



**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. 45A – 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 21, 2026**

**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
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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

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

*The House met at 10 a.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 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.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Good morning, Honourable Speaker. Would you please call for second reading debate Bill 234, The Registered Landscape Architects Act.

Miigwech.

#### SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

##### Bill 234—The Registered Landscape Architects Act

**The Speaker:** It's been announced that we will now proceed to second reading of Bill 234, The Registered Landscape Architects Act.

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** I move, seconded by the member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton), that Bill 234, The Registered Landscape Architects Act; Loi sur les architectes paysagistes, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Oxenham:** Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to The Registered Landscape Architects Act.

Most Manitobans experience the work of landscape architects every single day without even really realizing it. They walk through the parks where their children play, along the trails they use for exercise and connection, through the schoolyards, streetscapes, riverfronts and public spaces that make our communities more livable, more accessible and more welcoming.

These are not just attractive places; they are carefully designed spaces that help us move, gather, breathe and belong. That is why this bill matters. It recognizes landscape architecture as the professional discipline it truly is. It creates a proper regulatory framework, it protects the title: registered landscape architect, and it establishes clear accountability and public trust.

Manitobans should know that the people designing the spaces we rely on are qualified, ethical and held to high standards. Landscape architects also play a critical role in helping us respond to the realities of climate change and also community growth. They design spaces that manage storm water, they reduce flooding risk, support biodiversity and they make our neighbourhoods more resilient.

In a province like Manitoba, the work is not optional, it is essential. When we look at places like the Legislative grounds, The Forks and the public spaces around the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, we see how much good design shapes not just what a place looks like but how it feels and how it functions. Those spaces bring people together, they tell our story, they reflect care, planning and a long-term vision for public good.

This bill is about recognizing the work and respecting the professionals behind it. It is about ensuring that, as Manitoba grows, we build communities that are safer, greener and stronger for the next generation. Honourable Speaker, I am so very proud to champion this legislation.

Thank you.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** I'd like to thank the member from Kirkfield Park—or for Kirkfield Park for bringing this legislation forward. I think the question and answer period of this bill proposal is important because not a lot of people understand the need.

So maybe I'd start off by asking a question to allow the member to explain it a little bit further, and that being, what is the problem that this bill is set out to address?

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** Well, this bill gives formal recognition and regulation. It protects Manitobans using these daily trails, parks and playgrounds, ensuring that the qualified professionals are the ones who handle the safety and accessibility issues like storm water and whatnot. Like other Canadian professions, it adds title protection and accountability. So, basically, Manitoba values the experts that shape healthier communities that we rely on and which go unnoticed.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for La Vérendrye, I'm sorry—the honourable member for Radisson.

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** I'd like to start by congratulating our colleague from Kirkfield Park on introducing his bill for a second reading. I remember sitting in his office and hearing him share about his excitement working with community on this bill. I know that members of the public don't often get to see the ins and outs and the steps it takes to get to this point.

I'm wondering if our colleague, the member for Kirkfield Park, would be able to share that step-by-step process and how we got to today?

\* (10:10)

**Mr. Oxenham:** I would love to thank the member for that really great question.

And it's been quite an honour and privilege to get to meet the good folks with Manitoba Association of Landscape Architects and to really be educated on the role—and the important role—that they play in shaping our communities and the real care, the love, the attention and the thought work that goes into the work that they do.

It is—it's intentional work. There's a lot of community consultation that I know that the good folks, that landscapers do with communities just to ensure that they're doing the right work that not only respects the process—

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

**Mr. Narth:** Just wondering if there is—has been a precedent set in other jurisdictions across the country to have a regulatory body like this, or is Manitoba first?

**Mr. Oxenham:** That's a really great question. Thank you to the member for the question.

This really aligns Manitoba with other provinces. It supports mobility while safeguarding daily public services. It prevents unqualified folks using the title public knows registered landscape architects that equals trained, ethical and accountable, safe and critical designs for the public, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Could the member share with the House why it is so important for Manitoba to formally recognize landscape architects as a regulated profession, and what message that this sends about the value of their work in our communities?

**Mr. Oxenham:** Thanks again for the question.

You know, this legislation, it ensures transparency, not self-policing. It offers a clear complaints process and it mirrors other regulated Manitoba professions, protecting families that use parks and trails confidently, Honourable Speaker.

Thanks for the question.

**Mr. Narth:** Could the member please list which other provinces currently use a regulatory body as this one is presented?

**Mr. Oxenham:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

There are several other jurisdictions across Canada, I know for sure Ontario and British Columbia. There are other jurisdictions across the country. I'm happy to provide specific information for the member.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** You know, it's no question that Manitobans shape core memories at a lot of the spaces that landscape architects work at. And Manitoba has many iconic public spaces, including The Forks, the grounds surrounding this very building, the Manitoba Legislative Building and the outdoor spaces around the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

So I'm wondering if the member can highlight how architects and landscape architects can help create spaces that bring Manitobans together at this critical time?

**Mr. Oxenham:** That's another great question.

And just highlighting the importance of bringing folks together, and that's something that landscape architects, I believe, truly understand the importance of people getting together and collaborating on these things. And I believe that landscape architectures approach their work with that intention of collaboration and making sure that there's community and stakeholder engagement and involvement.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Thank you to the member from Kirkfield Park for bringing this bill—or, sorry—this act forward.

Can the member explain what specific problems in Manitoba's labour market this bill is trying to solve?

**Mr. Oxenham:** Well, Honourable Speaker, we have a \$3.8-billion capital plan, which would protect the public from unqualified folks who are claiming to call themselves landscape architects.

So this legislation is really critical to ensure that folks who are hiring people who are claiming to have knowledge and—in this type of work, it ensures that they are regulated and they are licensed and they're responsible and accountable to the public for the work that they do.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Many of us in the Chamber here today represent communities that are expeditely growing, Radisson being one that, you know, in the near future, we'll see over 30,000 constituents in Radisson alone, and landscape architects play an important role in creating spaces that are not only beautiful but also safe, accessible and sustainable.

And so I'm wondering if the member can explain why those values are increasingly important as Manitoba communities continue to grow?

**Mr. Oxenham:** Thank you, again, to the member for that really great question.

You know, growth—congratulations for the growth in your community, that's wonderful—growth means more pressure, Honourable Speaker, and they deliver—like, slip-proof paths, for example, universal access, flood-ready planting for safe daily use.

It cuts heat and flood risk, ensures equity, vital as Manitoba builds resilient, equitable neighbourhoods long term, Honourable Speaker, for sustainability.

Thank you.

**Mr. Narth:** I was just wondering if the government has assessed whether this creates barriers for smaller firms or new startup businesses from entering into this field?

**Mr. Oxenham:** No. Low-cost self-regulation by MALA professionals, it prevents expensive fixes from poor designs, floods and injuries. It's proven in other provinces, Honourable Speaker, without burden.

Thank you.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Our colleague from Kirkfield Park introducing this bill has already, you know, shed some light on the work that has been done in community to put this all together and bring it to this point. There is so much thought that has gone into this, not only from the member, but from community as well, and so, with that thought, includes a governing council with public representatives and establishes a process of complaints and discipline.

So could the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham) please explain how these changes will strengthen accountability and public trust in the profession?

**Mr. Oxenham:** Thank you, again, to the member for that really great question.

This really prevents unqualified folks using title of registered landscape architect. And we know that if we see registered landscape architect on someone's, you know, formal training, then we know that they're trained, they're ethical and they're accountable for safety. And we know that their experience is critical in the design of the spaces around us.

So this really aligns Manitoba with other provinces, Honourable Speaker. It supports mobility while safeguarding the daily public spaces.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The time for questions has expired.

