



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Honourable Speaker, I'm tabling the revised Estimates sequence for April 22 and 23 only.

The Speaker: No further tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Melvin "Mel" Meyers

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): Honourable Speaker, I am honoured to rise in this House today to pay tribute to an outstanding Manitoban whose career was defined by public service, principle and an unwavering belief that strong institutions matter because people matter. I'm speaking, of course, of Melvin "Mel" Myers.

Born and raised in Winnipeg's North End, Mel Myers graduated from Manitoba Law School in 1961 and began public service as a Crown attorney with Manitoba Justice. From there, he built a distinguished practice in labour law with a firm that became Myers Weinberg, later Myers LLP. In 1972, he was appointed Queen's Counsel, reflecting the respect he earned across the profession for both his sharp advocacy and his integrity.

Manitobans also know Mel as a pioneer in human rights. He served as the first chair of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission from 1974 until 1978, at a time when the work of building fair processes and public trust was still new and still urgently needed. Over decades, he appeared before labour boards, arbitrators and courts and contributed to major public inquiries, always with a focus on fairness, due process and equal treatment under the law.

The commitment to democratic fairness also showed in his public-interest work connected to Manitoba's election law issues. Mel appeared before the Monnin inquiry into violations of Manitoba's election laws,

which examined wrongdoing and helped reinforce the importance of clear rules, ethical conduct and public confidence in our democratic processes.

Mel also invested deeply in people and in the next generation of professionals. He taught labour relations and administrative law at the University of Manitoba, contributed to legal education through bar admissions instruction and helped strengthen the profession through leadership in the Canadian Bar Association's labour relations subsection. Nationally, he co-founded and served as president of the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers, helping to shape a community committed to principled advocacy and accessible justice.

Even after retiring from active practice, Mel continued to serve the public as chair of the automobile inquiry compensation appeal commission, helping Manitobans navigate a system that touches families at vulnerable moments. He also gave his time to community institutions, including service as president of the YMHA community centre and as a member of the Board of Regents at the University of Winnipeg. And his influence continues through the annual Mel Myers labour law conference, which brings people together to learn, to solve problems and to support causes rooted in economic and social justice.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mel was a devoted husband to Sharon and a loving father to Noel, Paul and Sarah, and Zaida [*grandfather*] to Emily and Lily. Those who knew him also remember his wide-ranging curiosity and interests—from the arts and theatre to history, jazz and sports—and the way he brought that same energy and warmth to conversations and community life.

As Minister of Innovation and New Technology, I am especially mindful that the values Mel championed are the same values Manitobans need as government changes and adapts to new realities.

Whether we're improving digital service delivery, strengthening cybersecurity or shaping how new tools like artificial intelligence are used, the goal is not technology for its own sake; the goal is systems that people can trust—systems that are transparent, accountable and grounded in rights. Our guiding principle should always be: What would Mel say?

Honourable Speaker, Mel Myers strengthened Manitoba through the rule of law, respect for working

people and a lifelong commitment to human dignity. On behalf of the government of Manitoba, I offer 'sindere'—sincere condolences to his family, his friends and his colleagues. And I invite all members of this Chamber to join me in recognizing his lasting contributions and in committing ourselves to the same standard of fairness and public trust that he exemplified.

And I ask that members join me in a moment of silence for Mel.

The Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence once other members have spoken? [*Agreed*]

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I rise today to recognize the life and passing of Mel Myers, a member of Manitoba's legal and community life, who passed away on March 24, 2026.

Mel Myers had a long career in law, beginning as a Crown attorney after graduating from the University of Manitoba faculty of law. He later entered private practice, where he became a partner in a firm that continues to carry his name today.

Over the years, he appeared before many courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada, and contributed to the development of labour and human rights law in our province and country. He also served as the first chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, and he remained active in legal education and mentorship throughout his career.

Outside of his present—of his professional life, Mel was involved in a number of community organizations and was committed to others through his work and volunteer efforts. He will be remembered as a professional, a mentor and a family man.

On behalf of this House, I extend condolences to his wife Sharon, his children, grandchildren and all of those that knew him.

Thank you, honorary Speaker.

The Speaker: We could all rise for a moment of silence, please.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

St. Norbert Collegiate's Seussical Theatre Production

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): Honourable Speaker,

I rise today, yes I rise with delight, / To celebrate something done wonderfully right. / At Collège

St. Norbert Collegiate—oh hear me proclaim— / The students, staff, and volunteers earned Seusstacular fame.

I attended last week, took my seat in a row, / And from curtain to curtain—oh, how did it go?

This Seussical tale, oh it twists and it turns, / With characters loved by young hearts that still yearn. / There's Horton, the elephant, faithful and true, / Who hears tiny Whos when no one else do. / "A person's a person, no matter how small," / A message still mighty, a lesson for all.

But, Honourable Speaker, let's talk about hard work and grit. / Because none of this magic just happened a bit. / Since September, they planned. In November, auditions. / From January on, full rehearsal conditions. / Nearly 90 students, week after week, / Learning lines, steps and songs they must speak.

* (13:40)

The students themselves said the moment they knew / Was dress rehearsal night, when it all finally flew. / When cues clicked just right, when the nerves turned to cheers, / When months of hard work suddenly appears.

That's why shows like this matter—yes, matter they do. / They build confidence, courage and leadership too. / On stage or backstage, every role has a say, / Like one fish, two fish—all helping the play. / Red fish, blue fish—each one unique, / Together they shine; together they peak.

So to cast, crew, band and all who ran the show, / You gave your community joy—oh, what a glow. / You reminded us clearly, so none can ignore, / That arts in our schools matter now and much more. / Oh, the places these students are surely to go. / If they just keep believing, keep dreaming, keep Seussically so.

I ask my colleagues—yes, all near and far, / To join me in cheering these theatrical stars, / and congratulating Collège St. Norbert Collegiate, / On a production that was nothing short of brilliant.

And, Honourable Speaker, I don't think I need leave to have my guests' names entered in Hansard, I believe.

Michelle Archibald, Emma Diduke, Andrew Gatz, Sam Lapointe, Annika Penner, Violet Russell, Alice Saurette, Audrey Schlamb, Debie Tolawak.

Manitoba Korean Canadian Community Resource Network

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work of the Manitoba Korean Canadian Community Resource Network, also known as MKCCRN.

MKCCRN was established to provide essential support for Korean Canadians, helping newcomers and long-time residents get connected to necessary services. Built on a vision of inclusion and connection, MKCCRN addresses the very real challenges many new Canadians and Manitobans face, whether navigating health care, overcoming language barriers, finding a sense of belonging in a new community and making Manitoba home.

The roots of Manitoba Korean Canadian community stretch back to the 1960s, when families began settling in Manitoba, in search of opportunity. Over time, a vibrant and close-knit community grew. Yet many, particular seniors and newcomers, continued to face isolation; that is where the creation of MKCCRN was formed.

Proudly launched in 2023, its e-community, creating a central hub for support and connection.

I have had the pleasure of attending many Korean events and most recently, their Korean Lunar New Year celebration, alongside many members from our PC caucus. It was a wonderful event, featuring delicious food, memorable performances, delicious food—I'll say it again—and a vibrant showcase of Korean culture. Heads up if you plan to attend: bring your wallet with you because they have many amazing Korean vendors selling uniquely Korean items, my favourite being the Korean face cream.

Honourable Speaker, I provided a list of names of those in attendance to be included in Hansard and I ask that members rise and recognize the amazing contributions of Korean Canadians and Manitobans. And I also want to take a second to acknowledge that they are—many of them are proudly wearing their traditional garments called hanbok.

Be proud, be who you are, proud Manitobans together.

Thank you.

Andrea, Rev. Bo-sung, Eunice, Eunji, Hana, Jas, Jeremy, Jennifer, Joshua, Julie, Mihye, Nancy, Rosa, Sean, Rev. Seung Hun, Stella, Yena, Youngho, Rev. Bo-sung, Youngkyoung.

Recognizing Manitoba's Landscape Architects

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Honourable Speaker, there is real disappointment in the fact that this Chamber could not come together today to advance The Registered Landscape Architects Act.

The Manitoba Association of Landscape Architects, MALA, has advocated for 40 years for proper recognition and regulation of this profession. That is not a short-term ask, it is a long-standing and reasonable request grounded in public interest.

Members opposite tried to reduce this bill to fear, regulation and fees, but that framing misses the point. This bill is about public confidence, professional standards and making sure the people shaping Manitoba's communities are properly recognized and accountable.

The Progressive Conservatives had seven and a half years in government to bring this forward themselves, but they chose not to. That is the missed opportunity that we are left with today, Honourable Speaker.

I would ask that my guests' names be entered into Hansard and that my colleagues join me in recognizing Manitoba's landscape architects.

Chantel Alary, David Bodnarchuk, Bhavana Bonde, Maggie Bonetta, Kaili Brown, Heather Cram, Prachi Dey, Darcy Granove, Derek Murray, Bob Somers, Desiree Theriault, Ryan Wakshinski, Jackie Wilkie.

Gavin Wood

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I rise today to recognize an individual whose life's work reflects a deep and enduring commitment to law, education and public service: Mr. Gavin Wood.

Called to the bar in 1978, Mr. Wood has built a distinguished legal career spanning decades, while also shaping young minds as an educator. For nearly 20 years, he taught at both the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, sharing his passion for politics and the law with generations of students.

His interest in public life began early, serving as a page in this very Chamber in 1969 while a student at Daniel McIntyre. That experience helped shape a lifelong appreciation for the democratic process. The very first time Mr. Wood ever made the news was when serving as a page; he accidentally spilled water on MLA Joe Borowski. I don't think that would be considered newsworthy in 2026.

Honourable Speaker, I had the privilege of being in one of Mr. Wood's classes at the University of Winnipeg, and I can attest to his enthusiasm, expertise and the energy he brought to the classroom. It feels like a full-circle moment to stand in this House today having learned from him in the classroom and now having the opportunity to recognize his commitment to service here in the Legislature.

Here he is today with us almost 50 years later, still contributing, still practising law and, in his words: still trying to get it right.

At the heart of his life was his late wife, Joy, whom he describes as the love of his life. In her memory, her estate is making a meaningful contribution to Jocelyn House Hospice. Through this, Mr. Wood has also become a voice for the importance of hospice care, reminding us of the compassion, dignity and support needed at the end of life and the incredible work of those who provide it.

Mr. Wood's life is a testament to quiet leadership, to service and to the impact one person can have across generations.

I ask all members of this House to join me in recognizing and thanking Mr. Gavin Wood.

Investments in Health Care and Education

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Well, I brought a list today, Honourable Speaker. A good list. A strong list. A list that I stand by. But the problem with lists is that they sound impressive sometimes in here, and then you get home, you're standing in your kitchen and you think: Wait, what was on that list again? Was it an ER, a new fire hall? So instead of the list, let me tell you what it actually looks like where I serve.

It looks like a parent pacing the kitchen at 8 p.m. with a sick kid, and now there's an extended-hours clinic at Victoria.

Looks like sitting in your car outside work trying to figure out where to go and pulling up Medinav.ca and actually getting an answer.

Looks like hearing that we're building a new ER at the Vic and thinking: Okay, maybe next time I don't have to drive across the city because the PCs closed this one down.

Looks like a family in Bridgwater having a real conversation about keeping mom or dad close because a personal-care home is coming.

Looks like kids at Bison Run running straight for a playground at recess instead of staring at an empty field.

It looks like parents at pickup talking about where their kids will go next and knowing two new schools are on the way.

And this week, it looks like women in our community finally having a place to go, with a menopause clinic opening at 1330 Kenaston, which matters because the last time Manitoba had specialized menopause care, the PCs shut it down.

So when we say we're bringing it back, we mean we're fixing something that never should have been taken away. And while we've been doing this work, the PCs seem to have come up with, I don't know, roughly one idea that they don't know how to pay for and don't even know how much would cost in the long run.

But in Waverley, in Manitoba, when people elected an NDP government in 2023, they elected a serious team to get serious work done, and that's exactly what we're going to continue to do. We'll keep listening to Manitobans and delivering on what they're actually asking for.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

* (13:50)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Defence and Aerospace Sector Call for Provincial Investment

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Manitoba's economy is dying. It is dead last in Canada under this NDP government. The Premier had a chance to fix it, but he has decided not to act. The federal government is spending billions of dollars in Canada's aerospace and defence sector, but the Province of Manitoba is nowhere to be seen.

Mayor Scott Gillingham wants Winnipeg to be an aerospace hub—what the mayor calls Winnipeg's sky economy—to play a central role in the economic future of the city and province. But the Premier has said nothing and done nothing. It's nowhere to be seen in his NDP budget. The Premier yet is waiting for more handouts from the federal government. He's waiting for others to do the work and step up.

The Premier knows that the Province must step up and come to the table to join federal governments and municipalities for projects like this.

Why won't the Premier invest in an industry that has federal and municipal support to grow Manitoba's economy?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, so far we have seen the opening of a new facility at Boeing in Winnipeg. We've invested tremendously in Magellan as well as 17 Wing, and we were able to get the federal government to commit that if they switch fighter jet platforms, that our aerospace sector will be part of that new procurement arrangement.

