provincial revenue.

Meanwhile Manitoba's debt continues to grow. Since 2023, billions have been added to the provincial debt with little to show for it.

We need to make sure that every penny is accounted for. We need to make sure we're good stewards of the money that we're given. And we need to make sure we are here to meet the needs of the people in our province first, no matter what.

And I'm very honoured be able to say that and stand up for my community of Morden-Winkler and the families that are in my community and the families in all of—across Manitoba who I have been elected by to be here today to speak on this important resolution. Thank you—amendment.

**MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson):** I'm proud to rise today to speak on Budget 2026 and what it means for the people of Thompson and for the communities across northern Manitoba.

This budget, at its core, is about people. It is about the families in Thompson and across Manitoba who want to know that their hospital will be there when they need it. It is about the workers who depend on the mine to support their livelihoods. And it is about

northern communities who have far too often felt overlooked, but who are now seeing real movement and real investment.

Honourable deputy Speaker, for many in Thompson, the past few years have brought uncertainty. When questions were raised about the future of mining in our region, families felt it, businesses felt it, the entire community felt it.

But today, we are seeing a path forward. Our government stepped in to help secure a new owner for the Thompson mine, protecting hundreds of jobs, giving our community something that it's been waiting for: stability. Mining is not just an industry in Thompson; it is part of who we are. And protecting it means protecting the future of our city.

At the same time, we are making practical investments that people will feel in their daily lives. Like in Budget 2026, we are investing \$5 million in the Thompson General Hospital to upgrade its operating room ventilation system, improving conditions for surgery and strengthening reliable care closer to home.

\* (15:10)

We are continuing our investment in the Thompson aquatic centre with \$10 million committed to date to give families, youth, elders a space to gather, stay active and build community.

Honourable deputy Speaker, these are important steps for Thompson. But this budget also recognizes something deeper: that the future of Thompson is tied to the future of Manitoba as a whole. For far too long, the North was treated as an afterthought, spoken about but not invested in.

But that is changing, honourable deputy Speaker. Our government is making one of the largest investments in northern economic development in our great province's history, with \$262.5 million towards the redevelopment of the Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay rail line.

And, honourable deputy Speaker, that means investing in the North, investing in northerners. It's going to create job opportunities. It's going to create stability for Churchill, Thompson and the entire region.

This is a huge investment that's going to open up economic opportunities, not just for the North but for the entire country. It's going to create a new export market to European—to our European allies.

So that is a huge investment that the North is looking forward to, that Churchill is looking forward to, that all of Manitoba—Manitobans will benefit from, honourable deputy Speaker.

This is not just a project; it is a turning point. It positions northern Manitoba as a gateway to global markets, opens new opportunities for critical minerals and, like I said, creates jobs that will benefit communities across our region, including all of the North and including Thompson.

We are also investing directly in critical—the critical mineral sector, supporting projects like the Minago mine and funding exploration through the Manitoba Mineral Development Fund. These investments strengthen the very economic 'corridor'—corridor that Thompson is a part of and helps ensure our region remains a leader in resource development.

And we are planning for the future, honourable deputy Speaker, with \$1-million investment to study northern infrastructure needs like roads, like rail lines, like hydro and telecommunications to unlock the North as the hub of economic activity.

Honourable deputy Speaker, we also know that infrastructure is about more than economic growth; it is about dignity and access. And for far too long under the previous PC government, northern Manitoba was left to the sidelines.

But under our new NDP government and under our third budget, we see huge investments in northern Manitoba, and I know that our government deeply, deeply cares about the North. Our Premier (Mr. Kinew) has been—all corners of northern Manitoba.

And so, you know, that is why in Budget 2026 we are investing \$15.3 million in Northern Affairs communities. And that's huge, honourable deputy Speaker. I represent quite a few Northern Affairs communities and this is something that they have been waiting for for a long time, and our government is delivering for these communities with \$11.5 million in operating funding for Northern Affairs communities.

We are also making targeted capital investments, including \$3.8 million in capital grants for critical projects like waste water and waste systems, and \$24 million through the Manitoba Water Services Board to support water and waste water infrastructure across northern Manitoba and rural areas.

We are also improving connectivity through additional transportation investments, including a \$10-million increase in highway funding and \$16.2 million for the Wasagamack First Nation road

and airport. I know that this is something that is crucial to the Island Lake community that they fought hard for under the PC government, but our NDP government is delivering for this—these Indigenous communities. Projects like that keep northern communities connected and accessible.

And alongside that, honourable deputy Speaker, we are working to strengthen health care across the North with \$6.3 million dedicated to recruiting doctors to rural and northern Manitoba. We are taking real steps to bring care closer to home, and that means fewer families having to leave their communities for basic services.

You know, I know, under the PC government, they slashed jobs, health-care jobs—they cut doctor positions, cut nursing positions—but our government is investing with this huge \$6.3-million investment in Budget 2026 to recruit doctors to the North. And that means earlier access to care and doctors that actually understand realities of northern life. I know the PC government really never stepped foot in, you know, the North, very rarely actually did. Our government is always in the North. *[interjection]*

What's that? No worries there.

We know that there's more work to do, but this is how progress begins, by making real investments to ensure that no matter where you live in our great province that you can count on access to care when you need it.

Honourable deputy Speaker, this is a budget that recognizes that Thompson does not stand alone; it is part of a broader northern system, connected through infrastructure, through industry and through community. We are stabilizing what matters locally, we are investing in what drives our economy and we are building the connections that will carry northern Manitoba forward.

When communities like Thompson have stability, opportunity and access to services, our entire province benefits. And when we invest in people, when we listen, act and follow through, we build something better than any one project or policy, when—we build a province where families can stay, where young people can see a future and where communities can grow with confidence. That is why budget—that is what Budget 2026 represents, and that is how we move forward together, and that is how we build one Manitoba.

Ekosi, honourable deputy Speaker. Kinanâskomitin. Thank you.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** It gives me great pleasure to get up here and speak on the amendment to the 2026 budget because the budget was pretty much not what Manitobans want or need, and the amendment points a lot of that out.

So it's a budget that was supposed to provide hope, relief and a direction for Manitoba families, but instead it delivers disappointment, uncertainty and definitely a lot of missed opportunity. This was a moment, a moment when Manitobans expected leadership, a moment when families expected relief, a moment when this government had the opportunity to demonstrate that it understands the pressures facing everyday people across our province.

And yet, honourable Speaker, what we see before us is a budget that falls short, a budget that does not meet the moment, a budget that does not reflect the reality that Manitobans are living each and every day.