### Debate

**The Speaker:** The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Once again, thank you to the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham) for bringing forward a piece of legislation to the floor of this Chamber. It's an important part of the process, and I appreciate the opportunity.

So I'd like to start off by being very clear that landscape architects play a critical role in Manitoba's economy, as the member for Kirkfield Park had also mentioned. It adds to the quality of life for all of our communities. They're just—they're not just designers of green spaces, they're planners, problem solvers and professionals who shape the environments we live in every single day.

As the member had mentioned, every space around us has, for large part, been touched by professional landscapers and landscape architects and designers that are passionate about the long-term feasibility of the spaces around us.

These are everyone from urban development planners, flood mitigation planners, agriculture land use to environmental restoration and community planning. This is a profession that touches nearly every corner of our province, and we can see that from our backyards to the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature.

\* (10:20)

In a province like Manitoba where agriculture, resource development and environmental stewardship all intersect, this work does matter. It matters to our municipalities, to our farmers, matters to the growing communities and the developers that interact in that space. So, therefore, it matters to the long-term economic strength of our province.

But Honourable Speaker, supporting the profession does not mean that we should accept poorly developed legislation. And that is where this bill falls short, because what we have before us today is not a fully thought-out, well-developed piece of legislation. What we have is a framework that leaves far too many critical decisions to be figured out later. And when we see legislation being brought forward that doesn't include all aspects and consider all variables, we have legislation that starts to create concerns for future applications and the longevity of the feasibility of our province.

It seems to be a trend by this NDP government, and it's concerning. I definitely appreciate, like I say,

the member from Kirkfield Park for seeing a need and bringing forward legislation that answers the concern by those that work within that field each and every day. But, Honourable Speaker, what we need is legislation that increases affordability for Manitobans, increases the viability of our economy, and this can be done in unison with protecting an industry, a trade. But what we can't do is we can't limit the future growth of that industry.

Honourable Speaker, the government will stand up and say that this bill creates modern regulatory structure, but when you actually read the bill—and I have read it carefully—you quickly realize that most of the real substance is unfortunately missing. Instead of clear direction in legislation, we see broad powers handed off to bylaws, bylaws that are not before this House, bylaws that have not had the opportunity to be debated—

**An Honourable Member:** We don't make bylaws.

**Mr. Narth:** —and bylaws that have not been scrutinized. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** Honourable Speaker, you know, member—the House leader of this Legislature is heckling that the terminology is not appropriate, so she's unaware that the two terms intersect. So, if it's more favourable for the socialist terminology to use regulation, because we see how favourable the socialist NDP are of regulation, I won't use bylaw, which is a term that that intersects the other—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** —but regulation and the dependency on regulation that is formulated after is of great concern when we pass legislation like this.

Another concern, since the House leader—the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) seems to be so passionate, you know, another question that I had, if we had more time during the question-and-answer period of this bill proposal, is, why, if the Government House Leader—the one that's in charge of organizing what legislation comes forward—is so passionate about passing a bill for landscape architects and a new regulatory body for landscape architects, I'm not sure why this isn't a government bill?

I'm not sure why tonight, late into the evening, or yesterday, late into the evening, this bill would not be part of the negotiation and part of debate. If this is—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** –if the organization that this bill sets out to represent, those that met with the member and voiced their concern for their industry—if this was important to the NDP government, I'm not sure why it's not included in the long list of nothing bills that we've sat through the evening yesterday and will sit through the evening again today—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** –to debate. So—*[interjection]*

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

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

**Mr. Narth:** So this government and that House leader seems to love jamming through new regulation, as we can see with the bills that are before this House now. And if it—and if this regulatory body was of importance to the government, I would have welcomed the debate on the floor with the appropriate bill briefing, but, instead, we did not see that.

Honourable Speaker, we, definitely on this side of the House, support the small businesses and the entrepreneurs that make up the landscape architect identity of our province and, as I stated both in my questions as well as through this debate, we see it each and every day around us and we see that importance. But legislation needs to be well thought out, well planned, without the risk of unnecessary and inappropriate regulation that will potentially limit the success of the industry and also the affordability and access to service by Manitobans.

So the first and foremost is the ability for Manitobans to access this service. The association has obviously reached out to the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham) to draft legislation. And I'm quite certain that that association has given a great deal of background information to support the draft of this bill, but, unfortunately, we haven't seen that put in the draft of this legislation and it still brings many questions to how this is going to affect not only the industry but also Manitobans who rely on the service.

The fees that are associated with this, it's not clearly outlined how that may or may not affect both potential new landscape architects, those entering into the industry, as well as how that is going to change and shape any potential future barriers to Manitobans accessing these services.

So, as I said, Honourable Speaker, unfortunately, this was brought forward in a private member's bill, not allowing adequate time for us—

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

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Again, I want to thank the member from Kirkfield Park for bringing forward this bill, the registered landscape architectural act, but there is some questions that are unanswered here and I rise today to speak on this bill because of some of the serious concerns with it.

Because, while the government may try to package this bill as modernization, as professionalism or progress, it—many Manitobans will recognize it for what it is, too often from the NDP government: more regulations, more bureaucracy, more paperwork, more costs, more barriers for people simply trying to work, build, hire and grow Manitoba.

That has become a pattern with this government. Every time there is a challenge, they do not ask how to make life easier, they do not ask how to make Manitoba more competitive, they do not ask how to reduce costs or improve productivity. They ask: How do we regulate it more? How can we license it more? How can we create another board, another process, another fee, another compliance burden? How do we include this in the Manitoba jobs agreement so it gets us another 85 cents an hour to pad our pockets with?

\* (10:30)

And now we are seeing it again with Bill 234.

**An Honourable Member:** Talk to the architects up there.

**MLA Bereza:** This government wants Manitobans to—I don't want to turn my back to the architects—the government wants Manitobans to believe this is a simple housekeeping matter, but the architects here have to know as well, too, this will come right off your bottom line if it's going on the Manitoba jobs agreement. Because one—government creates a new gatekeeper system, it never gets smaller; it continues to grow. It means more forms, more approvals, more delays, more costs passed on to workers and businesses, municipalities and, ultimately, taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are already struggling with—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I just remind the honourable member that pronouns are important. It's Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Bereza:** My apologies.

Manitobans are already struggling with affordability. Manitoban families are paying more for groceries, more for fuel, more for housing—

**An Honourable Member:** You haven't read the bill.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** —more for utilities. I have read this bill, and there's nothing in it. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** More utilities, more insurance, more borrowing. And what is this government focused on? Creating new layers of regulation around who can use titles, who can register, who can qualify and who can be disciplined, who can be fined and who gets to decide.

That is not the priorities Manitobans are asking for. They're asking for opportunity; they're asking for jobs; they're asking for investment; they're asking for homes to be built faster; they're asking for roads, parks, schools and hospitals to be delivered efficiently and opened on time. Instead, this government gives us more red tape.

Mr.—Honourable Speaker, we support professionalism, we support standards, we support safety, we support qualified people doing important work, but the real question before the House is simple: Is there a genuine problem this bill solves? I don't see it. Where is the evidence of widespread abuse? Where is the crisis? Where are the repeated failures requiring sweeping new legislation? Has the government—*[interjection]*

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

Members of the NDP will have an opportunity, if they so choose, to debate, but for now—*[interjection]*

Order.

For now, they can quit hollering back and forth across the way.

**MLA Bereza:** Has the government demonstrated that Manitobans are being harmed under the current system, or is another example of fearmongering creating the impression of a crisis so government can justify more control?