The good news is that's all within the past week, so I welcome the friendly question from the member opposite because it gives us a great opportunity to thank all the hard-working Manitobans who go to work in the aerospace sector each and every day.

On the other side of the House, though, we do have to call out the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) and the very shameful behaviour that he showed, unbecoming of an MLA. We have the Leader of the Opposition who has—

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

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

Mr. Khan: It's really sad to see the Premier go down this way. The Premier said himself that families are off limits in this Chamber. God forbid one of our family members in this Chamber gets into trouble. Members would appreciate not being smeared and used as a political tool for this Premier to volley over this way. The Premier should do better.

Winnipeg is home to a growing and well-established aerospace sector, but under this NDP government, Manitoba's economy continues to fail. The federal government has stepped up, but the Province of Manitoba is nowhere to be seen. Industry is making those investments; the federal government is making the investments, and the provincial government is riding the coattails of the federal government.

When will the Premier step up and do the right thing and get back to growing Manitoba's economy instead of destroying it to be dead last in Canada?

Mr. Kinew: You know, our Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (Mr. Moses) has done a great job spearheading investments in Standard Aero, Magellan, and, of course, members of our team were very proud to be at Boeing just this past week. *[interjection]*

Now, the members opposite are chirping, but I remember just yesterday there was a complete silence when we raised the question of the member for Riding Mountain who offered \$1 million to bail out a family member who is convicted of sexually assaulting a minor. Now, this same member has been renominated by the PCs to run in the next election. In the last election, they ran, falsely accusing LGBT folks of grooming children, when it turns out there was some very nasty stuff happening in their own backyard.

The question that the Leader of the Opposition needs to answer today—the Leader of the PCs—is, was he aware of this affidavit from the member for Riding Mountain when he signed off on his renomination?

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

Mr. Khan: The Premier wants to talk about criminal records. Well, he can just look in the mirror himself. He has more charges in this Chamber than any other member to ever serve in the history of this province, Honourable Speaker. The Premier should know better than—to know that families are off limits when it comes to the Chamber. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Manitoba is home to CFB Shilo, 17 Wing and many other major Canadian Armed Forces operations. Mark Carney is spending billions of dollars on defence in order to meet 2 per cent GDP requirement set by NATO. Billions of dollars being spent and this provincial government is nowhere to be seen to step up and match those funds.

So it only makes sense for Manitoba to step up when the federal government has threatened billions of dollars. And what does this Premier do? Absolutely nothing, Honourable Speaker. Other provinces are receiving billions of dollars. Manitoba has got nothing for nation-building projects.

When will the Premier stop grand—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Kinew: Well, just last week I had an excellent meeting with Minister McGuinty in which we described how we're going to collaborate on the hundreds of millions of dollars coming for investments at Shilo, Winnipeg and 17 Wing.

However, the member opposite from Fort Whyte knows that in the affidavit that I tabled in this House yesterday, the member for Riding Mountain said that

he is an MLA. He is the one who brought his status as an elected official into this conversation.

I'll note that the conflict of interest law says that no member of this Assembly is supposed to use their position to advance the private interest of a family member or of anyone else. So, there certainly are a lot of interesting points that need to be followed up on.

But the question and the reason why it is germane is because you have to wonder, given the political desperation of the leader of the PCs, whether he was compromised to look the other direction away from the member for Riding Mountain. (Mr. Nesbitt).

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Order, please.

Stop the clock.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: If I could interrupt proceedings for a moment. We have some guests in the gallery that need to leave pretty quick.

So we have seated in the public gallery, from Grafton School, 15 grade 4 students under the direction of Elizabeth Redekopp, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler).

We welcome you here today.

* * *

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

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

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Premier can personally attack me all he wants. He can bully as much as he wants in this Chamber. On this side of the House, we're going to stand up for Manitoba families and continue to advocate for growing our economy and making life more affordable.

When the Premier goes low, we will always go high, Honourable Speaker—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Securing investment and growing Manitoba's economy should be top of this Premier's list, and it's not. The best the Premier will do is save you pennies by cutting PST off of junk food, Honourable Speaker. He's going to leave out small

businesses; he's going to leave out local restaurants and local grocery stores.

The Premier could agree today to vote in favour of a resolution tabled by the MLA from Midland that will put up to \$3,000 back in the pockets of families—not pennies, thousands of dollars. The Premier could choose to do that today.

So will the Premier stand up today and support a resolution that will make a real difference in Manitoba's families, or will he continue to throw pennies—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Good news, Honourable Speaker. We're taking the tax off of all food and drinks at the grocery store everywhere in Manitoba. Now, this is an important measure that responds to what you've been saying for the past number of years, that grocery prices are going too high.

Well, here's the record: when that member was sitting at the Cabinet table, food inflation in the last two years of their government was 10 per cent and 8 per cent. So, obviously, we've taken action, doing something that they never did.

However, the other thing that happened while he was at the Cabinet table is that the member for Riding Mountain was sitting there. He was sitting there right next to the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). They brought an incomplete framework for protecting kids in schools forward that was corrected by the current Education Minister. There are serious questions about conflicts of interest and conflicts with judgment and common sense when it comes to the actions of the member for Riding Mountain.

Was the Leader of the PC Party aware that his colleague had vouched for a sex offender?

* (14:00)

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: When you want to talk about errors in judgment, where was the Premier's judgment when he assaulted his ex-partner and dragged her across the floor? Where was the Premier's judgment when he assaulted an East Indian cab driver? Where was it, Honourable Speaker? Manitobans?

The Premier wants to stand up and now cast the accusations across the way, when the Premier himself has a larger criminal record than anyone—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —in the history of the province to sit in this Chamber.

On this side of the House, we're advocating for affordability for Manitobans, making life more affordable—not personal attacks—more affordable. The Premier can stand up today and support a resolution brought by this side of the House that will put up to \$3,000 back into your family's wallet instead of pennies.

The Premier wants to stand up and talk about pennies; we want to talk about real savings—thousands of dollars. Manitobans will decide. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Will the Premier stand up and support our resolution to make a difference today?

Mr. Kinew: So, when the story broke on Friday, the member opposite was talking about how the Riding Mountain MLA was acting out of love when he chose to bail out a sex offender. Then yesterday, he was telling the media: So I made a choice then—that's right—and I came out, and now I've said clearly, this matter is before the courts. But here we are again today, and now he's clearly addressing the issue.

So I encourage him to hang on to this little bit of courage he's found and go address this issue clearly in front of the media once question period is over. Because the question that Manitobans want to know is: Was he aware that the Riding Mountain MLA had pledged up to \$1 million in bail for somebody who had sexually assaulted a minor?

Now, if the answer is no, he was not aware until the Free Press reported on the story, the question that the leader of the PCs needs to answer today is: Is he going to drop the MLA for Riding Mountain as a candidate for the PCs in the next election?

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

Mr. Khan: I have asked the Premier five questions on affordability and making life more affordable for Manitobans, and he wants to—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —continue to stand up and launch personal attacks. He can do the right thing and start to make life more affordable today, but he'll continue to stand up

and make flashy announcements and smile for the camera.

In 25 years under the NDP government, everything has gotten worse. Health care is worse, crime is worse, homelessness is worse, economy is worse and affordability is the worst it has ever been in the history of this province. The government's—it's time for government to step up and do the right thing.

Manitobans don't have more money; they have less money under this government. And that's because this Premier continues to increase taxes on you and your family. Manitobans know better. Manitobans can see through this Premier's pennies' savings—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —at the grocery store.

Will the Premier stand up today and—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please.

Stop the clock. The honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care (MLA Asagwara) will come to order. And the rest of the NDP bench needs to calm down as well.

Mr. Khan: The Premier's economic horse is dead.

Was there ever a plan to—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, we're taking the tax off of all food and drinks at grocery stores in northern Manitoba, eastern Manitoba, western Manitoba and southern Manitoba to save you money.

You know, I don't live in the south, but I know people in southern Manitoba fairly well. I can tell you that they take personal offence when people attack children, when people sexually assault minors. Whenever the media has come after me for saying that, you know, we should be very, very harsh on sex offenders, people in southern Manitoba have spoken out and said that they support those comments.

I wonder what the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) is going to say now that he has to campaign next to somebody who's offered \$1 million bail for somebody who sexually assaulted a minor. What are they going to say in southeastern Manitoba when the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) shows up at the door and that's circulating on social media?

It's a very tough position that the leader of the PCs has put his colleagues in, and no least of all when we think about affordability.

We're trying to save you money—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Manitoba's Defence and Aerospace Sector Request for Manufacturing Procurement Strategy

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): The federal government has committed \$180 billion in defence procurement and \$290 billion in defence-related capital investment. Mayor Gillingham recognized this in his State of the City address, calling for a sky economy and to capitalize on the capacity available now in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba.

The mayor has publicly committed to convening partners, clearing barriers and ensuring Winnipeg is organized to secure this new investment.

Where is the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) contract and procurement strategy, and will he table it today?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, we're very happy to be working alongside partners at the federal government level at DND, with said people in the aerospace sector here in Manitoba to support our efforts to join in our strength in our aerospace sector and the opportunities that lie in defence.

That's why we invested in groups like Magellan, that's why we invested in supporting Boeing's efforts and that's why we invested in StandardAero: to grow our aerospace sector, make sure we can realize the opportunities to support not only our growing aerospace sector, but most importantly supporting our national defence strategy.

We'll continue to do that work alongside partners in a trusted way, including the City of Winnipeg, to make sure that we can grow our economy that works for all Manitobans.

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

Mrs. Stone: The only thing this NDP government has done is wait for others to do the heavy lifting while they wait on the sidelines. Instead of working with industry to create competitive environment to secure these federal funds and grow an established Manitoba industry, this government has done nothing but sit on the sidelines.

There is huge economic potential for Manitoba. These federal dollars are competitive and could drive jobs and GDP growth for the province. Mayor Gillingham is actively pursuing these opportunities. The private sector is coming to the table.

So why is this Premier waiting for everyone else to do the heavy lifting rather than taking a leadership role to make Winnipeg and Manitoba an aerospace and defence manufacturing capital of Canada?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, members opposites' comments couldn't be further from the truth. They, quite frankly, are way off base. We've been working for months with industry partners, both here in Manitoba in our growing and advanced aerospace sector, in our defence operations here as well at 17 Wing and at Shilo.

These are real players who are committed to working and developing our economy here in Manitoba. I want to give a shout-out also to our post-secondary institutions, who are leading some of the important research in this area, who are helping and ensuring that we have the workers to both take the jobs in our aerospace sector and in our defence procurement industry of the future.

So we'll continue to do this work in collaboration with partners right across the country to support growing economy right here in Manitoba.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Stone: The federal government is coming to the table, the City of Winnipeg is coming to the table, and while this NDP government shuts down those post-secondary opportunities through MITT, other provinces are leading the way and Manitoba is being left behind.

One of the commitments from the federal government is to release these funds in a way that is predictable and consistent. We need a strategy now to be competitive before other jurisdictions get hold of these dollars before Manitoba even has a strategy.

So I'll ask the Premier again: Will he table Manitoba's procurement and contract aerospace and defence manufacturing strategy, or does he not even have one?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, once again, member opposite's comments are way off base. They're unaware of the work that we've been doing for months

to build up the incredible aerospace sector and defence sector in Manitoba, supporting military personnel with ease of coming to Manitoba, making sure Manitoba is a welcome place for our military personnel.

And supporting our aerospace sector by investing in companies like Magellan, StandardAero and Boeing, working collaboratively with our military envoy and ministers from Advanced Education, and we are collaboratively working with DND, the federal government, to support opportunities for defence right here in Manitoba.

That's how we grow an economy that worked for everyone. Defence, aerospace sector, workers in Manitoba, something that we can all get behind. Apparently, not members opposite. They're out to lunch.

Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Inquiry into Provincial Funding Support

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, when this government should have been growing the economy and helping Manitobans train for good careers, the minister is picking winners and losers.

* (14:10)

The Minister of Advanced Education and Training approved millions for the University of Winnipeg during the funding crisis without a briefing note, so why did the minister shut down MITT when they needed the funding?

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Honourable Speaker, I don't know about the funding crisis without a briefing note. It sounds like a novel I would have read in my high school years.

But I want to take this moment before Gavin Wood leaves to say thank you so much for the years that we had together at University of Winnipeg. I also had Gavin Wood as an instructor, Canadian legal systems—phenomenal individual. And we'll continue to support phenomenal individuals like Gavin at our post-secondaries today and every day.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: These are serious questions. I filed a FIPPA request for the briefing notes behind that funding and the response was, they do not exist.

In January, MITT staff and students were told government would shut it down, cutting opportunities and putting their futures at risk.

Why did the minister support the University of Winnipeg and not MITT?

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, I'm very proud to stand here today just to make note of the fact that this government has invested record numbers of dollars into our post-secondary system in this province. We've expanded opportunities all across the province, and the member well knows that the challenges at MITT were not sustainable. The unilateral decision by the federal government to cut international students from an institution that was too heavily reliant on them meant that, as a responsible government, we needed to act.

All of those students at MITT have continued their programs with Red River or will, and each and every one of those students will graduate and be able to participate in a fulsome way in our economy. It was the right decision at the right time with very difficult—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, the minister had two and a half years to prepare for this. The minister's making decisions without facts or data; that's unacceptable.