\* (15:20)

There is a reality facing Manitobans. Across Manitoba, families are struggling. Those that are watching today, I'm sure you can relate to this. They're not asking for luxuries; they're not asking for hand-outs; they are asking for relief, real and tangible relief. They're asking for a government that understands the cost of groceries, the cost of fuel, the cost of housing and the cost of simply trying to live a decent life, because right now, too many Manitobans are living paycheque to paycheque, and that happens right at home in Interlake-Gimli. Too many are within \$200 of each month of not being able to pay the bills. Too many are forced to make impossible choices between essentials.

We have all seen it: our friends, our neighbours, our family struggling under this government; parents standing in grocery store aisles, carefully looking at what they can afford; seniors choosing between heating their homes or filling their prescriptions; young families wondering if they will ever be able to get ahead. This is not a theory; this is real, and it demands a real response.

This budget misses the mark on affordability. This budget does not provide an affordable response. It does not deliver the kind of affordability that Manitobans need and deserve. It does not ease the burden on working families. Instead, it offers small, delayed-into-the-future and insufficient measures that fail to address the scale of the challenges that Manitobans are facing.

Take, for example, the increase on the education property tax credit, an increase of \$100. Not this year—next year, in the future sometime, maybe. Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, when families are facing increases in property taxes of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars, a \$100 increase next year is nowhere near meaningful enough. It's not timely and it's not adequate—does not reflect the urgency of this situation. Manitobans need relief now, not at some point, at some future date.

The NDP missed the mark on property taxes and again delivered a broken promise. This government made a commitment, a commitment to not raise taxes. They have, and Manitobans are paying more. Education property taxes are rising at an alarming rate. In many cases, homeowners are seeing an increase of 20 per cent or way more. In some jurisdictions, increases have reached as high as 40 per cent.

Honourable Speaker, when a homeowner opens their property tax bill and sees a significant increase, that is a tax increase. No matter how it's framed, no matter how it's explained, it's money out of their pocket, and for many families it's money that they simply don't have.

This budget does deliver something, though: hidden tax increases through bracket creep. The burden doesn't end just there. This budget also fails Manitobans through what it does not do. By cancelling the 'indexation' of personal income tax brackets and the basic personal amount, this government is quietly increasing taxes on Manitobans.

As wages rise, often just to keep up with inflation, people are pushed into higher tax brackets and they pay more even though their purchasing power is not improved with inflation. This is known as bracket creep, and it's a—disproportionately affects low- and middle-income earners. It reduces take-home pay, it undermines financial stability and it makes life harder for families to get ahead.

There's a better path forward. There's another way, a better way, a way that puts Manitobans first, a way that delivers real, immediate relief.

On our side of the House, we have proposed a clear and practical solution: eliminating provincial income tax on the first \$30,000 earned. That is real affordability. That is real relief. That would mean up to \$1,500 a year more for individuals; up to \$3,000 more for a family.

This is money that stays in your pocket. It's not a tax credit you get at some point in the future. You get this increase on each and every paycheque. Money that helps pay for groceries, rent, child care. And if they're fortunate enough to own a vehicle, some gas money; maybe take the kids to the park.

Money that supports local businesses and strengthens our economy. People have more money in their pocket, it helps the economy thrive. It's not a rebate. It is not delayed. It is an immediate, on every single paycheque, more money in your pocket.

The NDP's economic performance is a troubling picture, to say the least. Beyond affordability, this budget fails to address a deeper concern: the overall performance of our economy. And the numbers tell a clear story. Manitoba's economic growth is lagging. If the NDP budget was a NASCAR race, I think we would have been lapped many, many times and our neighbouring provinces are just coming up to pass us again.

Real GDP growth sits well below the national average here in Manitoba. We are trailing our neighbours. We are not keeping pace with the provinces we compete with for investment, for talent, for opportunity.

This matters because economic growth is what drives opportunity. It's what creates jobs. It's what raises wages. And it is what allows governments to fund essential services. When growth is weak, everything else becomes more difficult.

I want to take a moment to talk about the composition of job growth. While this government may point to employment numbers, we need to look deeper because not all job growth is equal. Over the past year, job growth in Manitoba has been almost entirely driven by the public sector, your taxpayers' dollars.

Private sector employment has actually declined, and this is a fundamental concern. The private sector is the engine of economic growth. It drives innovation, productivity and investment. It creates a wealth that funds public services. When private sector employment is shrinking, it signals underlying weakness. It raises concerns about competitiveness. It suggests that businesses are hesitant to invest, expand and hire within Manitoba.

This budget also skips over business confidence and investment. And, indeed, that is exactly what we are seeing: Business confidence in Manitoba is declining. Employers are expressing concerns about

the cost of doing business. They are uncertain about the future and they are hesitant to invest.

Investment, the clearest indicator of economic growth, is lagging far behind other provinces. We are not attracting the level of capital that we should. We are not positioning ourselves as a destination for growth. And, without investment, we cannot build a strong, sustainable economy.

Agriculture: another missed opportunity. Let us turn to one of the—Manitoba's most important industries. In Manitoba, I wholeheartedly feel it is agriculture. It's not just a part of our economy; it is a part of our identity. Agriculture is near 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP. It supports our rural economies. It drives exports. It feeds our province and far beyond: Canada, the world. And yet, this budget, agriculture is overlooked.

\* (15:30)

Producers are facing rising input costs, fuel, fertilizer, equipment. They're navigating global trade uncertainty. They're dealing with pressures that ultimately impact every Manitoban through higher food prices. And what does this budget offer them? Nothing. No comprehensive plan, no meaningful support, no recognition of the critical role that they play.

Let's take a moment to talk a little bit about the fiscal management and the growing debt. We must also address the financial position of this province. This budget predicts a deficit again. Former PC government, of course, left behind a large surplus. The last balanced budget, twice, was under the last PC government. But recent NDP history tells you that their projections cannot be taken at face value. Deficit targets have been missed by significant margins. Forecasts are not aligned with reality. And that raises serious concerns about credibility. This NDP government is not credible.

At the same time, debt continues to grow. Billions of dollars have been added to the NDP debt in a very, very short period of time. We are also experiencing rising interest rates, the cost of servicing that debt. When we run deficits, that increases the debt and our province will get downgraded; and it costs more money to borrow money. The NDP is spending more of your money—and let's be clear, this is your money, this is Manitobans' money—to the tune of \$6.5 million per day, just on interest, just on interest alone, 6 and a half million dollars a day. That's a new arena every single day in a small town in rural Manitoba.