Because Manitobans have seen this far too many times before with this government. The NDP identifies a problem nobody was talking about. They exaggerate it. They centralize authority. They increase

fees. They expand administration. They call it progress. That's not progress, ladies and gentlemen. Meanwhile, costs go up and outcomes rarely improve.

I also want to raise concerned about barriers to entry. This province should be attracting skilled professionals. We should be welcoming talent. We should be recognizing credentials quickly and fairly. We should be encouraging young Manitobans to stay here and build your careers here.

Instead, what message does this legislation send? That before you can work, before you can grow, before you can contribute, first you must navigate another registration body and another regulatory system, another list of requirements, another set of fees, another approval timeline and, again, part of the Manitoba jobs agreement.

That is exactly the kind of thinking that drives people away from Manitoba. Young professionals can choose Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, other countries. So why would we make Manitoba the hardest place for these people to get started? Why should we build barriers when we should be building bridges?

Our Progressive Conservative team believes in something different. We believe government should clear obstacles, not create them. We believe in high standards without unnecessary bureaucracy. We believe in credentials being recognized quickly. We believe in protecting public while respecting the worker. We believe in empowering industries to grow, not smothering them in paperwork. That is how you build a stronger economy.

Honourable Speaker, I also have concerns about hidden costs, like the Manitoba jobs agreement. Whenever government creates new regulatory systems, Manitobans are told, oh, don't worry, it'll be in regulations. They're told it will pay off for itself. They're told administration will be minimal. They're told there will be no burden.

But Manitobans know exactly how this works. There will be registration fees. There will be annual dues. There will be compliance costs. There will be legal costs, administrative staffing costs, enforcement costs, appeal costs. And those costs never disappear, they're simply shifted: shifted onto the professionals, onto the firms, shifted onto municipalities, shifted onto consumers, shifted onto taxpayers. So when the government says there is no cost, Manitobans know better.

Honourable Speaker, I also want to mention labour costs and government-linked charges. Many Manitobans are frustrated watching costs rise because every project now seems to come with additional levies, additional agreements, requirements and administrative markup. Whether it's another payroll burden, another labour premium, another mandated process or another politically connected structure, the results are the same.

Projects are becoming more expensive. Homes become more expensive. Infrastructure becomes more expensive. Taxpayers pay more. Do not use professional respectability as a cover for administrated-administrative expansion. Honourable Speaker, Manitobans deserve a government focused on results.

Where is the plan to lower hydro bills? Where is the plan to reduce wait times at hospitals? Where is the plan to build roads? Where is the plan to grow the private sector jobs? Where is the plan to keep young people here? *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** Instead, we get another act, another registry, another process and another set of rules. This is not leadership. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** This is displacement activity.

Honourable Speaker, our PC team will continue to stand for affordability, competitiveness and opportunity. We want Manitoba to be the easiest province to invest in, not the hardest, and most welcoming province to build our future in. That means fewer barriers.

So I urge this government to rethink its instinct for overreach. Rethink the endless expansion of red tape. Rethink legislation that burdens workers and taxpayers.

Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** I am happy to put some words on the record—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** —to point out how insulting remarks from members opposite are to people across this province who have been asking for this for years. Honourable Speaker, while we have guests in the gallery and people across Manitoba who have been working with the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham) on this legislation, they clearly have

such a problem with regulation they can't even regulate themselves enough to respect that.

They hate oversight so much, that's why they swept all kinds of abuse under the rug when they were in government. Regulatory bodies—we are digging ourselves out of a hole when it comes to regulatory bodies because they did nothing for seven and a half years to ensure that dozens, hundreds of professions are up to code.

Honourable Speaker, they are gaslighting community. They can't even regulate themselves and they seek the power to push things under the rug. No wonder, because they want to be the ones to push it under the rug themselves. They don't trust regulatory bodies to do the job that they are trained and prepared to do. People who've worked their entire lives to hold the professions up to a great standard, they are mocking them, Honourable Speaker. They're gaslighting community once again.

\* (10:40)

This is exactly who they are as the PC Party, and we are doing the work to rebuild this province. They need to get out of the way.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Given all that the government bench wants to say on this bill, I thought they would use their full speaking time today to highlight this. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Byram:** I am happy to stand here today and speak to Bill 234, and I want to thank the member from Kirkfield Park for bringing forward this registered-Bill 234, The Registered Landscape Architects Act, that proposes to establish a self-governing regulatory framework for landscape architects here in our province of Manitoba.

This bill would grant title protection, meaning only those who are registered could call themselves registered landscape architects. This would designate the Manitoba Association of Landscape Architects as the regulatory body, creating a governing council with public representation and established processes for registration complaints and discipline.

And I can appreciate, as we all can here in our province of Manitoba, the architectural-landscape architects as well as those that work in the field and the work that they do showing their—showcasing their talent and abilities in that line of work.

On the face, Honourable Speaker, this legislation appears to be straightforward, but we can't look at this bill without looking at the broader realities that many families are facing here in our province of Manitoba, where we have many people struggling, struggling to put food on their tables. We're in the middle of an affordability crisis and we continue to see homelessness rising here in our communities right across the province. And these are urgent, urgent matters that we are facing here and visible challenges that Manitobans are witnessing here.

So the question that we have on this side of the House is, why is this the priority? Why, at this time, when affordability and housing insecurity are at the forefront and a crisis situation and on the minds of many of us here across the province, why are we dedicating legislative time to expanding regulatory framework for a group, a small professional group, when there's much—there's a larger scope that we face here across the province?

This bill introduces a layer of regulation, a new layer of regulation. It formalizes a licensing regime defined with entry requirements, administrative structures and enforcement mechanisms. And it's framed as enhancing public protection. It also inevitably adds complexity.

And when we were asking the member from Kirkfield Park, you know, some questions, it just leaves so many unanswered—well, unanswered questions, really—with the complexities that this opens up. And I know my colleagues from La Vérendrye and Portage la Prairie listed some of the concerns that this brings forward. And, again, I'll highlight some of those.

The extra cost that comes along with this in, for example, the process to registration, compliance, discipline: these are all costs that won't disappear and they will fall on the backs of the businesses, the professionals. And, ultimately, again, like we know, this ends on the backs of the consumers, those that are using the professionals. In this case, we know that it could land on the backs of municipalities, other developers and Manitobans who are looking for these services.

And, again, at a time when we should be looking for ways to reduce costs, remove barriers for economic growth in our province, is this—poses the other question—is this going to create further barriers, build more red tape and close the door for business opportunities here in our province?

Like many other jurisdictions working to attract and retain skilled workers, when we introduce new licensing requirements such as we have here today and controlled titles, we have to ensure that we are not unintentionally creating barriers, and this legislation could pose to doing just that. It creates another level of cumbersome and restrictive regulations, and, again, that poses questions about the Manitoba jobs agreement.

There's just so many unanswered questions that lie within the content of this. And, you know, another question is: What evidence was presented that the current system is failing? What specific issues here in the province of Manitoba's labour market or professional landscape that requires this level of regulatory intervention, Honourable Speaker?

These questions are good questions because good policy should be driven by clear and demonstrated need, and without that clarity we are all at risk, or there is a risk that we are simply adding another layer to a complex regulatory environment that many of us see and feel and hear about here in our province of Manitoba. We have businesses and professionals often speaking about the cumulative impact of this—of regulation here, and with new—each requirement, each new process, we are adding another layer of burden to our economic growth and development. And even though each change may seem like a modest change, together they shape and create an environment with red tape and, like I've said, cumbersome legislation.

At a time when economic growth is a priority, we should be asking whether this bill helps move Manitoba forward or whether it adds friction. And I think some of the points we've raised here today with, you know, so many questions unanswered, I think it creates further friction and another layer of added unnecessary legislation. And none of this will diminish the importance of landscape architect as a profession.