Skilled trades are essential to Manitoba's economy, and cutting trade opportunities will only make labour shortages worse.

Why has the minister taken action that will hurt trade—skilled trades and weaken our Manitoba economy?

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, I'd like to put some facts on the record; the member is suddenly interested in them.

Fact: Year over year, the previous PC government cut funding to post-secondary institutions—year over year over year. Fact: They settled zero collective agreements with any of the instructors or professors; that's another fact. Fact: They drove professionals out of this province by causing problems, creating chaos in nearly every sector.

I will not take any advice from the members opposite who drove our province into the ground—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Cable: —for seven and a half years. I am very proud of the work that this team on this side of the House does, and we're going to continue to deliver each and every day for Manitobans.

Export Development Projects Importance to Municipal Sustainability

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Seven months ago, a very successful and innovative company in Lakeside reached out to the minister with a proposal that would drive innovation, job creation and an export growth here in Manitoba, which is exactly the kind of opportunity municipalities depend on to grow and remain sustainable. Yet, it has gone unanswered. I can share the name of the company with the minister in private, as I have done before.

Now, does this minister understand how critical export development is to our municipalities, and why has there been no response?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, we do understand how important exports are to our economy. That's why we have been standing up against the Trump tariffs, unlike members opposite, who spent time thanking him for those very same tariffs.

Our government is—supports exporters. We work with Canadian exporters of Manitoba to ensure that we have the supports to help navigate the new tariff landscape for local businesses so they can reach new markets. We've doubled our export support programs so that more businesses have the resources to make their next big sale along the global market.

That's how we work collaboratively with the business industry to support exporters, work with businesses, and we'll keep doing that good work each and every day.

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

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, municipalities across Manitoba rely on strong economic development to support local jobs, expand their tax base and sustain essential services. Companies in Lakeside have brought forward real opportunities that support all of those goals, yet the government has failed to act.

Can the minister explain how ignoring opportunities like this supports the long-term growth and sustainability of our communities?

Mr. Moses: Our government listens very carefully to the needs of rural municipalities and their economic growth. We listen and understand the waste water

concerns they bring up that were ignored by the former government. We listen in concern about their infrastructure concerns that they bring up that were, again, ignored by the former failed PC government.

Instead, we're working collaboratively. We bring these people in. We have detailed and intense conversations about how we can work to ensure that they have the economic opportunities in every region of province, whether that's the Interlake, whether you're talking about the Westman, eastern Manitoba, the Pembina Valley, northern Manitoba. We're here to support business opportunities, economic opportunities for all Manitobans from all walks of life, and we'll keep doing that work every day.

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

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, yet this minister fails to respond to an opportunity in my constituency that's going to be good for all of Manitoba. This year's budget provides no funding for community economic development, even though municipalities rely on that work to grow their economies and sustain local services. The same time, real opportunities for job creation and investment are sitting without a response from this government.

Does the minister understand how essential community economic development is to the long-term sustainability of all municipalities?

Mr. Moses: First of all, Honourable Speaker, I'd be happy to follow up on the individual details member opposite brings forward today. Second, yes, we are supporting local economic 'opportunities' with local areas right across Manitoba. Third, when it comes to working with rural municipalities, when it comes to the AMM, we saw check marks right across the board, every category when we came to AMM, working collaboratively with them.

Now for economic development, we will work with businesses, we'll listen to the business community, and we'll support workers. We're happy to announce that we had almost 11,000 new jobs in Manitoba this month. That's real economic progress supporting workers, supporting them with good-paying jobs right here in Manitoba, and we'll do that so we can grow our economy—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Home-Care Services Centralized Scheduling System

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Last month, the government threw a party to celebrate the one-year anniversary of their botched home-care centralization that has resulted in nothing but chaos for front-line staff and cancelled visits for clients.

Staff told the media, quote, it's insulting to expect people to celebrate a milestone that is nothing but a reminder of the level of trauma we have endured this past year. They said that the switch to centralized scheduling has, quote, proven to be a disaster.

How can the minister justify this obtuse misstep while their office continues to hear from home-care clients and home-care workers about the chaos caused by their change?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, our government recognizes that Manitobans deserve to age with dignity in their communities. That's why we've taken a number of steps to ensure that we have more folks providing care in our communities across the province.

Just recently—actually, a couple of weeks ago—we hosted our first job fair. Very successful event. We had 260 people sign up in advance, 131 people show up on the spot, and we had 70 letters of offer signed that day. Those were all Manitobans who were looking for jobs in health care.

So we're going to keep doing the work, work that needs to be done because of seven and a half years of cuts, closures and chaos from members opposite.

Mrs. Cook: Last September, the Minister of Health was forced to apologize to Manitobans for their decision to centralize home-care scheduling and for messing up home care so badly. But six months later, they're throwing a party to celebrate the very changes they previously claimed to be walking back. It's no wonder we continue to hear from home-care clients and home-care staff who are frustrated by cancelled visits and inconsistent scheduling when this government can't even get its story straight.

So which is it: is the NDP breaking their promise and continuing to forge ahead with centralized scheduling and the chaos it created, or is it not?

* (14:20)

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I want to thank the home-care workers, the direct support service

workers, the nurses, the co-ordinators, the schedulers; all of these folks who have come together to form a committee, actually, in home care, that are directly informing the way that we repair the damage that was done by the previous government and address the fact that for seven and a half years the PCs made zero investments in home care whatsoever.

We're doing the real work that should have been done years ago, and I want to thank, actually, two folks in our departments, ADMs who intervened in home care, did a lot of research, put a lot of time in to address some of those fundamental concerns. The work continues. Much done, more to do.

Mrs. Cook: Staff at the scheduling office told media that, quote, I think they're all living in delusion because the WRHA keeps telling the government that everything's fine and the government is saying, oh, it's getting so much better. In reality, it's not. Unquote.

Staff told media the home-care system has become unsafe due to understaffing, rushed scheduling, missed breaks and long hours, all of which have contributed to burnout. Staff also said a rumoured visit from the Health Minister never happened. However, during the party, staff were given gifts such as Kleenex boxes and bags of chips.

How does this minister explain the slap in the face to front-line home-care staff and their clients?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I've had the pleasure of meeting with many, many home-care workers, and I look forward to ongoing meetings with front-line providers, who—many of which have worked for home care for decades. And what I've heard loudly and clearly from these folks is that this is the first time they have seen the government in many years actually get involved, get on the ground, bring people together to do the very real work of adding capacity to home care.

We're seeing many folks being hired. I'm happy to share in this House that 48 folks, nurses and direct service workers, were hired out of our job fair for home care specifically. That's real progress.

And, again, Honourable Speaker, we know we can't take our foot off the gas. There's a lot more work to do. There would be a lot less work to do if for seven and a half years, while she advised Heather Stefanson on health care, she had done a single thing.

Seal River Watershed Preservation Announcement

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Well, after seven long years under a government that cut funding to environmental organizations, we are rebuilding partnerships and putting Indigenous leadership and environmental stewardship at the centre of decisions. And last week, alongside First Nations chiefs, Elders, community leaders and the federal governments, an important step forward was announced.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change please share how this collaborative work will deliver stronger protections and lasting benefits for all Manitobans?

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Thank you to the member for Waverley for that great question.

Honourable Speaker, we know that Manitobans love nature. While the PCs gutted environmental protections, put Manitobans at risk and ignored science, we're moving forward on one of the largest Indigenous-led conservation initiatives in Canada, right here in Manitoba.

Last week I was so proud to stand with alliance chiefs, Elders, our federal partners and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) to announce we're protecting the Seal River Watershed permanently so future generations can enjoy our beautiful province for years to come. This is real action after years of PC failures.

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Underground Wildfires Burning in the North Concerns for Upcoming Wildfire Season

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Wildfire experts are blowing the whistle that there are many fires still burning underground in the North. The minister needs to listen to these experts and finally take a leadership role. He can start by finally being honest and accountable.

How many holdover fires are currently burning in Manitoba?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): I appreciate the question. It's an important question on a day where the minister has been speaking about the 2025 wildfire after-action review work that has already been undertaken and now has been shared with our municipal and First Nations partners.

We understand that the wildfire season that we saw last year was unprecedented, but it means that we just need to do more work to redouble our efforts and continue to support wildfire fighting across our province. Doing it in partnership with community is key, and, of course, all the investments that we made in Budget 2026 speak to the importance that we place on ensuring wildfires are fought—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Wowchuk: Honourable Speaker, we know that last year was a tragically devastating year for wildfires. The question was about how many fires are burning underground right now. Experts estimate somewhere around 80 that are waiting to erupt again and have another tragic fire season in Manitoba.

Mr. Wiebe: As I said, the minister and our team has been working on this file for the past year and doing so in conjunction and collaboration with community. And because of that work and because of the information that they've been able to build off of, we know that in Budget 2026, there's a \$1.2-million upgrade to the Manitoba Wildfire Service weather information and fire mapping systems.

We're creating a new initial attack and fire base in the Thompson area. We're adding 19 new firefighters and converting 15 term emergency management staff to new permanent positions and investing \$1.1 million in aerial firefighting services. The steps this—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Swan River, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Wowchuk: Honourable Speaker, these subsurface fires are going to erupt within a month after the snow-melt is gone and things heat up. This is going to require action immediately, not down the road. The government cut the budget. It's in black and white.

The same NDP government says they were prepared as much as possible for last season, when we know at Flin Flon, there was no IA attack crews, there was no tanker support, but fires from the season are still burning and the report is silent on this threat.

Maybe the minister should finish the job before congratulating himself. He thinks he was as prepared as possible, but also make a big showing of placing an order for water bombers that won't be available until 2031.

Why is critical fire capacity being left—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Wiebe: You know, not surprising the member opposite would just sit on the sidelines and attack the good work that this government is doing to support wildfire fighters across this province, because that's what he did in government. Member opposite sat at the table with his colleagues and he saw as our vacancy rate for our conservation officers went through the roof.

Every year, we saw that our firefighters were getting less and less resources. They sold off water bombers in this province, Honourable Speaker. The list goes on and on. He sat on the sidelines then. He didn't say a word. He's now sitting on the sidelines. He has no idea of the incredible work our minister and team are doing to support community throughout our province.

Upcoming Wildfire Season Questions Regarding Use of Local Aircraft

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, just to repeat what we heard: The water bomber that we supposedly have on order will not be ready 'til the 2030s, and that's from the NDP's own report.

We have already made the minister aware of local, immediate, available solutions here in Manitoba.

In light of predicted severity of the upcoming fire season, why has the minister not taken steps to acquire aircraft that are available right now within Manitoba to help protect our communities?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): Again, unlike members opposite, this team, this government is not sitting on our hands. We're not sitting idly by. We've been working for the past year to staff up, to give resources when it comes to community and to build out our capacity to fight wildfires and save lives.

What we saw last year in this province was unprecedented: 30,000 Manitobans displaced. Two Manitobans lost their lives in the wildfires last year. That was our call as a government to continue to work with community to build up capacity.

We're doing that work. Members opposite didn't do a thing when they were in government.

* (14:30)

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

MLA Bereza: Just to correct the minister there, \$1.1 million for aerial applicator is 55 hours. That's it.

Last month, I watched half a dozen planes leave Portage la Prairie to fight fires in Alberta, British Columbia and northwestern territories. These aircraft are operating all across Canada now. We know this government has a pattern of neglecting Portage. We've seen it with the MRI, the hospital not opening and now, with local industry.

My question to the minister: If these planes are good enough to protect the rest of Canada, why are they not being used here in Manitoba and why is this government failing to support a local employer and an—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, the member opposite is completely off base.

The support that we're providing is based on the experience last year. It brings together all municipal partners, First Nations, Indigenous organizations: everybody at the same table working together for one Manitoba. It provides real resources in the form of Budget 2026, including immediate—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —action items for this summer, including three new initial attack crews that'll be ready to go and on the ground.

Honourable Speaker, we're taking action and we're doing it in a collaborative way, something members opposite have no idea about, never did and never resourced once when they were in government.

The Speaker: Order, please.

If I could get everyone's attention. Earlier today in question period, a couple of things were said that were worthy of a caution, so I want to bring them up now.

The honourable Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation (Mr. Moses) said that what the member was saying couldn't be further from the truth, and the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) said that he could start by finally being honest and accountable.

And I would caution both members that such language has been cautioned by previous Speakers, and it comes dangerously close to being unparliamentary language. So, I would ask members to be more cautious in the language they use.

And question period has expired.

House Business

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Pursuant to rule four–34(7), I am announcing the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton). The title of the resolution is Women's Health in Manitoba.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Rule 34(7), it has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one previously 'p'ut forward by the honourable member for Tuxedo, and the title of the resolution is Women's Health in Manitoba.

* * *

The Speaker: Petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

The Speaker: So, the hour being 3:30, in accordance with rule–so, as per rule–subrule 2(13), today is the second deadline day for second reading of specified bills.

And, as such, at the beginning of orders of the day, the following provisions shall apply: for each bill, the minister may speak for a maximum of 10 minutes, followed by up to 15-minute question and answer period; critics of recognized parties and independent members may then speak for a maximum of 10 minutes per bill, following which I will put the question on second reading of the bill.

If such a bill had been previously called for debate, all remaining actions just identified will be dealt with before the question will be put.