The Manitoba NDP is paying more on interest, more on your credit card. Every dollar spent on interest is a dollar that cannot be spent on health care, education or tax relief. Manitobans expect to drive on roads that don't wreck their vehicles, but no, the NDP borrow more money and spare more of your hard-earned dollars on interest. They spend way more on interest than they do on roads. It's a growing burden on not just yourself as Manitobans, but your kids and grandkids, all future generations.

Health care continues to spend without results. Health care is one of the most important responsibilities of any government, and while spending has increased, outcomes have not improved. We have wait times that are at an all-time high; backlogs persisting; access to care remains a critical challenge; front-line workers are raising concerns about safety and capacity, and yet this budget does not present a clear plan for reform. It does not address systemic issues. It does not deliver the improvements Manitobans need and deserve.

Public safety is a real concern. Public safety is another area where Manitobans expect action. They expect to feel safe in their homes, in their communities, in their workplaces, but property crimes remain a very serious concern. Rural crime continues to impact families and businesses. Break-ins, theft and vandalism are not abstract issues. They are real experiences for Manitobans, especially in my constituency, and this budget does not offer a comprehensive plan to address them. It does not provide the tools needed to protect communities. It does not address repeat offenders. It does not restore confidence for Manitobans.

Time is going quickly, so I want to touch a little bit on mental health and addictions. Mental health and addictions are a pressing challenge that require urgent attention. Families across Manitoba are affected. Communities are struggling. Front-line organizations are doing their best with their limited resources, and yet this budget does not expand access to primary mental health services in a meaningful way. It does not establish the infrastructure needed to support recovery, and it does not provide a clear path forward.

We must also consider a broader picture. Population trends matter; they reflect opportunity and they also reflect confidence. They reflect whether people see a future in our very own province. Recent data shows that Manitoba's population growth is weak. In some periods under this NDP government, it has declined. That is a signal, the signal that we must take

seriously because when people leave, we lose talent, we lose economic potential, we lose momentum.

This NDP government is increasing dependence on federal transfers. Another concern is growing reliance on these, and now it makes up a massive portion of the provincial government's revenues. While these transfers are important, they cannot be the foundation of our economic strategy. We need a strong, self-sustaining economy. We need growth that is driven from within. We need policies that encourage investment, innovation and opportunity. We need a budget with a vision.

Honourable Speaker, at its core, this budget lacks that vision. It lacks a clear plan for economic growth. It lacks a strategy for competitiveness. It lacks the bold action needed to address the challenges we face. Instead, it relies on incremental measures, delayed promises and optimistic assumptions. That is not enough; not in this moment with the issues south of the border.

This budget is not for Manitoba, so Manitoba deserves better. They deserve a government that understands their challenges. They deserve a government that acts with urgency, a government that delivers results. This budget does not do that and it does not provide any real affordability relief. It does not strengthen our economy. It does not restore confidence. And that is why we cannot support this budget as printed.

As outlined in the amendment we brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan), this House must recognize that the government has lost trust and confidence in this government. Because this is not about budget; it's about people, it's about families trying to make ends meet, it's about seniors trying to stay in their homes, it's about young people deciding whether to build their future here.

This was an opportunity, an opportunity to lead, an opportunity to deliver, an opportunity to build a stronger Manitoba. And it was missed.

I want to thank Interlake-Gimli for sending me here to represent your voice in the Manitoba Legislature. And I just—if you take anything from the speech here today, just remember: \$6.5 million a day of your taxpayer money being spent on interest alone, on deficit, on debt.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, and thanks for Manitobans for listening today.

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** I just want to start first by sending my condolences and our support to Nelson House Cree Nation and to Chief Levasseur on, you know, the loss in their community and what they're going through right now. You know, it's tough when you have a community dealing with a suicide epidemic in their community, and of course our government is there standing alongside them and supporting them and walking alongside them.

That's why this budget is so important. We are, you know, of course, putting and strengthening our mental health system, ensuring that we are continuing to put services into the system. We saw, for seven and a half years under the previous failed PC government, things being cut after cut after cut.

\* (15:40)

So Budget 2026 is really focused on what matters most to Manitobans: health care, affordability, education, good jobs. And it's about responding to what people are telling us what they need right now.

So we're rebuilding our health-care system after years of cuts under the failed PC government, and mental health is health care. And we are responding and ensuring that, no matter where someone is in our province, that they are getting the supports that they need. We've added over 4,000 health-care workers, including more doctors, and expanded hospitals and personal-care home capacity.

Unlike, you know, the previous failed government who closed emergency rooms, who fired nurses, we are hiring nurses, we are opening hospitals, we are hiring mental health workers and we are uplifting social workers who are on the front lines of these services and supporting folks and meeting them where they're at.

We're improving access to family doctors and same-day care. I was ill, I don't know, a couple of months ago. I felt really, like, for four days I had that really bad virus. I made an appointment through Medinav. I got an appointment the same day. I went to Victoria. I didn't even know that there was a clinic in the basement of the Victoria Hospital. I got an appointment the same day. I was in and out of there within like 20 minutes. So what an amazing, you know, service that that provides.

So I want to say to Manitobans, like, use that tool, because it's an amazing tool. You can get same-day appointments. And that's the kind of work that this

government is doing, ensuring that Manitobans can get access to care same day.

We're expanding senior care and investing in women's health. You know, as someone who is perimenopausal, you know how important it is for me to be able to access those services and be able to get access to hormone replacement therapy without having to pay for those medications. Those medications are extremely expensive.

And as women, being able to access those medications without a cost, so many women have—and I've shared my journey, you know, on social media—so many women have outreached and shared their story with me and just said how incredible it is that they have—they've been going through this too and that they've been able to share what they've been going through. And some of them weren't able—wouldn't have been able to afford these medications.

So, you know, again, providing those supports to Manitobans. We're including free birth control. Again, this is something Manitobans wouldn't have access to. So we're making sure that those supports are there for women needing them where they're at, because no person should have to go without those.

And at the same time, we're taking real action to make life more affordable. And I think about going to the grocery store and, you know, members opposite like to joke about, oh, you're taking PST off of rotisserie chickens. Well, as a mom who works sometimes 'til 8, 9 o'clock in this building and has to rush home and has grandkids and a daughter, sometimes I don't have the luxury of going home and cooking a meal, and I pick up a rotisserie chicken and a salad. And I enjoy not having to pay tax on that.

I also buy snacks for my grandchildren. There's no tax on those. So for you parents out there that buy snacks for your kids when you take them to daycare and you don't have to pay PST on those snacks, I'm sure you're grateful for that too. So, you know, it's making a real difference. So look at your bill and you'll see that change as well.