Landscape architects contribute to the design of our public spaces, our communities and our infrastructure. Their work adds value and has value and has professional standards that do matter. But, again, the question before us is not about the value of the profession, it is about whether this legislative approach at this time is the right priority for Manitobans.

And I know members on my side of the House ask that question as well. If this was a priority for us here in Manitoba, why was this legislation not brought forward much sooner than this and made a priority for this NDP government? When we have people

worried about our bills, many families—we hear it in every community, this is not an isolated issue—when we're grappling with high grocery costs, fuel costs, homelessness, municipalities are trying to stretch their limited resources—these are issues that demand our attention.

So, again, Honourable Speaker, I ask what specific problems does this bill solve that justifies the urgency here today and how will it create—or how will this create new regulatory structure, make life more affordable for Manitobans? And how does this legislation fit in with a broader plan to address the economic and social challenges that people are facing here in our province of Manitoba?

Honourable Speaker, I think those are some reasonable questions. I think they reflect the concerns that we are hearing from Manitobans here in our province every day. And I just want to say, at a time when Manitobans are looking for relief and solutions to pressing challenges, we must carefully consider where our focus must be at this time in our province here in Manitoba. We want to support economic growth, we want to support good jobs and make life more affordable for our people that are here, living in the province of Manitoba.

\* (10:50)

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo):** I just want to take a few moments to put a couple of words on the record in support of this bill. And I've been hearing a few things coming from members opposite and I—it feels important to me to clarify some of the history of this bill that's here today.

So the landscape architects have been working for 40 years—four-zero—years, to bring this legislation to reality. And, actually, it was a member of their own caucus in the previous government that was actually bringing this bill forward. However, it got stopped because that member then got moved into Cabinet and no one else on their team took up this bill to bring it forward. But in the previous government, they were in full support of this bill. So I find it very interesting, the resistance that is—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Compton:** —now coming from the other side.

So, to me, I would also like to lift up, you know, when the member of Agassiz is saying, why is this—why now? Why is this important now?

Well, it has been important to these folks for 40 years. And it was important to their government and their caucus previously, which now it conveniently is not.

And it has been lifted up that the arguments that they're bringing forth seem to be a little bit confused about the matters at hand, because having a registered agriculture—or, sorry—landscape architect title does not preclude anyone else from applying for some of these positions or contracts. But what it does clarify is the actual education qualifications standards that that person is held to account, and a certain level of understanding of the quality of work that they will be bringing forth.

I am a registered nurse. That title means something. It means a certain basic level of education, as well as qualifications met and ongoing standards that I have to continue to meet to maintain that title. As you can tell, I get pretty passionate about things around regulated titles, because they mean something to me. They mean standards, they mean accountability, they mean responsibility. And that is what the landscape architects are asking.

Members opposite like to keep lifting up Ontario and Alberta as doing so many things. Well, in Ontario and Alberta, they have registered landscape architects. Manitoba, U of M, has one of—if not the—I believe it is the best landscape architect program in the entire country. And you know what's happening? We are losing our young landscape architect folks to other provinces because they have opportunity there, because they have their registered title there, because their title means something.

So I just would like to put those few words on the record. I could probably talk even longer about it. But I really do want to thank the members that have come here from the community—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Compton:** —that represent the landscape architects. I know they are quite passionate, and they're very disappointed in what the members opposite have been saying. And I really do believe it is in the best interest for Manitobans that we move forward and pass this bill today.

So, thank you.

**The Speaker:** There are no—the honourable member for Brandon West.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** First of all, I would like to thank all of the landscape professionals that serve Manitoba and make sure that the

beautification is there for us to all enjoy, and really like to talk a little bit about what happens when proper landscaping takes place.

And it reminds me of Brandon, and, of course, where I'm home, and the number of awards that the City of Brandon has won because of the beautification and the landscaping work and the horticultural designs implemented by professionals that work in the greenhouse and work in the Parks department for the City of Brandon.

And if you've ever entered the city and drove down some of the major roads, you will see that beautification at a lot of the intersections and a lot of the boulevards as you move down the streets and it's particularly 18th Street, and if you drive down 18th Street, come June, generally by then all of the flowers and the pots that are put there in full bloom and they're looking absolutely beautiful and it's no wonder the city has won so many awards because of this.

When you come down 18th Street, you'll notice just along there at intersections that go along any of the major routes, the city has taken the time and the responsibility to—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. If I can get the clock stopped.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** We have some guests in the gallery that are only going to be here for a very short period of time. So we have seated in the public gallery from École Crane, 22 grade 3 and 4 students under the direction of Jennifer Iverach-Brereton. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw).

We welcome you here today.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Balcaen:** I wanted to speak a little bit about that beautification because it brings a point forward that municipalities don't always have the ability to hire people that have titles because of the costs that are incurred by them and the demand for the extra resources, the extra pay, the extra money.

So I'm wondering if that's something that was considered when this bill was brought forward is the impacts that it will have on cities and municipalities down the road when those workers, and often unionized workers, are going to demand higher wages and, you know, more costs to the municipalities, more

costs ultimately to the taxpayers. And that's a question that's fair to pose because there's a number of indications that this could happen.

I really want to talk about—I get passionate when I talk about Brandon as everybody knows because of how beautiful it is, how wonderful it is and the fact that, you know, if you've ever been to the Riverbank Discovery Centre, it's one of the drawing cards for Brandon. It's in the constituency of Spruce Woods, and we look there and we look at the beautification that is done there and the landscaping and the work that has been undertaken by individuals on this—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Balcaen:** —and the work that has been done there, Honourable Speaker. And so when we look at places like the Riverbank Discovery Centre, \$535,000 was invested by this PC government—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Balcaen:** —when they were in power under the sports, arts, cultural and heritage grants. And that has allowed the Sawarsky *[phonetic]* gardens to be developed at the Riverbank Discovery Centre and it's another Manitoba star, another Manitoba drawing card to see the beautification there. *[interjection]*

And I see the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning is calling across and screaming across to me, so I'm wondering if, you know, if this is so important that she wants words—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Balcaen:** —maybe she would have taken the time at the government bench instead of—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Balcaen:** —debating, belittling, taking that time and the energy that could have better—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Balcaen:** Perhaps the Minister of Families would also like to get up and put some words on if she's passionate about this—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Balcaen:** —but, unfortunately, as the Government House Leader, she didn't have the—

\* (11:00)

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen) will have five minutes remaining. *[interjection]*

Order. Order.

## DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 7—National Strategy for Silver Alerts

**The Speaker:** The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is resolution No. 7, National Strategy for Silver Alerts, and we will be resuming debate, and it stands in the name of the honourable member for Spruce Woods, who has eight minutes remaining.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods does not wish to continue the debate, then we will move on. No one wishes to debate?

The honourable member for Spruce Woods.

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** I stand in this House today to speak to this resolution, one that speaks not only to our responsibilities as legislators but to our shared duty to protect those who rely on us in their most vulnerable moments. Because, at its core, this is about people; it's about the quiet fear that can enter any family's life in an instant. Picture someone dear to you: your mother, your grandfather, a neighbour you've known for years, stepping outside and suddenly becoming lost, unable to find their way home. No message, no warning, just an absence that deepens with every passing moment.

That uncertainty, that fear is something too many families have already endured. For them, this issue is not hypothetical, it is heartbreakingly real and it is why we are here today. We know that the safety and well-being of older adults and those living with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or cognitive impairments must be a priority for government. These are some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. They are people who have once cared for others, who built our communities, raised our families and shaped the very fabric of our society. Now they need us.