For the information of all members, under the provisions of subrule 2(13), the House will not rise until the second reading question has been put on all remaining specified bills, and points of order and matters of privilege are deferred until all votes have been accomplished—all votes have been completed.

If the House is still sitting at 12 o'clock midnight, the debate will be interrupted to put any remaining second reading questions without further debate or amendment, and the division bell shall ring for no more than one minute on each question.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

The Speaker: So we will now continue with second reading of the bills as listed on the Order Paper in that order.

Bill 6—The Sign Languages Recognition Act

The Speaker: So I will now call for second reading of Bill 6—continuing the debate of second reading of Bill 6, The Sign Languages Recognition Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Agassiz, who has seven minutes remaining.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I am quite proud to stand here and put a few words on the record in relation to Bill 6, The Sign Languages Recognition Act. It is unfortunate that the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), the minister responsible for this, has still refused to get up and speak to this bill.

First, I want to acknowledge our—acknowledge and sincerely thank our American Sign Language interpreters who are present with us here in the Legislature. Their work breaks down barriers and ensures that all Manitobans have access to what happens here in the Chamber and access to our debates and the decisions that impact their daily lives here in Manitoba. Accessibility and democracy should never be an afterthought here, and their presence is an important step forward. So, again, a shout-out to the ASL interpreters here and a thank-you to the work that they do.

As I said, Bill 6 is an important bill, recognizing ASL and LSQ and Indigenous sign languages and tactile sign language is—as distinct languages. Recognition is meaningful and—because language is more than communication, it is identity, culture and belonging.

But recognition must also be matched with action, and I do want to highlight here quickly some of the work that our PC and the Progressive Conservatives have done in the past when we were in government, and I'm just going to highlight a few.

In March of 2023, the PCs established a new \$12.6-million grant program to assist eligible seniors to—offered a hearing aid program that still exists today. That was what our PC government did. We also invested \$352,000 annually to expand coverage for cochlear implant external sound processor replacements.

In 2021, the PC team introduced the Manitoba Accessibility Fund. This was a new \$20-million endowment fund that provides grants to municipalities,

businesses, organizations, to help eliminate barriers to their services.

And some of the projects that were supported in this: close to \$50,000 for Deaf Centre Manitoba; over \$24,000 for the Resource Centre for Manitobans who are Deaf-Blind, providing mental health workshops; \$15,000 to New Directions in 2023 to support deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals; 33—over \$33,000 for E-Quality Communication Centre of Excellence; \$25,000 to the City of Winnipeg in 2023 to add audio loop assistive listening systems as a major priority reception—at reception counters; over \$42,000 for Squarely Social in 2022 and in 2023, to help raise awareness and educate communications and marketing professionals; \$44,000 for the Higher Learning Foundation in 2023; supported the arts—arts, culture, sport in community with over \$25,000 in Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, MAWA, to create online teaching tools; in 2023, \$300,000 for a partnership with Indigenous Languages of Manitoba to create and operate two-language revitalization programs.

* (14:40)

These were practical steps grounded in a simple idea: when barriers are removed, we can see where everyone benefits, because inclusion is not just what we say; it is about what we do. There is no question that recognizing sign languages in legislation sends an important message.

I look forward to seeing Bill 6 go to committee where Manitobans, we all know, will be watching to ensure that message is backed by continued investment and action but, boast—most importantly, backed with respect.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before putting the question, there's some guests in the gallery that have been waiting patiently, and I need to introduce them.

I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today the Dawson Trail 55+ apartments group, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training (MLA Cable).

And on behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And there are several other guests who were here but have probably left already, but I would like to take the opportunity to introduce them anyway.

In the public gallery were members from the St. Norbert—Collège Saint-Norbert Collegiate: Andrew Gatz, Sam Lapointe, Emma Diduke, Audrey Schlamb, Violet Russell, Annika Penner, Debie Tolawak, who were guests of the honourable member for Seine River (MLA Cross). And we would have welcomed them all here today.

And then, further, we had guests in the public gallery, 15 members of the Manitoba Korean Canadian Community Resource Network: Andrea Kitano, Eunji Lee, Hana Ha, Jas Bissonette, Jeremy Kim, Jennifer Choi, Joshua Borja, Julia [*phonetic*] Sun—Julie Sun, sorry—Mihye Yeoun, Nancy Zeilstra, Rosa Jeong, San [*phonetic*]—Sean Song, Stella Lee, Yena Seo, Youngho Cho.

Also with us today were four members of the Korean churches association of Manitoba, Reverend Bosung Lee, Reverend Seunghun Jung, Ms. Youngkyoung Lee, Ms. Unice Jung, who were guests of the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

And I apologize for not introducing all those guests earlier today.

* * *

The Speaker: So now the question before the House is second reading—[*interjection*] Oh, the honourable Government House Leader?

The question before the House is, then, second reading of Bill 6, The Sign Languages Recognition Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 11—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Sick Notes for Employee Absences)

The Speaker: We will then move on to Bill 11, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Sick Notes for Employee Absences).

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education, that Bill 11, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Sick Notes for Employee Absences); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (notes du médecin en cas d'absence d'un employé), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Marcelino: Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to provide comments on Bill 11, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Sick Notes for Employee Absences). This bill limits when an employer may require a sick note from an employee who is absent from work due to illness or injury.

We have heard that unnecessary sick notes mean extra paperwork without improving absenteeism and that, for our health-care system, sick notes are taking valuable time that could be better spent elsewhere. That is why we have introduced a bill that will make it so employers may only require a sick note if an employee's absence continues for more than a week or the employee has been absent on more than 10 working days in the same calendar year.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The bill would also clarify that there are a variety of health professionals who may issue a sick note in Manitoba, and that employers must accept sick—such notes from such professionals. Further, where an employer requests an employee to provide a sick note after the restricted period, the employee will be entitled to reimbursement from their employer for the cost of the sick note if incurred.

Greater clarity to verification requirements for long-term protected leaves under the code is also introduced. That will make it easier for employers to verify and plan for longer term absences. A regulation amendment is planned to coincide with the bill that will introduce an administrative penalty for non-compliance with the proposed sick note restrictions. These measures will prevent extra paperwork for employers and allow the health-care system to redirect valuable time spent on sick notes to serving Manitobans.

The bill implements consensus recommendations from the Labour Management Review Committee and follows the advice from Doctors Manitoba and the Canadian Medical Association to restrict sick notes. I would like to thank them for their invaluable support.

With these changes, Manitoba builds on restrictions found in other Canadian jurisdictions that have implemented sick note restrictions, including the federal government, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan.

It is our government's priority to always stand up for the rights of working people, and these changes support the 2025 Throne Speech commitment to

eliminate the requirement for sick notes that add an additional burden on working families and unnecessary paperwork for doctors.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Questions

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

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Bill 11 expands the list of health-care professionals who are entitled to provide a sick note.

While it is not explicitly stated, would those professionals who provide service through remote means such as telehealth be included?

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm just a little bit confused about the question. Is the member saying that the professionals—the health professionals—would be providing the sick notes through telehealth? Or they would just be—I'm unclear about the question.

* (14:50)

The act—or the bill says that the sick notes can be provided by health professionals, including a physician, a physician's assistant, a clinical assistant, a registered nurse, nurse practitioner, registered psychiatric nurse or a licensed practical nurse, a psychologist, a midwife and other prescribed classes of health professionals.

Mr. Guenter: Section 51.3(1) legislates that that an employer must reimburse the employee for, quote, any reasonable amount, and I wonder if it would not be more suitable to provide a figure that accurately reflects the service.

Which entity makes the decision that it is, quote, reasonable?

MLA Marcelino: So, currently, it's doctors and doctors' offices that charge for sick notes, and so that will continue to be the practice, and so I'm not sure how they come up with those figures. It's certainly not

coming from the government, so that is going to be the amount that would be 'reimburse'—reimbursed by employers at that time.

Mr. Guenter: Doctors Manitoba developed a tool kit to assist employers in transitioning to a sick note-free workplace, and I'm wondering if the minister was involved in the development of that tool kit.

MLA Marcelino: No, I was not involved in making that tool kit, but the folks that were involved in addition to Doctors Manitoba were the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and a lot of good work as well by the Chartered Professional in Human Resources Manitoba.

Mr. Guenter: How does Bill 11 align with neighbouring jurisdictions?

MLA Marcelino: So, Manitoba, Alberta and Newfoundland were the only jurisdictions that did not have any acts regarding limits on requirements for employers to procure sick notes from employees. So, that meant that everybody else, like the federal government, BC, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, PEI, Quebec and Saskatchewan all have other acts—part of their—which would be equivalent to our employment standards act here in Manitoba that would have some kind of—

The Deputy Speaker: Minister's time has expired.

Seeing no further questions, is the House ready for the question? [*interjection*] Oh, sorry.

Debate

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I thank the minister as well for bringing Bill 11 forward, and I thank her for the bill briefing as well on Bill 11 and the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about this bill.

Current employment standards allow employers to request a sick note for any absence due to illness or injury, which can create administrative burdens for employees and employers. Employees often face out-of-pocket costs to obtain these notes, and short-term absences may be unnecessarily formalized. There is a need to modernize the Employment Standards Code to reduce burden, improve access to care and in-clarify employer and employee responsibilities.

Previously, employers could require a sick note from an employee for any absence regardless of duration or frequency. The scope of acceptable health professionals issuing notes was narrow, often limited

to physicians. Emerging workplace practices, telehealth services and diverse health professions necessitate updated guidance.

Similar reforms in other jurisdictions have reduced administrative burden while maintaining accountability. Saskatchewan, BC and Nova Scotia, along with federally regulated workplaces, don't require sick notes for absences under five work days. Quebec and Ontario have similar legislation, where the limit is three days of work.

I think it's interesting as well, worth highlighting, that according to Doctors Manitoba, over 600,000 sick notes are requested per year in Manitoba. A third of the time, patients no longer have symptoms to verify by the time they see their doctor. These are unnecessary medical appointments that cost taxpayers over \$8 million per year, and eliminating sick notes will free up the equivalent of 300,000 patient visits per year.

So with those brief remarks, I look forward to sending this bill on to committee.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question on second reading of Bill 11, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Sick Notes for Employee Absences).

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 16—The Mental Health Amendment Act

The Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to second reading of Bill 16, The Mental Health Amendment Act.

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister responsible for Mental Health): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy), that Bill 16, The Mental Health Amendment Act, now be read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Smith: This bill is about people. It's about making sure that Manitobans can get the mental health care they need when they need it, no matter where they are.

The proposed amendments to Bill 16 will modernize The Mental Health Act by expanding the authority of qualified health professionals, including physician assistants, clinical assistants and nurse practitioners to conduct examinations and imply—and apply for involuntary psychiatric assessments when someone may be at a risk of harming themselves or others.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, The Mental Health Act has always been about balance, ensuring timely access to care while protecting the rights and dignity of individuals, including clear review and appeal mechanisms.

This bill strengthens that balance. It improves access while maintaining the safeguards and oversight that Manitobans expect and deserve. Bill 16 also creates the flexibility to include other qualified professionals in the future, such as registered psychiatric nurses, through regulation.

Right now, only physicians can apply for involuntary psychiatric assessments. Expanding the number of medical professionals that can apply for an involuntary assessment will directly contribute to reducing some of the pressures on our health-care system that we're seeing today.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, those pressures are being felt right across our province: in our emergency departments, in our crisis response settings and in our communities. When someone is in crisis, delays in assessments mean delays in care, and those delays can have serious consequences for individuals, for families and for our communities.

That's why this change is being made based on strong recommendations from the chief provincial psychiatrists and psychiatric leadership at Shared Health to help ensure people get timely care wherever they are.

We also know that these challenges are not felt equally. Rural, remote and northern communities often face the greatest barriers to accessing timely mental health care. By expanding who can perform these assessments, we are taking an important step towards equality so that geography is not a barrier to care. Only jurisdictions across Canada—other jurisdictions across Canada have taken similar steps, and we've seen proven improvements in patient flow, reduced wait times and better outcomes for patients, as well as public safety.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, it's also important to recognize how much the role and training of health-care professionals has evolved. Since the last major

review of this act, the education, competencies and scope of practice for many professionals has expanded significantly.

* (15:00)

And I want to acknowledge the regulatory colleges, the college of physicians, the surgeons of Manitoba, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba, who were all consulted and were all—and who are all supportive of the proposed changes to this legislation.

We've confirmed that their members have the knowledge, the skills and the standards in place to take on these responsibilities safely and responsibly. This bill also improves innovation in care and how it is delivered. It will confirm the authority to conduct assessments remotely using virtual technology and allow mental health review boards to hold remote hearings where appropriate. This is especially important for people in rural and northern communities where travel can be a barrier to timely care and fair review.

A brief training course will also be developed to support implementation in collaboration with mental health partners and educators. So, honourable Deputy Speaker, this is about making our system work better for the people who rely on it, especially in moments of crisis. It's about reducing delays, easing pressures on our emergency department and ensuring that people are met with care, compassion and timely support.

Bill 16 addresses the real and urgent challenges in our mental health-care system, and it does so in a thoughtful, balanced way. So, I urge all members of this House to support this bill and to stand with Manitobans in strengthening access to mental health care so that everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity and the best quality of life, no matter where they live in our great province of Manitoba.