So prenatal vitamins: that's PST exempt. Again, women who, you know, are carrying their child, they don't have to pay PST on their prenatal vitamins. Again, that's a real game changer. We've increased tax credit for homeowners and 'rentels'—renters. That's, again, taking the burden off of renters. Under the previous government, they raised that, something that should never have happened.

We're expanding affordable child care and creating more spaces. For those that can't afford child care, this is a game changer. Again, you know, I was one of those moms that couldn't even afford the subsidy. So I often couldn't put my kid in child care.

But there was Mount Carmel Clinic, Anne Ross daycare. You didn't have to pay if you couldn't pay. So they would take a lot of families and their children. So I just want to uplift all of those child-care workers that are on the front lines supporting our kids each and every day.

We're making transit free for our youth. You know how many kids don't go to school because they can't afford bus fare? So that's going to be a game changer again for our kids to get to school, access services and, you know, free menstrual products for all of our workers in all of their workplaces. We're also supporting renters, seniors, rural communities and farmers.

And because affordability isn't just one solution—it's about easing pressures in people's daily lives while building long-term stability—we're also investing in education. This is about our kids. Our kids are our future.

When I think about our—you know, our great colleague, Nello, he's probably looking down on us. And he was, like, one of the greatest educators and he taught me so much. I got to share a bank office with him. And, you know, we increased the school funding. We're building 11 new schools. We've expanded how many teachers are in schools, the amount of support staff and clinicians, and so many students are getting more supports than ever.

As an educator myself, you know, I just saw the need grow and parents even coming to the school and volunteering, and I was one of those parents. I would come and volunteer at lunch and, you know, help support students when I could through the lunch program and working with other parents and just building community. It was a great place to meet other parents.

We're expanding child care, school nutrition program and supports for educators while also investing in playgrounds. I mean, this is so important for our kids to have a place to play, to grow together.

I remember when I was a divisional principal and really bringing community together and especially culturally connecting our communities, because we have so much shared history. And we look at our diversity and how we have drums around the world and our dances and how we bring that together around

foods. We used to do that so much around our playgrounds, too, our recreation centres and our community spaces.

And our kids really need safe places to learn, grow and belong, and this—our schools are a place for that. So, you know, we're building 11 new schools, and I really want to uplift our Education Minister for that work that they're doing.

We're strengthening our Indigenous education. That's super important. You know, as an educate—or, as an Indigenous person myself, it wasn't until I was 23 that I started to learn about myself as an Indigenous person, learning about smudging, going to my first ceremony, going and learning about my colours, my clan, connecting to Elders. I didn't have access to that in school.

So, you know, today we have smudging practices in schools. We have Elders in residences. We have, you know, kids that get to go and do land-based learning. So I'm so proud of that work that so many people have done. We have people, Indigenous educators, that are reflective of the students that they're teaching and so much diversity in our schools. And I'm so proud of that work.

And we're investing in adult education—\$2.5 million, you know. As—that's something to be really proud of. As someone who dropped out of school when she was 16 and went back when she was 23, that's life-changing for someone. That's like—and I really want to lift up Jim Silver and Fran Taylor for all of the work that they did because, like, they do so much amazing work with adults, you know, and just advocating for that change. It's transformative.

And it's part of Your Way Home too. Like, a lot of our folks that are in encampments, that are in shelters, they want to go back to school. They want that opportunity. So this government is providing that opportunity for those folks. *[interjection]*

How long? Oh, shit.

\* (15:50)

So, honourable Speaker, really, you know, we are investing, creating change. We're doing this work together because we care about Manitobans. It's really about making sure that we are building together. We're ensuring that we are investing in housing, we're investing in mental health supports, we're investing in affordability, we're investing in health care and, of course, we're investing in our kids who are our future. And we want to ensure that we are doing it together.

We're reducing pressures on our health-care system, reducing wait times. And, most importantly, we're helping Manitobans better their lives.

So, bottom line, honourable Speaker, Budget 2026 is a plan that strengthens health care, lowers costs, invests in families and creates good jobs.

*The Speaker in the Chair*

We'll keep doing that work each and every day because Manitobans deserve nothing less, and this team is delivering on that.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** It took me a few seconds to stand up to get ready to put some words on the record in favour of the proposed amendment that the MLA for Waverley had brought forward.

And it's interesting, Honourable Speaker, because I was watching the clock. And the Minister for Addictions decided to leave eight minutes on the clock, so she really only had roughly 12 minutes of anything good to say and she repeated most of it throughout her speech.

And most of what she had brought forward in regards to her speech was a lot of the—and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) I don't think has had an opportunity yet to put some words on the record, but I'm sure she will once I've completed my 20 minutes.

I know the Education Minister is actually jealous of the fact that she's really—hasn't—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —hasn't brought forward anything new—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —under her watch, Honourable Speaker. The new schools—we talk about new schools. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Education needs to come to order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Yes, it is typical of not only the front bench of the NDP, but of course, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the rest of their colleagues to be rude when it—when other members in the Chamber who democratically have been elected to represent their

constituents to come here and put words on the record, Honourable deputy Speaker.

So, as I was saying, many of the schools that this minister is now talking about—or even, you know, the Premier about building these schools. In fact, many of those schools have just been delayed by this government and, actually, because of their two-and-a-half-year delay, students will not be entering those schools as soon as they would have if they would have just continued on with the Progressive Conservative plan.

I more than appreciate the predecessor to the MLA for Transcona, Nello Altomare, for bringing forward the food and nutrition money to schools in the great province of Manitoba. This is building on the good work of Karina Gould, who was the Liberal minister at the time for the federal government, and the education ministers who worked quite closely together in the summer of 2022 to bring forward a child and nutrition program for schools. And it was the good fortune of Nello to—had received—who was my successor as the Education minister in this province, to then be able to bring that forward to Manitoba.

And it's unfortunate because in this budget—and this is why I'm speaking actually to the amendment, because the amendment is a really good amendment. I appreciated all the members of the NDP side putting forward good words on the record towards the amendment because that's what we are debating right now.

And so when we start to talk about, you know, the food and nutrition, we talk about this budget. And as the Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister had put a few heckles on the record, and I appreciate the good work of the Speaker to ask her to wait her time to be able to put some words on the record. The fact is that she has cut funding to education.

The member for—I don't know where right now—she did put some words on the record earlier on and I appreciated what she was doing.