Across the country, seniors living with cognitive challenges go missing with alarming frequency. When they do, the clock starts ticking immediately. Conditions like dementia do not just affect memory, they impair judgment, erase a sense of direction and heighten vulnerability to danger. Within hours, a simple walk can become a life-threatening situation.

Critical incident reviews, missing person investigations have shown us time and again that they—these are gaps: gaps in care planning, gaps in communication and gaps in system response. And while we cannot prevent every incident, we can—and must—do a better job in how we respond.

Families who have lived through these tragedies have turned their grief into advocacy. They have called for stronger, more coordinated systems to help find their loved ones faster. They have gathered thousands of signatures. They have asked us clearly and urgency—urgently to act. And we are listening. The PC government in 2022 increased the government investments of \$1.3 million to expand client support programs for those living with Alzheimer's disease.

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Our provincial government has already taken meaningful steps. We have invested in the community supports, expanded caregiver assistance and work to improve the quality of life to those living with Alzheimer's and dementia. These efforts matter and they are making a difference. We need more. It's about time this government brings this resolution forward.

That is where the silver alerts come in. A silver alert is a public notification system designed to quickly broadcast information about missing seniors, particularly those with cognitive impairments. Much like an AMBER Alert, it mobilizes the public using highway signs, media broadcasts and mobile notifications to spread critical information in real time. Because when someone is missing, every minute matters.

There are those who express concern that expanding alerts could overwhelm the public or lead to—and while that concern deserves consideration, we must weigh against far more serious reality: the cost of—sorry—the cost of inaction. When a senior goes missing, the risk of injury or death increases dramatically with each passing hour. Exposure, traffic, dehydration, confusion—these are not distant possibilities, they are immediate threats. If not located within 12 hours, the 'likelihood' of serious harm rises sharply.

So the question before us is simple, can we not—can we 'anford' not to act?

Silver alerts are not just about finding someone. They are about giving families hope in their darkness moments. They are about equipping law enforcement with better tools. And they are about empowering communities to act, not as bystanders, but as partners

in keeping one another. They also send a powerful message. They say that our seniors matter, that their safety matters, that their dignity matters, and that when they are at their most vulnerable, we will not look away.

In jurisdictions where silver alert systems have been implemented, they have already proven effective. Lives have been saved. Families have been reunited. Communities have stepped up. This is not untested policy. It's practical, proven and compassionate.

And now, we have an opportunity to take this even further. Earlier this year, Raquel Dancho introduced Bill C-263, the silver alert notification framework act, in Parliament. This 'legislature-lation' proposes a co-ordinated national approach, one that would build on Canada's existing alert system—ready system to ensure timely, targeted alerts when vulnerable seniors go missing.

This is a smart approach. It allows alerts to be geotargeted, reaching the people most likely to help in the areas where a missing person is most likely to be found. It balances urgency with precision, and it ensures consistency across provinces.

Protecting vulnerable seniors should never be a partisan issue. It is a matter of public safety. It is a matter of compassion, and it's simply common sense. I want to take this moment to recognize the work of those who came before us and those who saw this need years ago and took the first steps towards addressing it. Your vision laid the foundation for the progress we are making today—

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

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** It's an immense privilege and honour to be able to rise to speak to this very, very important private member's resolution this morning.

I want to start my comments by centring the family in our debate here today. The Moberg family from North Kildonan, from my neighbourhood, my area, the city, has experienced an incredible loss and has shown an incredible amount of courage, of compassion and resilience in the face of a lot of uncertainty and a lot of personal sadness.

\* (11:10)

And I know the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott) mentioned this in debate as well, but it's inspirational. It's incredibly inspirational to me as

a legislator, but I think to everyone in this Chamber when a family who has experienced that kind of pain and loss is able to transform that into action. And the Moberg family has done an incredible job of being advocates not only for their own family and the specifics around the loss—the missing situation with their father, with Mr. Moberg, but has transformed that into a larger advocacy that is reflected in the private members' resolution that we have here before us.

They've done an incredible job of bringing the community together, of galvanizing the support from so many different, you know, groups and folks in our community, not only obviously law enforcement and working with them, but with the Bear Clan, with community participation. It's been incredible to see, and it's really, again, driven home the fact that they want to find Earl, they want to find their father, their husband, but they also want to make sure that this situation doesn't happen to others, and that's inspiration to all of us.

I also wanted to just really highlight the work and the approach of the member for Kildonan-River East. She has been an incredible advocate for the family, as I said, here in the Chamber by bringing forward this resolution, but it goes so much beyond that, and it really speaks to the values of this government and the values of what I think every legislator should emulate themselves after.

And that is the ability to be willing to sit with family, to open up her heart to their experience, to listen to them in a genuine and fundamental way, but then be able to translate that into action and, you know, bring the Minister of Health to the family, to sit with them, to listen to them in a genuine and deep way, and then bring the family to meet with me and meet with many members and colleagues here in the Legislature.

That's exactly what Manitobans want. They want somebody who is willing to listen, to have that heart, but then also be able to act and bring together all Manitobans in that mantra that we carry as a government of one Manitoba where we work together.

That's been further highlighted by the work that the member for Kildonan-River East has done across party lines, as she's talked about many times. It's not a partisan issue. It's not even—you know, we're not going to kick around other levels of government. When it was appropriate to engage the city councillor, she did that. When it was appropriate to bring in a

Member of Parliament, she did that work, and she was willing to sit with them.

Again, not a partisan issue. I think it's important to focus on the experience of the family and what we can do together. I think it's also important that we send a unified message here today from this Legislature. I had a chance to look through the Hansard and hear from all members in this Chamber around this issue. I hear a lot of support for this private members' resolution, and I think it's important because it's calling on the federal government to step to the plate. I think it's important that we send a message of unity, and I hope we can do that here this morning. I hope we can then support that work that's being carried on in Ottawa by our partners there.

I can say, from my department's perspective, we are carrying that message forward to Ottawa. Here in Manitoba, we've taken some concrete steps around ensuring that silver alerts are something that can be utilized by law enforcement when appropriate. It's important to develop that framework and support law enforcement to be able to use it in the way that's appropriate, but now that message needs to go to Ottawa because ultimately this is a national strategy.

I know other provinces—Quebec, others—have engaged in this issue, but it's important now to take the leadership from here in Manitoba to take that to the national level. And again, that unity that we can show here together I think is important.

I wanted to just quickly acknowledge the member for Lakeside (Mr. King). I thought his words were beautiful as part of the debate here and bringing forward Stewart Campbell's story. You know, I know there's many stories in this Chamber, but I thought it was important to recognize the impact that that situation has had on the community in Lakeside and I appreciate his words. And I think I heard him say, let's get to work, let's show that unity and let's get this passed here today.

Again, I just want to really share with the House and reiterate how important it is to have law enforcement as part of this conversation. One of the first things that I heard from the family directly, from the community, was the communication between law enforcement and the community needs to be robust and needs to be as fulsome as possible. That's a message I'm happy to carry forward as we work with law enforcement to enable this.

Of course, we need to make sure that these tools are used efficiently and in a targeted way. I also think

that it's important to recognize that law enforcement, you know, they want the average citizen, the community, a family in this case, they want folks to be a part of the solution and we know that silver alerts can enable that when used correctly.

And so I think this is the kind of tool that really can push, you know, folks into a productive, constructive role in helping to find missing persons and support those who are living in our communities with Alzheimer's and with dementia. Law enforcement wants to be a part of this process and as the provincial government, we're eager to help them to do that. That's why it's so important to, as a baseline, to have that investment in law enforcement, to keep working on public safety so that law enforcement has the ability to react and be proactive in cases like this. And it's important to support law enforcement in their specific role.