Miigwech.

Questions

The Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I want to thank the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith) for bringing this Bill 16 forward, The Mental Health Amendment Act.

I also want to thank the minister for the briefing that was given to me in her office.

I really—I have one question to ask the minister, and that is just regarding technology in the North and the rural areas: Is there something that, you know, if we don't have connectivity or something like that, how do we move forward from that point?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister responsible for Mental Health): I thank the member for that question and, you know, for the support on this bill and the thoughtful questions that they asked during the bill briefing. And, of course, you know, that's always a barrier for folks and technology, and we've been working really hard with communities and making sure that we are connecting and accessing supports no matter where folks are at.

And working with communities, First Nations, you know, we've been expanding connectivity across our great province, and, of course, we're going to continue to work with our partners in ensuring that no matter where they are in the province, that they can get access to timely care, access to mental health care. And, of course, this is another tool that we can use to ensure that folks can get access to the supports that they need no matter—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Debate

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

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): As I said before, I will be supporting this bill.

Just a little bit of background on this as well, too. As physicians, assistants, nurse practitioners and other regulated health-care providers increasingly perform functions traditionally done by physicians, advances in technologies have made remote assessments feasible, especially in rural and under-served communities.

The—there could be amendments made to this bill, but like I said, from what I'm seeing from this bill, from the information that I got from the minister, I believe this is a good bill. There's no reason for any further debate on this and I will be supporting this bill.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question on second reading of Bill 16, The Mental Health Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 19—The Animal Care Amendment Act

The Deputy Speaker: And we will move on to second reading of Bill 19, The Animal Care Amendment Act.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): I move, second by the Minister of Housing and Addictions and Homelessness, the—that Bill 19, The Animal Care Amendment Act, now to be read a second time and be referred to the committee in the House. *[interjection]*

Oh, I'm sorry, okay. Okay—my apologies.

The Bill 19, Animal Care Amendment Act, be now read the second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised the bill, and the—I table the message.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith), that Bill 19, The Animal Care Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le soin des animaux, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message—the message has been tabled.

Mr. Kostyshyn: On behalf of Manitoba Agriculture, I am pleased to present this bill. We are serious about the 'ethinal'—ethical treatment of animals. Bill 19 increases the maximum fines for offences under the act. Manitoba's maximum fine's now low compared to most other provinces.

With this bill, the fines will double from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for the first offence and from \$20,000 to \$100,000 for subsequent offences. Prison terms for serious offences are also increased. Bill 19 also establishes a new licensing regime for those selling and transferring pet animals in Manitoba.

Our intention is to first focus on the sale and the transfer of dogs in our efforts to address puppy mills. The most important thing the public can do is—to stop

the puppy mills is to look at the signs of ethnobreeding; that means viewing the breeder's facilities, meeting the puppy's parents and confirming veterinarian care. As we move forward, intending to communicate to the public how important it is that we will look at these signs.

By adding a licence as a requirement, we are adding one more signal to the public. Our message is simple: Look for signs of 'ethical' breeding. Licensing approach we are purchasing replaces one that has not been in use for more than a decade. The bill prohibits the sale or transfer of pet animals without a licence regardless of exemption by regulation.

However, through regulation, we'll establish thresholds. The intent is to capture ongoing commercial activities. The intent is not to require individuals acting in good faith, whether due to circumstances or other one-off situations, to hold a licence.

We've also intended to develop other exceptions for licence fees. Examples include municipal rescues that are charitable—registered charitable organizations like the Winnipeg Humane Society.

With the passing of the bill, Agriculture looks forward to its work monitoring online advertisements of pet animals for sale.

And there are other elements in this bill. The bill allows us to adopt animal health and welfare codes and standards by regulation. These standards are supported by animal industrial quality assurance programs and evolving scientific standards in companion animal care. This allows our actions to be timely, it's a response to the industry, it benefits animals and assists Manitobans who care for animals. It also allows for immediate incorporations of current industry-approved animal care standards.

* (15:10)

The bill also addresses some procedural matters. When Manitoba pursues a court order with individuals who are no longer able to care for their animals, we need to ensure people have access to justice and while others preserve our strong system of animal protection.

Lastly, it is our intention to bring forward regulatory changes to support this bill. I've mentioned some elements include exemptions to licensing. And we also intend to make an offence to abandon of pet animals.

This bill supports Manitoba Agriculture ongoing mandate on animal care and welfare.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): The first question that I have for the minister is clarification around why the current licensing system that was in place has been repealed—the one that was around licensing for pet stores and pet sales facilities—and how this bill is to replace that?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you, and a very valid question.

You know, there are times where presently, we see a number of cases, and regulations that presently exist don't really deal with the ongoing issues that we see on a daily basis.

And I think we basically have to modernize the regulations to make it so that—and I'll give you a prime example.

You know, the Humane Society has been very diligent—and I think I don't have to educate members opposite of the challenges we face in a lot of jurisdictions of abandoned animals and opportunity that we need to take this seriously. Because, unfortunately, these animals are being neglected, and unfortunately, there are times where I think—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Narth: So just further to that, to clarify: Now each and every dog that is for sale needs to come from a licensed breeder—I guess you would consider it. And so the licence for an individual selling a dog and a pet store would be the same licence now.

Mr. Kostyshyn: Thank you for the question.

No, this is meant for—a prime example is puppy mills. These are an industry that seems to have no regulations and no accountability. I'll take example as a producer or farmer that, you know, has a dog that, unfortunately, gets bred unintentionally.

The intent here is that we are just in regulations and finalizing it with it. But it's going to be a discussion with a number of organizations that are affiliated of dealing with the same problem of overpopulation and lack of care of some of these abandoned animals.

Mr. Narth: So, to further clarification, then; the minister is saying that someone who has a personal

pet that is bred and they sell the puppies, but not considered a puppy mill or full-time breeder—they would not need a licence, then.

So, individuals selling their—the puppies from a litter—whether that be on a farm, or individuals—would not need a licence under this new bill.

Mr. Kostyshyn: The interpretation, I think, has been somewhat 'miscrued' by the members opposite.

Basically, what it says—its intended consequences are that, you know, the farmer or the producer has a dog, unfortunately, unintentionally was bred. There is rules and regulations to follow, and we are building opportunities.

Our intent here is to deal with the puppy mills that have mass productions of breeds of dogs and are marketing them on—in the backdoor scenario.

So that is what our rules and regulations is focused on, and we will continue to try and address those in appropriate matter. It's an ongoing situation—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, so to be clear, this bill leaves out critical details, and those are, like, who needs a licence, how to get one and how long it takes. This is entirely all up to regulations.

So my question, honourable Speaker, is why is this minister asking Manitobans to accept the law when the most important rules haven't yet even been written?

Mr. Kostyshyn: We are going to do regulatory consultation with—to establish that the intent is to capture ongoing commercial activity. The intent is not to require individuals acting in good faith, whether due to circumstances or one-off situation, to hold the licence. Hopefully that maybe clarifies your question, sir.

Mr. Narth: Maybe the minister then could clarify for Manitobans: Where would they obtain a licence and how long would it take to obtain said licence?

Mr. Kostyshyn: They will apply and provide a licence information required. As we are in the early stages developing, we will have a mechanism; it will be working with our provincial staff to see where—what's more appropriately.

But I want to assure members opposite that there will be a simplified process of application, and working with the people who are in the business and have

an opportunity to maintain their business at a reasonable cost.

Mr. Narth: So, just to clarify what the minister is saying, and maybe he could confirm if that's accurate, so, we—in legislation we're moving for doubling fines up to \$100,000 now, but we don't know where to get the licence and we don't know who needs a licence and we don't know any details around when a licence is required.

Mr. Kostyshyn: Well, obviously, I'll put it in a simplified form: the intent is to capture ongoing activity. In order to obtain a licence, right, they will apply and provide licence information and the matter will be determined through regulations. So, we will have further information to provide as we work on regulations with our department staff.

Mr. Narth: Thank you, honourable Speaker, for that clarification.

So, we don't know where to get a licence, we don't know who to go to get the licence, we don't know who needs the licence. We do know that the fines have doubled.

So, further to my line of questions is, I wonder if veterinarians are needing to be involved in the approval process for who gets a licence, as in large animal care and now in agriculture, you need the approval of a veterinarian to get medication and to approve movement licences. Would that also apply for this new legislation?

Mr. Kostyshyn: In our consultation with the various organizations, and let me be clear in the statement: obviously, I think the members opposite fail to recognize the challenges that the number of organizations such as the Canadian Kennel Club, Winnipeg Humane Society, the Animal Justice group. They needed to be consulted and they have been consulted, and we will continue to build a plan.

The application for a licence will be very soon, online, but we are working on the finer details and it's not intended to go against anybody wishing to stay in the business and maintaining their opportunity. I think—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

* (15:20)

Mr. Narth: So I can appreciate that everything in this bill is going to be in regulation, and all that we know is what the fines are. So, I can accept that.

But in in the bill briefing, the minister had—the minister and his staff had highlighted that there

will be a safety mechanism that licences would need to have interaction with a veterinarian. So, I just want to clarify if dogs that are bred for sale will have oversight by a veterinarian.

Mr. Kostyshyn: We definitely want to have a licensing regime, as we understand. How will someone get a licence—and I'll just get back to it: they will apply and provide a licence information that we require, and the matter of this will be determined in the regulations.

How would this be enforced? We will be monitoring online activities, and for those advertising without display of a licence, we will also respond to concerns and complaints.

But we do have the department resource officers in place. The chief veterinarian officer will also be involved in this. It is just basically an understanding of regulations to minimize the puppy mills that exist in our province and—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, would the minister please be able to clarify if a licence isn't able to be obtained within an appropriate amount of time, within the amount of time that it—that is necessary to have the sale of a litter of puppies, what would be the consequences if that approval is delayed?

Mr. Kostyshyn: I'm assuming that member opposite is trying to make a worse scenario out of this. It's a very simplified process. By simply applying online, and based on historical information, research or not, I don't foresee any challenges.

But let me be clear: this is as proposal with one of many tools in the toolbox, and we will be working with agencies and we will be giving adequate time as we move into this formulation of addressing this issue. And I hope member opposite can somewhat support—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, so if it's an immediate approval process on an online application and there is no delay, what oversight does this bill create to improve the safety of dogs in the province?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Well, I'm sure the member opposite is quite familiar with—if the example that the member opposite's trying to determine that unexpected pregnant dog has puppies, I think anybody that has any association with this dog would soon diagnose and there would be adequate time. So, I think rather than make a ghost story out of this, I think there would be more than adequate time in the application process.

It's fairly simple. Just the communication through the chief veterinarian officer, through the local veterinarian clinics, will be public knowledge and applications can be put into place. But I think it's not as complicating as the member opposite is trying to make it.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, with that, one final important question that I need to pose to the Agriculture Minister is: What direct role will Crown lands play in the development of this bill?

Mr. Kostyshyn: I love the sense of humour that—some of these are border collie dogs, and they obviously are going to be used on Crown lands to chase cattle around in the area, so—in all support of the good breed of the border collie dogs. They are an excellent dog in the cattle industry for Crown lands—is used often.

Thank you.

Debate

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

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you for the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 19.

And let me be clear—and I think I tried to portray that in the question—is that animal welfare is of utmost importance. Whether you're a pet owner or you're an agriculture producer, many of us here, including the minister and myself, born, raised and still currently live on a farm. So, we see, whether it's animals that we rely on for our livelihood or they're companion pets, we, on both sides of the House, are passionate about animal welfare.

The question before us today is whether this legislation actually improves outcomes, and that's why I asked the order of questions as I had. And, you know, the question is whether it creates a better outcome for the animals or whether it creates confusion, unintended consequences and, of course, more red tape, as we know the NDP sure love to create.

And, you know, that's where our concerns begin. Because when you look closely at Bill 19 what stands out is not what's in the legislation, but it's what's missing. The minister has been very clear that many of the most important details will be defined later through regulation. And those are things, as we saw, like who needs a licence, what the requirements are to obtain a licence, how long the approvals process is, and much of that is still unknown.

So what are we being asked to do in this legislation? We're being asked to pass a framework without knowing how it will actually function in practice. And what shouldn't—what should be concerning every member of this House, because Manitobans deserve clarity, not uncertainty: they deserve to know the rules before they are expected to follow them.

Honourable Speaker, one of the most concerning gaps in this legislation is how it treats unintended consequences. As we know, not every litter is planned. Across Manitoba, families, farmers and rural residents occasionally deal with unintended breeding. Many of them are concerned what this new system holds if that occurs.

Honourable Speaker, everyone wants to comply. Manitobans are law-abiding citizens that want to function within the parameters of the law and they don't want to face the consequences. As we see in this bill, it's clearly outlined what those consequences will be: penalties doubled from 10 to 20 thousand. For more severe offenses, up to \$100,000 which, definitely not defending, you know, throwing the consequences at somebody that rightfully deserves that.

So I think not a single person in the House would dispute stiffer penalties on someone who is found to be a repeat offender of poor care for animals. But it's definitely concerning that, what's clearly laid out and explained in this legislation, is the doubling of the fee structure for a first offence without having clarity and leaving that up to regulation with what exactly is required.