**An Honourable Member:** Radisson. Radisson.

**Mr. Ewasko:** The member, Honourable Speaker—the member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz), my colleague had shared with me, is sitting there and just—*[interjection]*

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

Let's calm down. I'm having a hard time hearing. And I would remind the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) to always use the proper constituency or ministerial title.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I actually did correct myself and I had to get the correct name of the constituency. I know that there's many positions in the Chamber that stand up and speak and I know that there's been times, Honourable Speaker, where you've missed—you know, not necessarily pronounced, but represent—*[interjection]*

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

The NDP bench needs to come to order and the member for Lac du Bonnet needs to cease reflecting on the Chair.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Okay. Thanks for that, Honourable Speaker. I apologize if—that was not my intent to reflect on the Chair; it was basically just commenting that I made an error in addressing my colleague but then I did realize which constituency she represents and did put those words on the record.

So when we're talking about the—you know, it's been two and a half years of debt, decay and decline under the NDP government. And this is nothing new from this Kinew government, Honourable Speaker, because he's basically following in the footsteps of his own mentor, Greg Selinger. And it's just interesting because then you look at some of the comments from some of the stakeholders from the budget announcement.

So here we go. I'm just going to read a few of those into the record because these are not necessarily my words. You don't have to take my words for it. We'll just put, you know—I appreciate the Minister for Families who I think has had about—I don't know—five or six strikes in regards to her portfolio but, again, continues to be representing that department.

And just so that the Minister for Families doesn't feel that I'm putting her up on some kind of pedestal, the Minister for Justice, the Attorney General (Mr. Wiebe) himself, has shown on multiple times that he has failed in his portfolio.

So I think Manitobans, much like what was said in the Brandon Sun recently, many Manitobans are looking for a Cabinet shuffle on the NDP side. And I know that there's many members that have been 'abonished' to this side of the House—are hoping that by them playing nice with the Premier (Mr. Kinew) that they'll get a Cabinet position. I'm not going to name their constituencies because I don't want to make a mistake, Honourable Speaker.

So we take a look at—since we're talking about Education and Early Childhood Learning a little bit, as well, what did MTS President Lillian Klausen have

to say in regards to this year's budget? She said, and I quote, highest class sizes ever. End quote. Highest class sizes ever. Why is that? Because of the cuts by this Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister.

And due to those cuts by this Education Minister and this Premier (Mr. Kinew), Honourable Speaker, we're going to see a second year in a row of high school division education taxes on property.

**An Honourable Member:** That's not true.

**Mr. Ewasko:** We're talking—the Families Minister says it's not true. I'm sure she'll have an opportunity to get up and put some words on the record after I'm done. I know they're going to have to wrestle over there—you know, not jiu-jitsu like the Premier was always saying was a certain sport that he really enjoyed.

But here we go with some others. The Education Minister here wants to hear some other comments around the budget.

So what did Shauna MacKinnon, the Right to Housing Coalition, have to say about the budget? She said, and I quote: It's disappointing to see the decline in progress; 215 new units won't get us very far. That's what Shauna MacKinnon says. *[interjection]*

\* (16:00)

And the Minister for Housing and Addictions is applauding that quote, Honourable Speaker. But she had 20 minutes to put words on the record. She didn't mention that once. Matter of fact, she left eight minutes. So here we go.

What does Molly McCracken, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, have to say? She says, and I quote: It doesn't answer the urgency we're seeing on the street with very visible homelessness and other problems like that. End quote. Molly McCracken.

Here we have another one. We have, and I quote: Manitobans need and deserve support on affordability, but it must be delivered in a way that is fair and protects jobs.

**An Honourable Member:** Who said that?

**Mr. Ewasko:** I'm going to continue before I let you know who said that, but I appreciate that question. And continues to say: Exempting prepared meals sold at grocery stores from PST, but not those sold at restaurants, would hurt consumers, while putting restaurant businesses and their workers at risk. Who said this, Honourable Speaker? Kelly Higginson, president and CEO of Restaurants Canada.

Well, I know that more of the NDP backbenchers and some of the ministers haven't, you know, read some of these things, obviously, so I'm going to make sure I continue.

So here's a big one that I know that we talked about today in question period and failed to get any answers on. Matter of fact, I know the great member for Lakeside (Mr. King) had asked six questions. I think he's on to nine questions, asking about the North End water pollution centre, and has not received any answers. And so we'll see how this goes.

Here's a quote from the budget. Winnipeg Mayor Scott Gillingham said, and I—that he was disappointed in this budget as there was no mention of the North End sewage treatment plant. He quotes: If we don't get that project built, fully funded and built, within the next few years, we're going to have to put a complete stop on all future growth. There'll be no more housing developed. There'll be no more jobs created because no more businesses will be able to set up shop. End quote. Mayor Scott Gillingham on this Premier's budget.

So—and, again, as you know, the Premier's mentioned a couple times about phase 1 and phase 2. We know that phase 1 and phase 2 of the North End water treat—sewage plant—treatment plant was actually funded and built under our PC government.

It doesn't matter, Honourable Speaker, the amount of sewage that's coming out of the NDP benches today, but once again, soon, we will have an election and we will go forward and we will be the ones to fund that North End water treatment plant. And it's just unbelievable how this is playing out.

So I've got another one. The member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) wants to ask, he says: Do you have any more quotes about the stakeholders from the budget? And here we go. So here's another one.

So—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

The Honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) needs to come to order, and a lot of other people do as well.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Again—again—they're just following in the Premier's footsteps. So you can't blame all of them. They're drinking the same Kool-Aid, Honourable Speaker. *[interjection]*

So another comment—so they're all clapping, Honourable Speaker. They're clapping because I said they're following in the Premier's footsteps. I'll refer to that right away.

So here's another individual that had a few words to put on the record in regards to the budget. I quote: We've advocated pretty hard for our issues in corrections and wildland firefighters. We've seen a sprinkling of that in the budget, but overall our workers are doing more with less continually, and we're not really seeing any advancement of bringing in people to do this work.

Who said that, Honourable Speaker? Kyle Ross, the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union president. My word.

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

The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) has used a lot of quotes in his speech. Are those public documents or are they private? If the member could clarify that, I'd appreciate it.

**Mr. Ewasko:** On my 15th year being here, they're all public, yes, thank you. And so they can all look it up. Matter of fact, they could cheek-check their emails; they've probably received some of these, Honourable Speaker.

So what did Kathy Valentino, the association for Manitoba municipalities, have to say, Honourable Speaker? She said: We've heard loud and clear from municipalities that they are ready to grow, but with no increase in water and waste water infrastructure, they won't be able to grow. End quote. Again, that was Kathy Valentino, association for Manitoba municipalities.

What did Ben Wickstrom, the Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys, have to say? He said, and I quote—and I'm hoping the Justice Minister is listening: If you don't hire more prosecutors, there won't be anyone to prosecute the cases the police are working on. End quote.

So he basically just talks about the failings—*[interjection]*—of this Justice Minister. And, again, Honourable Speaker, I'm hoping that the Families Minister will get up and put a few words on the record because she seems to want to.