But it's also important to recognize others in the community who do this important work, around checking on folks, on supporting them through their mental health journeys. And as the member for—or the Minister of Health said last in debate here—said, you know, supporting older adults through the Seniors' Advocate office and now with specific supports around Alzheimer's and dementia supports. These are the kinds of ways that as a government we can take action and we can support families and ensure that when somebody goes missing that we're able to go looking and find folks.

But I do think that it's important to recognize that the silver alert system itself is an important tool, and we have what I think is unanimous support now for this action. And so I just encourage all members, let's get it passed. Let's move on to the next step and that would be continuing that unified voice to Ottawa. I'm going to take—continue to take action through the Province of Manitoba and our Department of Justice, but I want to ensure that we have a unified voice of debate here, that all legislators see the value in the silver alert program.

So, honourable Speaker, once again, I just want to really thank the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott). She is an incredible example of just the exact kind of MLA that I think Manitobans deserve, somebody who is willing to listen to community, listen to families, take in their grief, their pain, their concerns and then action them in a way that is effective. She's done that with our department, with Health, with all members of this Chamber.

I want everybody to support this and support the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott).

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no—the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I rise today to speak the—to this resolution, resolution No. 7 that's before us, regarding a national strategy for silver alerts. At its core, this discussion is about something very simple, but obviously very, very serious.

\* (11:20)

What happens when a vulnerable person goes missing and whether we're doing enough? We need to be doing enough collectively to respond in these critical first hours; those are obviously of the utmost importance. So imagine for a moment that a loved one—a parent, perhaps, or a grandparent, a neighbour, or a loved one—they leave home one day and they don't find their way back. There is no explanation, no clear direction to follow, just uncertainty. Families are left waiting, hoping and fearing the worst as the time passes. For many Manitobans and Canadians, this is not a hypothetical situation. It's been a reality in their world.

Conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia do not simply affect memory. They can also affect judgment or awareness, a person's ability to navigate, even if they're in a familiar surroundings. When someone in that condition goes missing, they're often exposed to serious risks, well whether it's weather or traffic or injury or probably disorientation as well. As we know from both research and lived experiences, time becomes the most critical factor.

That is where silver alerts come into this conversation. A silver alert is designed to function in a similar way as the AMBER Alert system that Canadians are, hopefully, already familiar with. It allows law enforcement to quickly share information about a missing vulnerable person. It's about descriptions or last known location or any other relevant details with the public that will hopefully help return that person safely home.

In Manitoba, we have already taken steps in this direction. Nearly a decade ago, right here in this building, this Legislature passed amendments to The Missing Persons Act to establish a silver alert framework. That work, led at the time for the member for Brandon East, Len Isleifson, demonstrated

foresight and a clear recognition that this issue required attention.

That system, however, primarily really—relies on media and other traditional communication networks. It does not currently make use of the same kind of cellular alerting that AMBER Alerts do: alerts that reach people directly in real time to their phones or devices.

And that's where the conversation is now evolving. So, across Canada, there is growing recognition that, while provincial systems are an important foundation, there may be value in looking at a more co-ordinated or national approach, one that builds on existing infrastructure and ensures a more consistent response, regardless of where somebody goes missing.

We know that Canada's population is aging. We—it's known as the silver tsunami or the baby boomers are hitting that age. We also know that the number of people living with dementia, sadly, is expected to increase significantly in these coming years. Estimates suggest that hundreds of thousands of Canadians are currently living with dementia and that significant proportion may wander at some point. There are not—these are not abstract numbers. They represent real people, real families and real communities.

One case that has been brought forward in this discussion is that of Earl Moberg, right here in Winnipeg. Mr. Moberg was—is an 81-year-old man living with dementia, and he went missing in December of 2023. His last known location was in North Kildonan and the River East area. His family, like so many others in this situation, relied on community support, police efforts and public awareness to try and locate him. In the days that followed, there were searches, there were calls for information, there were efforts to share his story as widely as possible. But, as his family has said, information did not always reach people quickly enough—or broadly enough, for that matter—to make the difference that they had hoped for.

Out of that experience, the Moberg family has become part of a broader effort to advocate for improvements to how the—how we alert the public and what happens when a vulnerable person goes missing. Their perspective is grounded not in theory, but in lived experience, an experience that absolutely no family wants to go through. They have pointed to a gap between the tools that we currently use and what might be possible with modern technology. In

particular, the widespread use of mobile phones presents an opportunity to deliver timely, targeted information to people who are in the immediate area where someone has last been seen.

At the same time, it's also important to acknowledge that there are considerations to balance. Some have raised concerns about alert fatigue, people just stop looking at their phones if they get one every few minutes, and the idea that if people receive too many alerts they'll just be desensitized and less likely to respond. So that's a legitimate concern and one that should be part of any thoughtful discussion about expanding the alert system as we're talking about it here today. However, it's worth noting that proposals for a national silver alert framework often include safeguards such as geotargeting to ensure that alerts are sent only to those relevant areas and a clear criteria for when an alert should be issued.

So, in other words, this does not have to be an all-or-nothing approach. There is a room for balance, of course, for careful design and for learning from existing systems. We're not starting from scratch, so that's a bonus. Canada already has a national public learning system in place, so the question being raised is whether that existing infrastructure can be adapted or expanded to better support situations involving missing seniors or vulnerable adults.

This is also where the federal leadership comes in. Earlier this year, a private member's bill, as we know, Bill C-263, was introduced in the House of Commons to establish a national silver alert framework. The intent of that legislation is to provide a structure through which alerts could be issued in a timely, co-ordinated, and geographically appropriate way.

Well, I also want to recognize the families who advocated—as my time is running short—brought renewed attention to the issue, often through very difficult personal experiences. Their efforts have helped ensure that this conversation continues, and not just here in Manitoba, but across the entire country.

This resolution does not claim to have all the answers. What it does is signal that this issue is an issue worth addressing, that co-ordination matters and there may be an opportunity to strengthen how we respond when vulnerable individuals go missing. For those reasons, I'm prepared to support this resolution and to encourage continued dialogue between provincial—

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

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Imagine a loved one—your parent, your grandparent, a neighbour—leaving home and not finding their way back. No explanation, no warning, just silence, uncertainty and fear.

This is the reality families face when a vulnerable person goes missing. That vulnerability may come from Alzheimer's or dementia, but also from developmental disabilities, brain injuries, mental health challenges or other conditions that affect a person's ability to remain safe. And when that happens, time becomes the most critical factor.

That is why silver alerts matter. A silver alert is a public notification system designed to quickly locate missing vulnerable adults. Much like the AMBER Alert system, it allows police to rapidly share key information, descriptions, last known locations, direction of travel, so the public can help in those crucial early hours. Because when more people know, more people can help.

Here in Manitoba, we have already seen leadership on this issue. In 2017, former Brandon East MLA Len Isleifson recognized the need for better tools to find missing vulnerable individuals. He introduced amendments to The Missing Persons Act to establish a silver alert framework, making Manitoba the first province in Canada to take this important step. And, honourable Deputy Speaker, as he said at the time, we have a duty and responsibility to ensure we have the tools to bring people home as soon as possible.

That leadership matters and it laid the foundation for the conversation we are continuing today. But protecting vulnerable people does not begin at the moment they go missing. It begins long before that. It begins with investment in supports, services and community care. And this is where the previous Progressive Conservative government demonstrated that important leadership. The PCs recognized that Manitoba's population ages, and as more families face the realities of cognitive decline, disability and other vulnerabilities, government has a responsibility to ensure people are supported, not just medically, but within their communities.

That is why the PCs made targeted investments to strengthen front-line services. The PCs provided funding to expand supports through organizations like

the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba, helping individuals and families navigate diagnosis, access resources and remain connected to their communities. Programs like First Link ensured families were not left to navigate these challenges alone, but were connected early to education, planning tools and support networks.