Further to that—I don't want to waste the time of the House here today. We'll eagerly wait to hear from the public during committee on the concerns that exist and hopefully, together with the concerns that I've brought forward through my line of questions, as well as debate here today, we can get some clarity and some guidance on what that regulation will look like through the committee process.

But we had heard from the minister earlier that veterinarians will be included to increase the safety and the safe outcomes of these litters that fall under the licensing requirements. A large concern is what that additional burden to the limited supply of veterinarians will be across Manitoba.

* (15:30)

So, if I understand it, it will follow very similar requirements to the movement and show and sale of large animals.

So, this—and a system like this already exists if you are to move and show large animals, some of that's, you know—and horses and cattle, so the approval of those licensing—that licensing process and the permits involves the approval of a veterinarian.

If this would be similar, we're talking about thousands of new licences across Manitoba, and that's not an exaggeration. There are thousands of dogs that are bred, and if that is to be included, what is the burden on the veterinarians in our province?

And if this is something that's going to further delay the approval process for obtaining a licence, we're going to see the opposite result of what this minister sets out to achieve because if people are going to be breaking the law by having unintended litters that aren't licensed, they may be making alternate decisions.

So, honourable Speaker, that, you know—those are a few of the concerns that we have, and I think Manitobans, those who care for their pets and care for the safety of pets that they look to purchase by breeders in the province, I think they deserve clarity around that.

Along with the clarity for the individual Manitobans, I think that municipalities, those that are enforcing bylaws, also deserve the clarity because we haven't been told that there's going to be any increase in provincial staffing to follow through on the enforcement. And currently, under the current structure, the animal rights enforcement is many times being done together with bylaw enforcement together with the bylaws of cities, towns and municipalities.

If this is going to download more of that burden on municipalities, I think the government, together with the minister, in legislation should make that more clear, and these are all things that shouldn't be of surprise in regulation after public has had their time to bring their concerns forward.

So with that, honourable Speaker, I look forward to hearing more about this bill and the concerns that the public has during the committee process.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll now put the question on second reading of Bill 19, The Animal Care Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

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

The Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to second reading of Bill 38, The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act.

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

Motion presented.

MLA Schmidt: Bill 38, builds on the great work our government is doing to restore our education system, rebuild faith in that system and support safe and caring schools in every corner of our province.

Bill 38 takes concrete steps to protect students, to ensure that all divisions are led by experienced educators and to expand the supports available to First Nations educational organizations across Manitoba.

This bill supports safe and 'scarn'—safe and caring school environments by updating provisions related to the provincial code of conduct to focus on student behaviour and to broaden the definition of bullying to ensure it captures the use of generative AI technologies.

The definition of bullying is being broadened to include harm to individuals, groups and a broader school community. These changes to the definition of bullying better reflect the realities of today, specifically with the advancement of technology. As society changes, we are making changes to our legislation in response to ensure that we are responsive. Language in The Public Schools Act will be revised to better align with the revised student-focused provincial code of conduct, since teacher behaviour is already governed through professional codes of conduct through employment agreements and collective agreements.

Bill 38 also ensures school divisions and districts will be led by qualified and experienced educators by

legislating the requirement that school divisions and districts hire a superintendent, establish minimum qualification standards for superintendents, which include having previous teaching experience and a teaching certificate in good standing and administrative experience relevant to the duties of a superintendent and defining the core responsibilities of that role.

While all school divisions have a superintendent in place, this is really just a practice. This is not a requirement in the act, so this bill legislates that requirement, which was the request from the sector and something our government sees great value in.

There's also a requirement for school boards to notify the minister with the name and qualifications of any newly appointed superintendent within 10 days. The amendments will lay out in statute the responsibility of superintendents for implementing school board policies, administering educational programming and acting as liaison between the board and government; these responsibilities in addition to any other powers, duties and functions assigned to them by the act or the school board.

In order to ensure that all school boards can benefit from the input of an experienced and qualified educator when making hiring decisions, school boards will be required to provide superintendents, at minimum, with the opportunity to provide hiring recommendations for new staff.

Through amendments to The Manitoba School Boards Association Act, this bill also expands eligibility for full membership in the Manitoba School Boards Association, the MSBA, for Indigenous educational organizations and other organizations and promotes representation of Indigenous voices in the association and in our education sector more broadly.

By expanding eligibility for membership in the MSBA, this bill will give Indigenous educational organizations and other organizations access to a range of programs and services, including labour relations, human resources support, bargaining support, risk management, trustee education, employee benefits, insurance and policy development.

Through the MSBA, this membership will also provide Indigenous education organizations and other organizations with a common voice with which Manitoba school boards can speak to governments or other organizations at the local, provincial, or national levels on issues of interest or concern. This is yet

another example of how we are working as a government to create one Manitoba by working in partnership across sectoral and jurisdictional lines.

Bill 38 also gives the MSBA board full discretion to approve or reject application for full membership based on criteria that is provided in legislation and criteria as set out in MSBA bylaws. In order to ensure that Indigenous voices are meaningfully heard, provisions in this bill will require that when the MSBA has one or more members that are Indigenous educational organizations, the executive of the MSBA must include a director who is a designated representative of an Indigenous educational organization.

This bill was informed by discussions with the Manitoba School Boards Association, the Manitoba association for school superintendents, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and other valued partners. We will continue to engage with all of our partners in the education sector, our school divisions, our school districts, the broader community to clearly communicate and implement these important changes.

Honourable Speaker—honourable Deputy Speaker, we will continue to rebuild our education system one legislation—one piece of legislation at a time. We will continue to rebuild trust that was broken under the PCs' time in government, and we're going to do it for kids, we're going to do it for families and we're going to do it for one Manitoba.

Thank you very much, honourable Speaker. Merci, miigwech, and I conclude my remarks by saying that I look forward to the unanimous support of this bill by the House. Thank you.

Questions

The Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

* (15:40)

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): How does Bill 38 define Indigenous educational organizations?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Yes, we're very lucky to have so many great partners across our province, including Indigenous educational organizations, such as the Manitoba First Nation educational resource centre. We also know that there are many First Nations

here in this great beautiful province that deliver education themselves on reserve.

So these are the type of Indigenous educational organizations that we are talking about. It is defined in the bill. And we also are working in partnership with the MSBA. Obviously, we respect—unlike members opposite, who spent their time in government fighting with the Manitoba School Boards Association, attacking their very existence—we work with our partners at the Manitoba School Boards Association, and we look forward to them developing their bylaws that will provide greater certainty, clarity and—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: It is unfortunate, and again, unbecoming of an Education Minister, of course, going with that tone. I thought we were going to have a nice 15 minutes of questions and some answers.

But I would like to ask, honourable Deputy Speaker: Can the minister give a couple other examples of the Indigenous educational organizations? *[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt: I'm not exactly sure what the content of the member's question was, which is not so dissimilar to every other day in this Chamber, honourable Speaker.

What I can say is that Bill 38 was developed in consultation with all of our education sector partners, the Manitoba School Boards Association, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, who I met with just this morning alongside with the Manitoba School Boards Association. We enjoy a great partnership, and we are very excited for the full support of this House for Bill 38, something that is going to really make great strides and improve education here in Manitoba.

Thank you.

Mr. Ewasko: It is unfortunate that when the Education Minister was trying to listen to my question, the Minister for Families was shouting myself down. So, I'll ask another question. So, if I can ask the minister: What is a designated representative? *[interjection]*

It's unfortunate, assistant deputy minister, that this continues, the heckling from the side there.

So I would like to ask: In Bill 38, what is the definition of the designated representative?

MLA Schmidt: So, I guess we'll go back to school here for the member to Lac du Bonnet. If he's not aware, there are copies of the bill available here in the Chamber. We also had a bill briefing with the member from Lac du Bonnet. I'm not sure if he picked up a copy of the bill that day.

But the member—the question that the member is asking is printed in black and white in the bill. So, if he would like me to read clause by clause the bill, I guess that's how he can spend his time here in question period.

So, for the benefit of the Chamber, to answer this brilliant question from the member of Lac du Bonnet, I will read the definition of a designated representative: means an individual designated under subsection 5.1(3) to represent an Indigenous educational organization or other organization.

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

And for the benefit of all members, when I'm in this Chair, you can refer to me as honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: So, okay. So, to the minister: What are the membership requirements for the organizations applying to the association?

MLA Schmidt: Yes, thank you to the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) for that question. And again, this is printed in black and white in Bill 38 that is available for all of the members and for everyone here to see.

But, again, if he would like me to read clause by clause for the bill, I suppose I could have done that. I didn't think that was a very useful way to spend the time in this Chamber this afternoon. But, again, I will read the black-and-white of the bill that is before all of the members here today.

So those criteria are that if an—if not an Indigenous educational organization as defined in the act, the applicant must be a non-profit organization and publicly disclose its finances. The objectives of the organization must align with those of the MSBA. The organization must meet any additional criteria—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: So, it's unfortunate again that the Minister of Education continues to put on display exactly the inappropriateness that she displays here each and every day.

An Honourable Member: Just read the bill.

Mr. Ewasko: So, we did have a respectful bill briefing. I have read the bill. I'm asking questions not only on behalf of our team, but also of Manitobans.

So what does the legislation—how does the legislation support Indigenous languages in schools?

MLA Schmidt: Yes, again, you know, we are so grateful to our partners at the MSBA, and there are so many fantastic benefits that come with being a member of the MSBA. I read out some of those during the introduction of the debate of this bill. And so, again, there are so many wonderful benefits that come with being a member of the MSBA.

So if there are Indigenous educational organizations or other organizations that end up receiving full membership with the MSBA, some of those benefits include labour relation support, human resource support, bargaining support, risk management assessment, education for trustees. There are—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Obviously, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) did not hear my question due to the excessive heckling by her seatmate, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine).

So I'll repeat the question for the minister: How does this legislation support Indigenous languages in schools?

MLA Schmidt: Well, again, I'm—again, the Manitoba School Boards Association currently holds a seat at the table for the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. Because of the way that the law is written today, MFNERC cannot hold full membership, but MSBA, like our government, really sees the value in partnering very closely with our Indigenous partners, with our First Nations partners.

And so that is why we brought forward this bill today, which talks about membership in the Manitoba School Boards Association. We've also done incredible work across government. I'm so proud to work with the Minister of Advanced Education and Training (MLA Cable) to make sure that we are finally rolling out here in Manitoba, for the first time in history, Indigenous immersion language programming here—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: So I'm asking the minister: How do you plan to ensure the effective implementation of the amendments regarding the Indigenous languages in school?

MLA Schmidt: I'm glad to get up and speak to Manitobans about the great work that our government is doing in promoting and helping to restore and revitalize Indigenous languages into the classroom here in Manitoba, something that in the past was disallowed. Indigenous languages were disallowed in the classroom. It's our government that's going to make sure that Indigenous languages are returned to the classroom. I'm so happy to get up and talk about that all day long.

Unfortunately, there's nothing about Indigenous languages in this bill, so I'm not exactly sure—we're supposed to be debating Bill 38. So, if the member from Lac du Bonnet has any questions about the content of Bill 38, I'd be happy to answer them.

At the same time, honourable Speaker, I can stand up here and talk about the good work that our department is doing. Our—

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's game-time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: The minister had 10 minutes to put words on the record in regards to this bill, and once again, fell short of that, putting on only under five minutes, honourable Deputy Speaker.

So what measures will be put in place to monitor the progress of the Indigenous educational organizations after they join the Manitoba School Boards Association?

* (15:50)

MLA Schmidt: I'm a bit perplexed by the question. So, again, these amendments are amendments that have been requested by the Manitoba School Boards Association, by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. Like I said, those organizations already had a partnership. What they have asked our government to do and what we are listening is to provide the legislative framework to allow them to formalize that relationship.

I've read about the benefits of becoming a member of the Manitoba School Boards Association. I'm a bit, quite frankly, offended by the suggestion that there's some need for the minister now to analyze and see what's going on at MFNERC. We have full trust in our partners in education. We believe in their local autonomy. We trust the great work that we're doing. This bill, again, is about—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: So, once again, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) stands up and congratulates the good work that we did in the Department of Education in regards to Indigenous education and inclusion and reconciliation, honourable Deputy Speaker, because she wants to try to take some credit, but at least she's giving the credit to the department because we know that she has not moved anything in that manner at all.

So, in regards to bullying, can the minister explain how the issue of bullying in schools—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —and the expected impact on school culture is being—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —targeted in Bill 38?

MLA Schmidt: Again, I'm so grateful that Manitobans are watching today because, once again, the member from Lac du Bonnet really shows his hand. The hypocrisy to get up and ask a question about bullying, but to start that question by doing what he does day after day after day after day, which is to get in here and bully me. The personal attacks, attacks on my credibility, attacks on my intelligence, how long I speak, he's quite frankly obsessed with it, honourable Deputy Speaker.

What I wish for Manitobans is that PCs would get their act together and instead of being upset—you know, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) lives rent free in the member's head. I seem to live rent free in the member's head. If the member had any good sense, what he would do is listen to Manitobans—

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Deputy Speaker, the only one that's shouting and doing personal attacks in this Chamber is the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, as well as the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), but this is nothing new for you-know-who.

So I would like to ask—*[interjection]* Minister of Environment's chiming in here, defending as usual.

What feedback have you received from the Indigenous communities regarding the proposed changes to Bill 38?