Anyway, here we go, another one. We've got Dr. Nichelle Desilets, from Doctors Manitoba. She says, and I quote: If you don't—oh, sorry—I quote: We are disappointed the government's budget included no signs of fulfilling their election promise to add 250 team-based providers in physician practices. End quote.

I have to say, Honourable Speaker, that this government—the Kinew government—has been the benefactor of PC doctor-physician seat enhancements and increases. They've been the benefactor of the nursing seats expansions. They've been the benefactors of the health-care aides advancements—and, of course, I can't leave, you know, the education and early childhood learning sector out—the advancements that we had done by signing with the federal government to increase the positions for early childhood educators as well. I know that the minister had mentioned earlier in her speech how thrilled she is with those investments that the PC government did in education and early childhood learning. And so I just wanted to make sure that I got a few of those words on the record.

We talked recently—I had a few sets of questions in regards to the drug consumption site that the Kinew government wants to put up. And it's unfortunate that, again, the Minister for Addictions wants to stand up and try to answer the questions and doesn't put the actual answers on the record. It is unfortunate that the Education Minister obviously has approved the posters to be hung in our high schools to promote youth attending the drug consumption site, Honourable Speaker. *[interjection]*

And see—*[interjection]*—and I hear that some of the NDP members are basically asking for me to prove it. Well, they can basically talk to their ministers because it's technically within the department, all those prepared posters and the plans already. And I know that I look across the way, and there's a lot of shocked faces because they don't know; they don't talk with one another. *[interjection]*

But you know what, Honourable Speaker? The Premier's now heckling me, so let's go to the reasoning why, you know, some of their members, as I said earlier, are walking in his footsteps. So here's what they were clapping for, and I'll read a quote: Is going to wrestling class because ju-jitsu wasn't gay enough. End quote. Who said that? The Premier (Mr. Kinew) of Manitoba, that's who said that.

Honourable Speaker, I think part of the—*[interjection]*

Oh, the Minister for Addictions wants to ask me if there's any more. So here we go. So another one. So it's @iamstomp. We have a saying in ju-jitsu, quote: It's only gay if you make eye contact. End quote. Who said that? It was the Premier of Manitoba.

\* (16:10)

So, Honourable Speaker, when the Premier stands up here in a few minutes, because I'm assuming he won't allow anyone else on his side to stand up and put words on the record because he's already put a gag order on them to only speak maximum 10 minutes to this budget that they're calling a great budget, which we know, on this side of the House, it is not.

I think that this Premier should do himself a favour and stand—when he stands in this House and puts on an acting class to the Manitobans, he should actually be looking in the mirror asking himself if what is he saying is actually the one that can be judged later on at the end of his life, Honourable Speaker.

With that, I'll be supporting the amendments to the budget, Honourable Speaker. I will be voting against this year's budget.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for your time and listening.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, I'm really happy today to rise to speak to the best budget that Manitoba has seen in many, many years. It's got more help for you and folks who need it the most. It's got no tax on any food or drink at the grocery store. It's got an enhanced or increased tax credit that will be mailed out to you or direct-deposited into your account so that you don't have to wait for tax time to save money. It's got a \$1,700 homeowners affordability tax credit. That means folks in Morden-Winkler—90 per cent of them—will see the highest refund that they've ever seen in their entire lives when we're talking about that property tax rebate.

There's huge investments in health care: 4,000 net-new staff, a new emergency room at the Victoria hospital, thereby completing our health-care commitments from the last election to staff up health care and build a new Vic ER.

And I think one of the things that I'm most proud of, Honourable Speaker, is that we're paying for all of this help for you and your family by asking the successful Manitobans to contribute their fair share. The top 1 per cent of Manitobans are great people and they're going to be stepping up to help ensure that you and your family get the help that you need to get through this cost-of-living period.

And so I want to say to everybody out there: You've got a government that's working for you. You've got a government that's been listening to you. You've got a government that's not afraid to show up. You got a government that you can believe what they say.

You got a government that knows what it's like and knows that you deserve help.

And so to that point, I want to talk a bit about some of these amazing colleagues who've been doing such great work, starting with that favourite target of the members opposite. Again, they're so afraid of a powerful woman, a woman who's empowered, an Indigenous woman no less, that they always like to attack my colleague from St. Johns.

But no amount of partisan nonsense from the PC benches will take away the \$20 million for the Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag strategy that is in this year's budget and that is being shepherded by the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) to help youth, to help women, to help gender non-conforming people and to help seniors to be safe and proud and happy in the province of Manitoba.

And then, of course, for a real Minister of Education, which again, we had a wonderful colleague prior to her serving in the role, but before that, it was a long, long barren winter of failed Education ministers. It's so good to have a real Education Minister back who's building schools—four of them under construction this year—as well as an \$80-million increase in school funding.

And, of course, we know that under the PCs' time in office, Manitobans, whether it was in rural or in the city, would look to the police for help and the police would say, we'd love to help you but the government cut our jobs; the government cut our funding.

That's why it's such a breath of fresh air to see our current Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. Wiebe), who's increased police funding by \$39 million in this budget.

Minister of Health: again, promise made, promise kept. A new Vic ER construction is under way: 4,000 more staff to serve you at the bedside.  
*[interjection]*

And, of course, I hear the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) asking, how much am I going to get back at tax time: \$1,700 thanks to the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala). And though he's done nothing to deserve it, he's still going to get it, because the Minister of Finance believes in fairness and equity.

What else could we ask for when we're talking about the young producers making benefit for the province of Manitoba than an end to the hikes, to the increased lease rates, to those rental payments and, for the third year in a row, Honourable Speaker, a freeze

to Crown lands in Manitoba, thanks to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn).

The Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith): tons of great initiatives in this budget, but, of course, we measure progress by the lives changed and I'm happy to share with the House that as of our meeting here today, more than 200 Manitobans—because of the hard work of this amazing woman—200 Manitobans have moved out of tents and into homes.

And while the members opposite are cashing cheques but can't show up for work—when it comes to their leader in particular—on our side, the members that we got sitting in the front row just keeps growing and growing.

So it doesn't stop with the Minister of Housing, Addictions, Homelessness; it goes right on to what used to be the PC side and continues with the member for Seine River (MLA Cross).

Now, of course, for the francophone constituents in St. Norbert, we're making Manitoba—

**French spoken**

— une province véritablement bilingue. Et puis c'est une des places où notre ancien premier ministre, Monsieur Louis Riel, a 'dépendu' beaucoup de temps.