There were also broader investments in home care, community programming and caregiver supports, recognizing that caregivers are often the first line of safety. Because when caregivers are supported, risks are reduced. When communities are informed, people are safer and when systems are co-ordinated, fewer individuals fall through the cracks.

These investments under the PCs were practical and important steps that improve safety, dignity and quality of life for Manitobans. But even with the best supports in place, incidents will still occur. People will still go missing. A door is left unlocked. Someone becomes disoriented. A routine walk turns into a dangerous situation. And, in those moments, prevention gives way to urgency.

That is where a strengthened silver alert system becomes essential. While Manitoba and Alberta have taken steps to implement silver alert protocols, these systems do not fully utilize the mobile, geotargeted alerts that Canadians are familiar with through the AMBER Alert system. Instead, information is often limited to media releases, which are important, but not always fast or widespread enough during those critical early hours, and we have seen the consequences of that gap.

In December 2023, 81-year-old Earl Moberg went missing here in Winnipeg. In the hours after he disappeared, his family did everything they could. They retraced steps, contacted authorities and leaned on their community. Volunteers came out. Police followed up on tips. But like so many cases, the challenge was not a lack of effort, it was a lack of immediate, widespread awareness. There were people in that very area going about their evening who may have seen something, who may have been able to help, if only they had known. And that is the gap we are talking about today—not effort, not compassion, but communication.

Because, honourable Deputy Speaker, in situations like this, even a delay of a few hours can make all the difference. Mr. Moberg's family has since become strong advocates for change, calling for a system that would send immediate alerts to people's phones in the area where someone was last seen,

and they are not alone. Across Canada, families, advocates and communities are calling for a national approach. Today, more than 550,000 Canadians live with dementia, and many more live with other vulnerabilities. A significant number may go missing at some point, and if they are not found within the first 12 hours, the risk of serious harm increases dramatically. We cannot ignore that reality.

This legislation would use Canada's existing public alerting system to send geotargeted notifications to mobile devices, ensuring that people in the right place at the right time receive the information they need to help. This is not about reinventing the wheel. The infrastructure already exists, the technology is already in place. What is needed now is co-ordination and the will to act. Protecting vulnerable people, whether they are seniors, individuals with disabilities or those facing other challenges is a shared responsibility.

A national silver alert system would strengthen what provinces like Manitoba have already built. It would ensure consistency across jurisdictions, improve co-ordination and give families peace of mind. Honourable Deputy Speaker, it would also send a clear message that we value safety, that we value dignity and that we are prepared to act when it matters most.

So, today, I want to again recognize the leadership of my friend, Len Isleifson, whose work nearly a decade ago helped put Manitoba at the forefront of this issue, and I want to recognize the advocacy of families like the Mobergs, who continue to push for change so that others may have a better outcome.

That is why I urge all members of this Assembly to speak in support of a national silver alert strategy and to encourage federal action through Bill C-263.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** I appreciate the opportunity to rise in debate on this important issue, the matter—the resolution put forward by the member opposite calling for a national strategy for silver alerts.

And I've, you know, appreciated the opportunity to listen to the debate, and I think it's clear that members across the aisle, across this Chamber support this concept. And I was thinking of a former colleague of mine, the former Brandon East MLA, Len Isleifson, who, in 2017, introduced bill 214, The Missing Persons Amendment Act, which passed third reading and became law in Manitoba, making Manitoba the first province in Canada to implement

such a system. And he said at the time that we have a duty and a responsibility to make sure we have things in place for our citizens so that when, unfortunately, they do go missing, we have the tools to bring them back as soon as possible.

And that's important, and, of course, it's important to take into account where Manitoba stands and where other provinces stand across Canada when it comes to silver alerts. And Alberta and Manitoba have both established silver alert protocols through amendments to their Missing Persons Acts, though these do not typically send mobile device notifications like AMBER Alerts.

\* (11:40)

And so, due to a rise in dementia cases, petitions are ongoing to establish a federal system to send immediate geotargeted alerts to cell phones when a vulnerable—a senior disappears. Similar to an AMBER Alert system, a silver alert allows police to quickly disseminate information such as a description and the last known location to media and the public.

And this is important because, as colleagues have already said in this morning's debate, that time is of the essence when someone does go missing, especially someone living with dementia or Alzheimer's. And across Canada, over 550,000 people live with dementia, and about 60 per cent of people with Alzheimer's will wander at least once.

So, again, this is an important issue, and I can't imagine what families must go through, what they must feel on arriving at home or to the place of their loved one living with Alzheimer's and realizing that they're not there and, frankly, the fear that must be theirs when they realize that—and just the importance of law enforcement at that time having the tools such as the silver alert at their disposal to be able to act quickly and locate that missing person.

And there have been cases across Manitoba. We've talked about the family of Earl Moberg, who was 81 years old, and in December 2023, he was identified as missing. Britt's father, Earl Moberg, who suffers from dementia, was known for wandering. His last known location was on the border of Winnipeg's North Kildonan and River East neighbourhoods, and the family has been advocating since then for silver alerts, a notification system sent to people's phones in the nearby area after a senior or any vulnerable person goes missing.

It's something the Mobergs have been discussing since Earl went missing and Britt, his daughter,

told media that, I think it's really just coming out of love for my dad and compassion for other people and really just a fear that this can happen again to somebody else. The community definitely gives me a lot of strength, of support that we've had from the public; all the people who have come out to searches and people who have signed the petition, that just continues to give us strength and is really helpful.

And so I've talked about—and has been talked about in this Chamber about what Manitoba has done previously through the efforts of Len Isleifson, a former MLA here, but there is work ongoing at the federal level as well through Manitoba MP actually, Raquel Dancho, who brought forward a bill—a private member's bill, C-263, in Parliament on March 10, 2026 to establish a national silver alert framework in Canada. The bill would help ensure authorities can quickly alert the public when a vulnerable senior goes missing, allowing communities to act as extra eyes and ears during the critical early hours. Using Canada's existing national public alerting system, silver alerts could be geotargeted to nearby areas where a missing senior is most likely to be found, helping to deliver rapid awareness while avoiding unnecessary alert fatigue.

And protecting vulnerable seniors should not be partisan. It's not a partisan matter, and so I think that's why you find widespread support for this initiative across the Chamber. We believe on this side of the House that establishing a national silver alert framework is a matter of public safety, compassion and common sense. And, as I said, there have been a number of cases in Manitoba, and in southeastern Manitoba I can think of a few cases actually in the constituency of the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth).

And I've got two media articles: one's a good story, and, unfortunately, one is a yet-as-yet unresolved matter of a missing woman. But I'd like to read them into the record simply because there were—there's a very valuable, a very important constituency—organization within my constituency that was involved in the rescue of an elderly couple, and the CBC article says that—the headline says, elderly couple safe after a miraculous rescue from Manitoba backcountry, Hutterian dive rescue team takes to the air to help find missing couple. And this was posted June 26, 2021. And I know there were many in our area praying for this couple when that news came out that they were missing. Of course a fright, you know, frightful experience and something that no one wants

to hear, and I can't imagine again what the family must have gone through.

But this elderly Morris, Manitoba couple spent the night in dense bush after their car got stuck on a washed-out section of back road and one of the people who helped track them down after seeing an RCMP missing persons bulletin about their disappearance describes finding them as nothing short of miraculous.

Evelyn Wyatt [*phonetic*], 83, and her husband Brian, 88, set off on a drive Thursday afternoon with no particular destination in mind. She says that we were on this sort of trail in the bush and that's where it ends up. The car fell into a washout on the road and wouldn't budge.