MLA Schmidt: Again, if the member from Lac du Bonnet had showed up today to do his job, if he

would—just like he doesn't listen to Manitobans, he clearly is not listening here in debate. We've already answered this question.

It's not so much that I need to get feedback from MFNERC or other Indigenous education partners on these changes. It is them who have asked for these changes, so we have listened.

It's something that the member from Lac du Bonnet could learn about, listening to Manitobans, working on behalf of Manitobans instead of coming in here day after day with the doom and gloom and the personal attacks, which he continues. He can't help himself, honourable Speaker.

On this side of the House, we're interested in working for Manitobans. That's what Bill 38 does. We are listening to our education partners, and we are keeping—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Can the Education Minister let Manitobans know that, in 51(2) in the bill, how many of these individuals exist in the province today?

MLA Schmidt: Okey-dokey. So, again, honourable Speaker, the—I don't know what sort of games that the member opposite is playing. Again, I will refer him to, again, that every member of this Legislative Assembly was given a copy of the bill.

What he's referring to is the part of the bill that we have brought in to finally legislate, something that the previous government failed to do, and that superintendents—the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, who I met with just this morning, and I thank them so much for their incredible work and their partnership—have been asking for this for decades. The previous government in his time as a failed Education minister failed to listen.

We are finally listening to the superintendents. We are going to bring in this legislation to make sure that every single school division in this province has a superintendent with a teaching certificate, something—

The Deputy Speaker: Minister's time has expired.

And with that, the time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It is unfortunate that the Education Minister, once again, is not really taking her role as the Education Minister of not

only education but also early childhood learning—
[interjection]

Once again, honourable Deputy Speaker, it is just amazing that the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), who seems to want to talk a lot when the mics are not on. Unfortunately, there was a bill that was being debated just prior—just a couple of bills prior to Bill 38—and the minister couldn't necessarily champion that bill.

So—but today, right now, honourable Deputy Speaker, speaking to Bill 38, The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act. [interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Deputy Speaker, this legislation addresses critical issues in Manitoba's education system, student safety, bullying, school governance and the inclusion of Indigenous educational organizations in provincial education governance.

It is unfortunate, honourable Deputy Speaker, that the Minister for Families continues to stand and, you know, backs her friend and colleague, as well as the Minister for Justice, on the topic of schools.

And we talk about various different positions throughout government, and both of these ministers have had many, many, many staff absolutely quit under their watch because of the behaviour that Manitobans had seen today and continue to hear put on the record by not only the Minister for Education, the Minister of Families, but also the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) on a day-to-day basis in here.

Schools, honourable Deputy Speaker, are not just buildings where children learn reading, writing and math, even though, under this NDP government, we've seen students in Manitoba go from third and fourth in the country of Canada, in numeracy and literacy, to dead last under the former NDP government.

And, matter of fact, they actually fell further behind ninth, so even further last in this province. And it was thanks to our government, under seven and a half years, was able to bring and help students recover and start coming back to the good—walk the good life and starting to achieve closer to the sixth and seventh mark.

What worries me, with the attitude of the Education Minister, honourable Deputy Speaker, is that those students will start to slide. And I think because

when we see on a day-to-day basis, we see the bullying happen from the NDP benches on a day-to-day basis.

So, as I was saying, schools are the environments where young people form their first impressions of fairness, responsibility and community. These are the places where children and youth learn how to work together, resolve conflict and develop resilience, something that, unfortunately, majority of the NDP members have failed to do. Now, that's not all the members over on that side, honourable Deputy Speaker, but a great majority of them.

So when we start talking about Bill 38, we start talking about encouraging developing that school environment, you know, to make sure that those environments that are unsafe or negative, whether through bullying, harassment or exclusion, these fundamental learning opportunities are disruptive, and the development of healthy, confident and engaged citizens ends up being compromised. And majority of the time, it does start from the top: the Education Minister of early childhood learning and education.

* (16:00)

Bill 38 also begins by modernizing the definition of bullying in The Public Schools Act. So, bullying is now explicitly defined to include any conduct that, in quotation, creates a negative or unsafe school environment, end quotation—whether it targets an individual or a group or class of students.

Now it is unfortunate that this Education Minister didn't really want to put more words on the record to talk about their bill. They couldn't bring it forward, honourable Deputy Speaker, in the time allotted between March—the beginning of March and now.

But that also points to the failures and the lack of dedication and work of the Families Minister, who is the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), and I know that some members of the NDP bench are nodding in agreement to that because they have seen that for the last two and a half years already.

We see that this legislation recognized the role of technology and artificial intelligence—*[interjection]* Oh, honourable Deputy Speaker, I hear the Minister of Advanced Education wanting to get up and put a few words on the record, but she actually had a chance already. And we actually—in this Chamber, we have certain rules where if it gets past a certain time, it's—you know, it's unfortunate, but other members can't put words on the record.

So I would encourage the Minister for Advanced Education to speak to their Government House Leader to maybe get some of these bills rolling a little bit sooner. Maybe read the rules book and get it rolling here in the Manitoba Legislature a bit sooner. *[interjection]* The—honourable Deputy Speaker, it's unfortunate that I'm being heckled from that side of the bench again—but, again, it's nothing new with this group of the NDP, not only ministers but back-benchers as well.

We must remember, honourable Deputy Speaker, that bullying is more than a disciplinary issue. It has profound impacts on mental health, student engagement and educational outcomes. Research shows that students who experience bullying are more likely to struggle academically, suffer from anxiety and depression and disengage from school altogether. We are seeing this on a day-to-day basis, with the fact that, right here in Manitoba, truancy is growing—it seems to be on a everyday matter.

I do know that some of the local groups are getting together to try to come up with some solutions to this. Matter of fact, this coming Thursday, there's many groups getting together with Winnipeg School Division and try to come up with some solutions. And I would tell them—I would encourage them; I would encourage the Minister of Education, who speaks highly of the department, which—as do I—would maybe dust off some of those strategies that we were working on when we were still in government to move forward and to bring those forward with those community members to try to make sure that students are getting to school, make sure that they are learning on a day-to-day basis, honourable Deputy Speaker.

So, by broadening the legal definition of bullying, which again, the minister had pointed out eloquently in the bill that I had sitting on my desk. And it seemed like she failed to bring the bill to the Chamber today. But Manitoba is also signalling that all forms of harm—digital, AI assisted or group targeted—are serious and actionable.

It is going to be interesting also that we see—and I mean, the minister couldn't answer the question. But I had basically asked the minister a question on how many superintendents today are practising in Manitoba without a teacher's licence. And so this was something that the minister couldn't answer, wouldn't answer. I don't know what—really why that seemed—why she took offence to that question.

But I'm assuming that when this bill passes today and through committee, we'll hear from community

members on Bill 38. And so with that, honourable Deputy Speaker, I look forward to hearing from stakeholders, partners, education partners, all through this great province of ours, talking about Bill 38.

I look forward to the many, many, many people showing up because according to the Minister of Education, there's going to be many partners, many stakeholders coming to speak in favour of this bill. I look forward to seeing all of those individuals at committee on Bill 38 whenever that committee gets called.

Thank you for the opportunity, honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question on second reading of Bill 38, The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba School Boards Association Amendment Act.

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

Bill 41—The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act

The Deputy Speaker: We'll move on to second reading of Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act.

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor), that Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act; Loi sur la promotion de l'inclusion dans le sport amateur, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

The Deputy Speaker: And, for the clarity of the House, Bill 38 was—the motion for Bill 38 was accordingly passed.

Motion presented.

MLA Kennedy: Honourable Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak in the House today about Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act. We all know how important it is to make everyone feel welcomed, respected and valued in sport. Inclusive sport enhances the lives of all who participate and ensures all children know they have the right to play in Manitoba.

This bill supports a more inclusive sport environment by requiring provincial sport organizations to adopt an inclusions policy and implement initiatives to enhance inclusion in their sport. We know that many provincial sports organizations are already doing meaningful work to improve inclusion.

However, we also know that those efforts are uneven across the sports system. Some organizations already have policies and initiatives in place to help enhance inclusion in their sport, while others lack the capacity, consistency or clarity to move beyond good intentions.

This bill provides a formal, consistent framework that will move inclusion from best practice to a shared responsibility and provide long-term stability regardless of leadership or other changes within a sport. These efforts will result in reduced barriers for Manitobans accessing amateur sport.

This bill recognizes the important work already happening in amateur sport and building on these efforts by providing clarity, consistency and accountability. Ultimately, it is about ensuring that everyone in Manitoba who wants to participate in amateur sport has a fair opportunity to do so and that our sport system reflects the diversity and values of the province.

I ask that my colleagues on all sides of the House support this bill to 'strengshen'—strengthen the inclusion in amateur sport.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Who's responsible for establishing the core inclusion policy?

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I'm sorry, honourable Speaker. I actually couldn't hear the member's question.

Mr. Ewasko: This continues to be a problem in this Chamber. So, unfortunately, the minister and I are trying to have a question-and-answer time, and the Minister for Families continues to not only heckle me but talks amongst her group very loudly.

So, it's unfortunate that the minister didn't hear the question, so I'll repeat the question for the minister because we had a very respectful bill briefing, honourable Speaker.

So, who is responsible for establishing the core inclusion policy?

* (16:10)

MLA Kennedy: So I would like to say that amateur sport plays a foundational role in community life. It supports physical and mental health, builds confidence in leadership skills and creates a sense of belonging. It's really important for youth within our province to be able to participate, but we know participation in sport doesn't always reflect the diversity in Manitoba, and so certain groups continue to face structural, cultural, financial or accessibility barriers.

When sport is inclusive, everyone benefits. Athletes and participants feel welcome, safe and valued; organizations become stronger, more representative and more sustainable; and communities benefit from higher participation rates, better health outcomes and better social cohesion.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: So, once again, I will repeat the question for the minister because, again, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) was busy yelling from across the Chamber. *[interjection]*

And now the Minister for Education is standing there—or sitting there and calling me a liar from across, when the minister had a chance to answer questions—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko:—a few minutes ago.

So, I ask the minister again, who is responsible for establishing the core inclusion policy?

MLA Kennedy: So, with regards to this bill, the framework will be developed. We'll be working with Sport Manitoba, who is the body that our Province provides funding to for amateur sport in the province, and they will be working to develop the framework in order for this to go forward.

Thank you.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Thank you. That was the question; that was the answer, answered. Thank you very much.

So, which organizations must adopt this inclusion policy?

MLA Kennedy: So, the folks who will be adopting this policy will be the provincial sport organizations

who are responsible for amateur sport. There are also a few others that I would like to give the answer to, which I want to ensure I'm looking at my notes here to provide that. Sorry, give me one second so that I can provide a clear list.

So organizations that will be a part of this—that will be regulated are similar to The Protecting Youth in Sports Act, so: Accessible Sport Connection Manitoba, Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and rec council, Sports en français, Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre and Winnipeg Newcomer Sport Academy *[phonetic]*—Academy.

So once the act—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker, I guess.

I just want to say to the minister, I do want to say thank you to her for the very respectful bill debriefing—bill briefing that we had with her and the deputy minister as well. And I want to thank her for the answer she just provided. I know she wants to finish a little bit of that as well, because she was on a roll there.

But I also want to say, when she's concluding her first answer there, can she also answer how many of these organizations are going to be expected to fall with the inclusion policy under Sport Manitoba?

MLA Kennedy: All provincial sports organizations will need to follow this once it becomes passed into law. We want to ensure that—we know that different organizations, of course, have—they want to promote inclusion within sport and they are doing it differently—some folks have capacity more than others—but we will be expecting that every provincial sports organization will be following this.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: How does this benefit amateur sports right here in the province of Manitoba?

MLA Kennedy: This will benefit sports with the—amateur sports within Manitoba because we know and we want to ensure that all children know that they have the right to play, that they are welcomed, that they feel safe, that they have the ability to take part in provincial—in sport.

And so our government wants to ensure that inclusion is embedded within governance within sport organizations, that the boards will be taking training that will be mandatory to ensure that they are

understanding how important inclusion is in sport. And they'll be keeping track of demographics with the people that are—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: So my next question was going to be, does the minister not feel that amateur sports in Manitoba are trying their best to be inclusive? But yet her second last answer, she basically had started saying that a lot of the sports are already doing this.

So what would be a percentage of sports—amateur sports—that are not working towards an inclusive culture within their sport body?

MLA Kennedy: Instead of speaking in percentages, I think it's important to speak to why this legislation is needed. And this legislation is needed because we want to show that there's a strong demonstration of Manitoba's commitment to a safe, diverse and inclusive amateur sport program.

So many of the PSOs already do meaningful work to improve inclusion. However, those efforts are uneven and across the sport system. Some organizations already have policies and initiatives to enhance inclusion where others may lack the capacity, consistency or clarity to move beyond good intentions. So, this legislation provides a formal, consistent framework that ensures minimum expectations across all provincially funded sport bodies—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: In Bill 41, it is—it states that, in six dash one, under participant assessment: A provincial sport organization must conduct an assessment of participants in its sport to obtain general demographic information about the participants to determine if there are under-represented groups in the sport.

So I'd like to ask the minister: How does Bill 41 define under-represented groups within the context of amateur sports?