**Translation**

*a truly bilingual province. And it is also one of the places where our former premier, the honourable Louis Riel, spent a great deal of time.*

**English**

But she's also been right there on the front lines, listening to folks on the Lemay Forest, making sure that we're going to protect that green space for many future generations of Manitobans.

**French spoken**

Et puis, à cause de l'appui du député de Saint-Boniface (DAL Loiselle), nous avons entendu hier un projet de politique très important : là, dans l'ancien Saint-Boniface où nous avons vu des institutions qui ont essayé de lutter contre la francophonie maintenant—contre la francophonie manitobaine, maintenant on voit une nouvelle école pour la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine.

Félicitations au député de Saint-Boniface.

**Translation**

*And thanks to the support of the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle), we heard a very*

*important policy proposal yesterday: there, in the old St. Boniface where we saw institutions try to fight against the francophone community—Manitoba's francophone community, we now see a new school for the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine.*

*Congratulations to the member for St. Boniface.*

**English**

And, of course, you know, when you drive by the bus stops in the cold, cold winter, people are shivering: they're shuffling this way, they're shuffling that way. They'll shuffle no longer if they're under 18 because they're getting free transit, thanks to the advocacy of the member of Kildonan-River East, who, for the record, I want to share with the PC members of the House, is a great parliamentarian and is going to be remembered long, long after their political careers are over.

And even though they run to the social media machines and they do that little weird pause now at the end of their time in question period, she didn't even post a video and she went viral on Instagram. Take that, PCs.

And the MLA for Elmwood: Well, his presence is gift enough to the people of Manitoba. But on top of that, we know that when it comes to priorities like the right to repair; when it comes to consumers; when it comes to making sure that we're reaching people with the cost of living, it is the member for Elmwood (MLA Maloway) who is standing up for people right across Manitoba.

\* (16:20)

Minister of Innovation and New Technology (MLA Moroz) has seen fit to invest a \$5-million boost to Research Manitoba. That means while the members opposite are thanking Donald Trump for tariffs and quietly cheering on his attacks on science and on gender, on this side of the House, we're a bright beacon saying: Come on, American scientists. Come on, American innovation. Set up shop here in Manitoba, because we, unlike the PCs, still believe in the truth. So thank you to the Minister of Innovation and New Technology (MLA Moroz).

We have \$4 million in this budget for the Seal River Indigenous-protected area, which puts us on the path to protecting 30 per cent of Manitoba by the year 2030, and it's all thanks to the member for Riel (MLA Moyes), the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

And when we're talking about the Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu), I've got to say that the Manitoba jobs agreement just makes everyone's hearts sing right across the province of Manitoba. It's such a popular initiative that it's putting so many people to work. It's almost—it's almost—I don't know, it's almost too good that we also get to see him owning the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) each and every day in question period.

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor) has increased the highways budget, historic spending: \$525 million. Yesterday, we were walking into—or two days ago, rather, we were walking into a meeting and she said: Oh, let me get out of your way; the most important person has arrived.

And I said: Oh, no, Minister, absolutely not. Premiers come and premiers go, but in the history of Manitoba, there has only been one woman to serve in the role of Minister of Infrastructure. We are in the presence of greatness.

Minister of Advanced Education has been doing remarkable work, ensuring that the future workforce of Manitoba is going to have what they need, but also the future citizenry. We want Manitobans to succeed and to get good jobs after their college and university training, but we also want them to be good citizens of the world, unlike the members opposite. That's why we support the Minister for Advanced Education and Training.

The Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (Mr. Moses) has increased apprenticeship training budgets by \$7.2 million in this year's budget. And here's the thing: Those apprenticeship numbers right across the building trades, they keep going up and up and up. There's so much apprenticeship opportunity. We're going to get the member for Borderland an apprenticeship opportunity soon so that he can learn how to read the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics monthly bulletins.

Honourable Speaker, we know how you love to sing. You love to smile big smiles and sing karaoke and you're going to have plenty of time singing when the Junos come to town in 2027, thanks to the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy). And I think we can finally tell people about it now, right? Is that fair for us to be able to do?

And, of course, I'm probably going to be chastised by saying this, but Minister Smooth. He's doing a heck of a job, the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations (Mr. Simard).

Honourable Speaker, \$3 billion in hydro construction projects for Brandon to put the blue collar to work; increased funding for the Keystone Centre by 100 per cent; training new doctors at Brandon University, keeping our promise; increasing funding to municipalities; new schools in Brandon, both French and English. If this is what one MLA for the NDP can do for Brandon, imagine what we could do if we had two more just like Minister Smooth.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures (Mr. Bushie) is hiring 19 more firefighters as we speak, building a \$75-million firefighting attack base in Thompson and making sure that, unlike the members opposite who want to divide everybody into tiny little micro-sections of the electorate, such that none of us are allowed to even hang out in the same room together anymore, he's bringing people together. Small town, rural communities, First Nations, cities, south, north—it's really, really inspiring to see.

And anytime I feel lonely and I haven't seen him in a little while, you know what I do? I go to Bass Pro Shops on Route 90, I get the hunting guide, I open it up and I look at a picture of my friend who is published in the most important popular magazine.

Honourable Speaker, I know you have a particular fondness for Flin Flon. I want to tell you that this year's budget has \$500,000 for the north central Canada centre of arts and environment so that we can build Flin Flon into an arts hub for the North.

We've got a new playground in Fort Richmond at the Bairdmore School, brought forward by the member for Fort Richmond (MLA Chen). Another playground at Bison Run School for the military liaison. We heard the good news about Meadowlands School thanks to the member for McPhillips (MLA Devgan).

The member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton) has brought \$1 million in this budget forward for security enhancements for places of worship, including synagogues. The MLA for Kirkfield Park has advocated for the investments of \$2 million for gender-affirming care. And I want to let you know that our late colleague from The Pas-Kameesak, her legacy will live on in part thanks to The Pas primary-care clinic finally moving ahead, with an opening date scheduled for 2030.

There's a \$250,000 investment for the Guru Nanak gurdwara that we've seen at the advocacy for the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar). Bringing forward that new attack base in Thompson and other investments in the community by the member for Thompson (MLA Redhead).

The MLA for Lagimodière making child care free for low-income families. The MLA for Radisson advocating for not just a new school in Devonshire Park, but that it's a bigger, huge, awesome school for all the kids in her backyard. And the MLA for Transcona's advocacy leading to the Park Manor personal-care home, where construction starts this year.

As you can see, this is a team that's listening to you. This is a team that's investing in health care and education. And this is a team that is making your life more affordable.