Evelyn said the couple got out and walked in search of help. The terrain grew rougher, to the point of walking—to the point that walking turned to crawling in the bush and Brian got far ahead of her. She said she turned back. I wasn't having any good luck at all, Evelyn said, everything is sore by this time and you're trying to walk where you can't walk. I ended up spending the night in the car and he was out in the bush. I'm feeling like what is going to happen, is anybody going to find us here, what will we do? It was a bit scary, she said. Then she looked up.

And so what's neat about this story, as well, is where this constituency organization that I have the distinct honour of representing comes in and the Hutterian aquatic—the Hutterian emergency aquatic rescue team, HEART, I think I got that acronym right—are located out of Oak Bluff Hutterite Colony near Morris. And these are wonderful folks who help search for drowning victims and all the rest.

Absolutely, yes, great people at Oak Bluff Colony, and I enjoy visiting with them every year. And—but—so they saw a Facebook post about the missing couple. And Manuel Maendel, a volunteer with the Oak Bluff Hutterite Colony based—Hutterian Emergency Aquatic Response Team, said he wondered if there was a way he could help.

And so he enlisted his brother Jack and the use of a small plane that they own to get up in the air and see if they could spot anything. And it was after about an hour and a half of flying over Morris and many different parts of the surrounding area, they spotted a vehicle jammed into the ditch and Manuel Maendel says that he said, guys, this could be it.

And after taking GPS readings and photos, they landed, retrieved their emergency response van

and rushed back to the scene, while calling 911 for help along the way. He says the closer we came the more dense the brush got. We just pushed through. And I'm running out of time, but Evelyn says they were very happy.

They said they praised the Lord that they actually found us alive and they said that when these rescuers found him, they told him don't thank us, thank God and she said I'll think about that all the time—

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

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I'm honoured to stand up and speak on this resolution. It's very important for us to have these discussions in our province and to take care of those that we love and need extra care.

The people in our families and our communities who have spent many years contributing to raising children, owning businesses, working at their jobs and just participating and just pouring into our lives as community members, it's important for us now, as they age, for us to take care of them and to do what we can to make sure that we're doing everything to keep them safe.

Our PC government is committed to improving the quality of life for Manitobans, seniors and investing in expert care for seniors living with dementia and those with Alzheimer's. It is an important thing to our caucus and to our group of legislators on the side of the House.

\* (11:50)

We know that safety and well-being for older adults and those living with Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other cognitive impairments must be a priority for government and for us all. These are some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. They are people who once cared for others, who built our communities, raised our families and shaped the very fabric of our society. And now, as they age, it's our turn to take care of them. And now at this age, they need us, as we will need the—our younger generation as we all age.

Across the country, seniors living with cognitive challenges go missing with alarming frequency. When they do, the clock starts ticking immediately. Conditions like dementia do not just affect memory, they impair judgment, erase a sense of direction and heighten vulnerability to danger. Within hours, a simple walk can become a life-threatening situation,

as we heard my colleague from Borderland just speak about.

None of us want any of our loved ones to ever be in a situation like that. It's critical incidence reviews and missing person investigations have shown us time and time again that there are gaps, gaps in care planning, gaps in communication and gaps in system responses. And, while we cannot prevent every incidence, we can and must do better in how we respond.

Families who live through these tragedies have turned their grief into advocacy. They have called for stronger, more co-ordinated systems to help find their loved ones faster. They have gathered thousands of signatures and they have asked us, clearly, as legislators, clearly and urgently, to act.

And we are listening. The PC government, in 2022, increased government investment of \$1.3 million to expand client support programs, in 2022, for those living with Alzheimer's disease. These are big steps. These are things that we have done in the past and we need to make sure we show the generations to come that this is how we start making change and start taking care of those that we love that are aging. Our provincial government has already taken meaningful steps, and I expect the current government to continue those steps. We invested in community supports, expanded caregiver assistance and we work to improve the quality of life for those living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

These efforts matter and they make a difference. But we know more is needed. It's time that the current government brings us—it's about time this current government has brought this resolution forward. We continued to—we started it in 2022. It's now 2026. It's been a while; it should have been done a long time ago.

That is where silver alerts come in. A silver alert is a public notification system designed to quickly broadcast information about missing seniors—excuse me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

#### Introduction of Guests

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'll just interrupt debate for one second while we recognize some guests in the gallery. We have seated in the public gallery from École Crane, 22 grade 3 and 4 students from—under the direction of Jennifer Iverach-Brereton. The group

is located in the constituency of the honourable minister—honourable member of Fort Garry.

Thank you for being here.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Hiebert:** I want to just continue to speak about silver alerts and how important they are, and it's so great to have young people in the Chamber to hear about this today because they're the ones who will be taking care of us one day, and I hope that you listen really closely to the things that are being said here today. So it's great to have you here.

As all of us age and we become elderly grandparents, we're going to need a younger generation to help take care of us and this is why we need to set things up so that it is easy for them and we continue to take care of those right now as well that need these supports.

A silver alert is a public notification system designed to quickly broadcast information about missing seniors, particularly those with cognitive impairments. Much like an AMBER Alert, it mobilizes the public, uses highway signs, media broadcasts and mobile devices' notifications that come across our phones to spread critical information in real time. Because when someone is missing, every minute matters.

There are those who express concern that expanding alerts could overwhelm the public or lead to desensitization. This is something that we need to make sure that everyone understands how important it is when these alerts come across their phone. There is somebody that will see that person that is missing or lost, and that one notification that came across their phone could be the matter—the difference between life or death for someone that is lost or doesn't know where they are.

And while these concerns deserve consideration, we must weigh it against a far more serious reality: the cost of inaction. When a senior citizen goes missing, it's very, very urgent that we act quickly. Every moment could mean life or death, especially with the weather in Manitoba, the freezing temperatures or it could be a heat wave going on. There's so many outside factors that can really, really affect a senior citizen that's lost. They could get exposed to traffic. They can wander into a dangerous area of the community where they could be robbed or mugged.

These are all situations that we don't want to have happen to anyone. And as I would say, the kids

that are in the gallery today: that's your grandma and—or grandpa or great-grandma that could be in that situation. So it's important for us to do all we can to make sure we take care of those that have taken care of us for so many years.

Earlier this year—I just want to bring attention to Raquel Dancho. She introduced Bill C-263, The Silver Alert National Framework Act in Parliament. This legislation proposes a co-ordinated national approach, one that would build on Canada's existing alert-ready system to ensure timely and targeted alerts when vulnerable citizens go missing. This is something that should have been done a long time ago, and I just want to say thank you to our Member of Parliament here in Manitoba, Raquel Dancho, for bringing this forward. It's such good legislation.

It's a smart approach. It's something that we should be doing across the country to make sure we take care of those that we love. And I hope that everybody will support that—her bill coming forward when—as she brings it forward. We need to reach people that need the help. We need to do all we can to support those that we love.

And, with that, I just want to say thank you again to my colleagues in this room for making sure that we put our loved ones before everything else and make

sure that we have proper legislation and we support Raquel's bill.

Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** It gives me a lot of pleasure to speak on this very, very important bill today, and we often speak in this Chamber about policy, legislation and systems, but today I want to begin with a simple question.

What if—what would you do if someone you love disappeared? Not hours later, not a day has passed, but right now. You would call family, you would call neighbours, you would call the police and then you would wait, hoping that someone somewhere has seen something.

For too many Manitoban families, that moment is not hypothetical, it's real, and it's made even more urgent when the person who is missing is vulnerable, someone who may be confused, someone who may be disorientated or unable to recognize danger.

That's why we're here—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., this House stands recessed—or is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. today.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

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