But there's more. When it comes to the members opposite, I really get a kick out of how they get all worked up and come in here with a big strategy. And then, like, on Tuesday, I think it was—earlier this week, they're like, guess what? The Premier (Mr. Kinew) likes Avi Lewis. I know. I posted the picture on my Instagram that you used in your silly videos that you posted online.

But you know what was really, really special to me about the time leading up to Avi's victory as a federal NDP? It's that I got a chance to speak to his dad for the last time, Stephen Lewis. Somebody who moved mountains in Canada and moved mountains around the world, who raged against injustice and who stood on principle and with people against forces who always tried to push for injustice and profit being taken.

And you know what I talked to him about the last time we spoke? I talked to him about this budget. I talked to him about the idea that we were taking from the 1 per cent to be able to invest in you, the middle class and the blue collar.

And you know what the part is that he got the most kick out of? Well, it comes from the portfolio of the member—or the minister, rather, of advanced education: \$2.5 million for adult literacy. He said that made his social democratic—or, rather, democratic socialist—heart sing. The fact that we're helping people who haven't gotten that assistance earlier in life be able to make good on their full potential. So, thank you, Stephen Lewis. Thank you, Jim Silver, for your advocacy on adult literacy. And thank you to everybody working in those adult learning centres right across Manitoba.

And so I'll close this speech about the best budget ever with a little thank you to mom as well, too. Because as I told Jim Silver, the reason that adult literacy money is in the budget is because my mom conspicuously left his latest paper on my kitchen table where I had to read it, and it just made perfect sense.

If you want to build Churchill, you got to build the people of the North, and adult learning is the foundation for future economic prosperity.

So thanks, Mom. Thanks, colleagues. Thanks, Manitoba. Let's work together.

\* (16:30)

**The Speaker:** The hour being 4:30 p.m. and pursuant to rule 35(7), I'm interrupting the proceedings to put the question necessary to dispose of the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government and all amendments to that motion.

Therefore, the question before the House is the proposed amendment moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan) to the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance that this House approves in general budgetary policy of the government.

Do members wish to have the amendment read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**The Speaker:** So it's moved

THAT this motion be amended by deleting all the words after "House" and substituting:

therefore regrets that this budget fails to adequately address the current cost-of-living crisis by:

- (a) failing to take action to mitigate the escalating cost pressures on Manitobans, while simultaneously generating hundreds of millions of dollars in new tax revenues from families already facing financial hardship;
- (b) cancelling the indexation of basic personal amount and personal income tax brackets, thereby denying the ability of Manitobans to keep more money from their paycheques and earn more before paying income tax; and
- (c) failing to uphold its commitment not to raise taxes, as evidenced by increases to school taxes, education property taxes and the termination of income tax indexation; and
- (d) allowing education property taxes to skyrocket to 19.5 per cent since last year without presenting a plan to meet the growing needs of education—of the education system or offer meaningful long-term relief for homeowners; and

- (e) abandoning 4,600 students and 500 staff by refusing to provide the necessary funding to support the transition of learners displaced by the defunding of the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology; and
- (f) failing to support agricultural–agriculture producers, who are essential to addressing the rising food prices and driving economic growth; and
- (g) failing to provide the effective stewardship of Manitoba's public utilities, thereby contributing to annual increases in hydro rates and MPI premiums; and
- (h) failing to bring forward or execute an economic plan designed to stimulate economic growth and lessen the burdens imposed on Manitoba families and businesses by trade wars and increasing fuel prices; and
- (i) failing to take necessary measures to restore public safety in communities across Manitoba, as this budget contains no plan to address rising property crime or to advance the reforms to the bail system aimed at keeping violent offenders and repeat criminals in custody; and
- (j) adopting a tax policy that places additional burdens on physicians and other critical skilled professionals, diminishing Manitoba's competitiveness in recruiting and retaining the expertise necessary for a strong health-care system and economy; and
- (k) failing to enact and enforce necessary measures to address repeat violent offenders and armed drug traffickers who continue to endanger and victimize hard-working Manitobans; and
- (l) refusing to take the vice–decisive action to—in response to grave safety concerns raised by staff and patients at health-care facilities, including multiple sexual assaults, resulting in three hospitals being greylisted by nurses for the first time in the province's history; and
- (m) failing to take meaningful action to resolve the growing diagnostic and surgical case-loads, thereby forcing Manitoba families to endure unprecedented delays in accessing essential care; and
- (n) neglecting the mental health needs of Manitobans by failing to expand access to primary mental health services and failing to establish a single Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinic to support those struggling with addictions; and
- (o) failing to present a balanced budget in its first term and failing to present a credible plan to balance the Public Accounts or reduce the Province of Manitoba's deficit and debt; and
- (p) refusing to acknowledge or act on the reality that half of Manitoba families are within \$200 a month of being unable to pay their bills; and
- (q) failing to take meaningful action to address inflation and the escalating costs of groceries and fuel and housing; and
- (r) implementing the job-killing Manitoba jobs agreement, which arbitrarily selects winners and losers and overrides the choice of the 88 per cent of Manitoba construction workers who have chosen to not be associated with a union, thereby driving up the price of schools, hospitals and other infrastructure.

As a consequence, of these and many other failings, the provincial government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of this House and the people of Manitoba.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**The Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

**The Speaker:** All those members—all those in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

**Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Respectfully, a recorded vote, Honourable Speaker.

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

The question before the House is the proposed amendment moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan) to the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Division**

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

**Ayes**

*Balcaen, Bereza, Byram, Ewasko, Goertzen, Guenter, Hiebert, Johnson, Khan, King, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Robbins, Schuler, Stone, Wasyliv, Wharton, Wowchuk.*

**Nays**

*Asagwara, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Cable, Chen, Compton, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Fontaine, Kennedy, Kinew, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Naylor, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Simard, Smith, Wiebe.*

\* (16:40)

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 20, Nays 33.

**The Speaker:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** We will now move on.

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

All those in favour—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**The Speaker:** I hear a no.

**Voice Vote**

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

**Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Respectfully, Honourable Speaker, a recorded vote.

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

\* (16:50)

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Division**

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

**Ayes**

*Asagwara, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Cable, Chen, Compton, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Fontaine, Kennedy, Kinew, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Naylor, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Simard, Smith, Wiebe.*

**Nays**

*Balcaen, Bereza, Byram, Ewasko, Goertzen, Guenter, Hiebert, Johnson, Khan, King, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Robbins, Schuler, Stone, Wasyliv, Wharton, Wowchuk.*

**Clerk:** Ayes 33, Nays 20.

**The Speaker:** The motion is accordingly passed.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** What is—the honourable Government House Leader.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

**The Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? [*Agreed*]

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, April 9, 2026**

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