MLA Kennedy: We're going to be taking this on because we want to ensure that there's a sector-wide policy and standardized training. So, that's going to ensure that there's a reduction in duplication; it ensures consistency and it supports smaller organizations they may lack internal capacity.

So, the data collection, through the participant assessments, are going to help us better understand the participation patterns, identify the gaps and barriers that may be there. And we're going to have smarter, targeted programs, investments and policy decisions

because of this information. The annual reporting is going to ensure there's 'transparashy'—transparency, and it keeps the focus on outcomes, not just intentions.

The Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: So the minister talks about the fact that they will be taking this on, so I'm assuming she means the department and under her leadership. But I was under the impression that this was being brought forward as a piece of legislation—*[interjection]*

So, the Minister of Education just continues, just can't help themselves, honourable Deputy Speaker—*[interjection]*

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: So I'd like to know, in regards to this Bill 41, is—are they going to be providing a working document to Sport Manitoba, or are they expecting to Sport Manitoba to start from scratch?

MLA Kennedy: So, I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question there. So, Sport Manitoba has the expertise; they're aware, they are the experts in this field. And so they are going to be the ones who are going to be building out this framework. They will take documents, if they exist currently, that may be, you know, current and available to utilize within this inclusion policy. Or they're going to develop others that make more sense. So, it's really up to them.

* (16:20)

And then we want to ensure that progress will be measured and there are targets that are going to be set. So, it's going to be measured through Sport Manitoba's review of the reports of the activities that are undertaken by this—provincial sport organizations.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you to the minister for that answer.

I'd like to ask the minister: How will Sport Manitoba support provincial sport organizations in implementing the required inclusion training?

MLA Kennedy: So, Sport Manitoba will be providing support to the provincial sport organizations. That is the role they have, these relationships with the provincial sport organizations, and they're going to be there to help build capacity to ensure that provincial sport organizations know what's needed in regards to this legislation and they're going to, if—you know, there are smaller sport organizations that need to build capacity, they'll be there to help them. It's going to look different for all different sport organizations.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you to the minister. Minister, can you—or, to the minister, can you provide—can they provide examples of best practices from other provinces or countries that inform the development of Bill 41?

MLA Kennedy: What I will say is, similar to The Protecting Youth in Sports Act, this bill, which is to do with promoting inclusion in amateur sport, is actually at the forefront in Canada. We have other provincial jurisdictions who are going to be looking at Manitoba and are very interested in what we're doing here. So, we haven't been able to utilize any examples from other provinces or territories because we're at the leading pack of this.

Thank you.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you to the minister for that answer.

Will there be a dedicated budget or resources allocated specifically for the implementation of this act?

MLA Kennedy: There's not going to be any new additional funding that we require to implement the provisions under the act because the requirements will be integrated into the existing framework that many of the provincial sport organizations have.

So, for example, PSOs are currently expected to provide annual reporting to support Manitoba on programming and participants as a part of their funding agreement.

And so the reporting currently already includes some gender data, but additional demographic information is not required. So, some sport organizations may collect additional demographic information, but this isn't consistent across all organizations, and so we're looking to ensure that this will be a part of their reporting requirements.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: And I'm just asking, does she—does the minister have a specific dollar value that they are going to be adding to Sport Manitoba and to amateur sports to help deliver this training? And also, what type of feedback have they received from stakeholders, partners in the amateur sports community, regarding Bill 41?

MLA Kennedy: As I had previously said, there is not going to be any additional funding that's going to be provided for this bill and for enacting this.

What I will say is the feedback that we've received is that provincial sport organizations want to

increase participation. They want to promote inclusion and they want children to be able to be a part of their sport organizations.

And so the feedback that we've received is positive in that sense. They want to increase sport participation within their organizations.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: And with that, the time for questions has expired.

Debate

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

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Honourable Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up today and put forward a few words on the record on Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act.

Prior to having the bill proceed through this second reading debate and on to committee, it will be interesting to see the various amateur sports come to the Manitoba Legislature and put their words on the record in regards to the support that, I believe—it sounds like that the minister has said that all amateur sports across the province are in support of this.

I strongly believe that all amateur sports in—and also amateur organizations which help with youth, work with youth, trying to include more youth in sports, introduce more sports to various different ethnic groups all across this incredible province of ours, acting—or honourable Deputy Speaker.

In regards today, in regards to promoting inclusion in amateur sports, this bill seeks to address that issue and touches communities across Manitoba.

Now, who gets to participate in sport? We know that there's various organizations, businesses throughout Manitoba that fundraise and do an incredible job.

And I would like to say congratulations to Sport Manitoba, the umbrella organization, of course, which under that umbrella has so many incredible amateur sports, which gives so many—not only youth, honourable Deputy Speaker, but adults the opportunity to compete in a friendly environment all across this great province.

And when I look at some of the various different jobs or volunteer positions that people have—the volunteers have—throughout this great province of ours, it brings me to, you know, to one particular job

that volunteers do on a daily basis in this great province, and that's the referee.

And in some cases, we have referees in various different professions, sports, departments—I mean, here even in the Manitoba Legislature.

And, I mean, we all know that, you know—being a hockey coach for many years and participating in the sport—and we know that across both party lines, many of us all have either participated as coaches in amateur sports or even participated as a referee. And we all know that when the referee is assigned the job of a certain game or competition or whatever, we all know that if that referee loses control in the first period, well, good luck getting the behaviour back on track. And I think many of us can definitely relate to witnessing that on a—almost a daily basis, honourable Deputy Speaker.

And it's very important to make sure—and I have all the faith in the world in all the amateur sports in the province of Manitoba, that they are doing an incredible job and they're trying to be as inclusive as possible. This is something that—I mean, the Minister of Sport had mentioned that there will be no further funding. And that is a little disheartening, I think, to not only Sport Manitoba, but to various amateur sports here in Manitoba, because we saw as simple as the arts, sport and culture grant, which helped fund various not-for-profit and amateur sports all across this province to the tune of \$100 million, in addition to the community places grant, which is an additional \$25 million.

And so, I know that in the big picture, that this minister bringing forward Bill 41 didn't have the final say on those cuts that the Kinew government did to those two programs. But I'm encouraged, because I've had the pleasure of working with this minister, that she will be able to go and talk some common sense into the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and actually try to reinstate some of that funding to those various not-for-profit groups and amateur sports.

And especially when we talk about additional training that these amateur sports are going to have to do, the minister also says how there's going to have to be yearly reporting from those amateur sports, which will eventually go to Sport Manitoba, which will then eventually go to the minister.

* (16:30)

So I would like to think or say or suggest to this minister that she go and knock on door 204 and maybe get in there and advocate for her portfolio to get back

that \$125 million of funding that she could go and promote any kind of arts, sports and cultural activities throughout this great province of ours. Because we know that whether it's youth, whether it's adults, anybody in this province, honourable Deputy Speaker, it's very important to help those situations, those organizations, to expand their outreach within their communities and their surrounding communities to make sure that they are a more inclusive, inviting organization.

And I do, again, honourable Deputy Speaker, want to make sure that it gets on the record that I do believe that these organizations are working very hard to get that done. But, unfortunately, under this Kinew government, they're finding it tougher and tougher because of the affordability factors, not only to the parents and guardians, but also just to the adults that are trying to take some time out of their busy schedules and maybe go and participate in a amateur sport.

And so with that, honourable Deputy Speaker, I encourage the minister to go talk to—speak to the Premier, try to get some of that funding put back in or, at the very least, to try to help with the moving forward on this Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act. I look forward to seeing this bill proceed in a few seconds through this second reading.

And, again, I know that there's many, many, many other of my colleagues from either side of the Chamber that would have liked to put a few words on the record. But, again, we all know that there was almost two months of time to bring this bill forward; it's just unfortunate that the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) was unable to get it done and to make the—make sure that these bills had fulsome debates at second reading. I look forward to seeing this bill go to committee.

Thank you for the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question on second reading of Bill 41, The Promoting Inclusion in Amateur Sport Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

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

The Deputy Speaker: We will move on to second reading of Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act.

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

Motion presented.

MLA Naylor: I am pleased to rise today for the second reading of Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act. The bill includes four initiatives that will enhance safety for all Manitobans.

The first initiative brings forward amendments to The Highway Traffic Act to govern the use of personal electric vehicles on public roads. Personal electric vehicles are small, lightweight electric vehicles designed for short-distance travel, typically within urban areas. These devices include electric scooters, electric skateboards, e-unicycles and other similar devices. To date there's been no regulation of personal electric vehicles, despite their increasing popularity.

The amendments establish a legislative definition for personal electric vehicles and set out where and how they may operate on roads and bike paths across the province to ensure consistency for users and drivers. The amendments set a minimum age for use, a maximum speed limit, mandatory helmet use, equipment and lighting requirements and other operational rules, so that it is clear how these smaller motorized devices should operate on Manitoba roadways.

Many other Canadian jurisdictions, such as Saskatchewan, Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, regulate e-scooters with pilot project regulations. The department has consulted with many stakeholders throughout the development of the amendments. And overall, stakeholders were supportive of the changes and welcome a permanent approach to regulating these devices on our roadways in a way that is consistent with bicycles and e-bikes.

The second initiative brings forward amendments that will require overweight and over-dimensional vehicles and trailers to be registered and plated. Vehicles that exceed Manitoba's maximum allowable road weights and dimensions under law may only be operated on roads under a special permit issued by Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure.

The existing law allows this permit to be a form of vehicle registration. Overweight and oversized vehicles are travelling on roads without registration and licence plates, making them difficult to identify. These amendments will enable law enforcement and the public to identify the vehicle's owner in the event of a collision or infrastructure damage. It will also help ensure the vehicles are properly inspected and insured.

Under the proposed changes, overweight and over-dimensional vehicles falling within existing commercial truck and commercial trailer classifications would be required to be registered and plated, similar to other Canadian jurisdictions, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec.

Overweight and over-dimensional vehicles outside of these classifications, such as infrastructure equipment, would continue to operate under permit alone, as they are typically being driven or towed under specific conditions. The amendments were drafted in consultation with many industry stakeholders, law enforcement agencies and municipalities.

The third initiative brings forward amendments that would define three-wheeled vehicles under The Highway Traffic Act and create permanent safety rules for the use of these vehicles. Since 2015, Manitoba Public Insurance has registered these vehicles under a pilot project. Although registered as motorcycles, they may be operated by a person holding a class 5 licence. The pilot project found that the three-wheeled vehicles do not pose major road safety risks, supporting the conclusion the pilot project can end.

Amendments to The Highway Traffic Act will make these vehicles permanently eligible for registration and insurance and establish legislated safety rules, including prohibiting towing, requiring helmets and restricting youth passengers who require a child restraint system.

The fourth and final initiative introduces amendments regarding high-level automated vehicles. Automated vehicle technology is still developing and ranges in complexity from basic lane centring or parking assistance to fully driverless capabilities. Lower levels of driving automation are already available to Manitobans in many newer model cars.

With these proposed amendments, drivers will be prohibited from activating a vehicle's higher level automated system, those that allow the vehicle to

drive itself, unless permitted to do so as part of a pilot project or vehicle technology testing permit. The bill amends provisions related to how automated driving systems are defined in the act and adopts an international standard for defining levels of automated driving systems.

Prohibiting lower levels of automation is consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions, including British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. Drivers may continue to use their car's lower level functions, and any vehicles already equipped with higher level automated technology may still drive on Manitoba roads as long as those functions remain disabled.

Honourable Speaker, I am proud to bring this bill forward, as it reflects our government's ongoing commitment to improving safety across the province. I look forward to moving this legislation forward.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

* (16:40)

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I wonder if the minister could talk about testing permits for automated driving systems.

How will those permits be structured, and what criteria will be used to approve or deny them?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I apologize; I didn't quite hear the very first part of that sentence. I'm not sure if the member is referring to potential pilot projects for automated vehicles. If so, nothing like that is in the works right now, but as we're amending the legislation, we're preparing for something that could be brought forward in the future. And if I misunderstood the question, I will listen more carefully the second time.

Mr. Guenter: I thank the minister for that answer.

How many stakeholders were consulted and what feedback was received?

MLA Naylor: There are multiple parts to this bill, so kind of depending on which part we're talking about, in terms of the e-vehicles, we consulted with AMM, with the City of Winnipeg, with MPI, Winnipeg Police Service, RCMP, the rural law enforcement agencies, a bunch of rental service providers, Peg City Car Co-op, Green Action Centre, CAA, Winnipeg Trails and Manitoba trails and Bike Winnipeg.

I can speak to the other organizations we consulted with on other parts of the bill in my next answer if the member would like, because I'm probably out of time.

Mr. Guenter: Enforcement is a key part of this legislation. I'm wondering how will power output limits and operating rules for personal electric vehicles actually be enforced on the ground.

MLA Naylor: I mean, that's a reasonable question. Enforcement is always a challenge, but it's—this is very similar to how enforcement happens for bicycles and e-bikes. Road users are all expected to follow the rules of the road. In some ways, this is a way to just educate people more and to ensure that—and in some ways it can also help parents enforce, even with their own children, about ages and who's allowed to be out on the hallway, but—highways, but in terms of actually justice enforcement, they will treat this the same as they would with cyclists and e-cyclists.

Mr. Guenter: This bill introduces a number of new definitions and categories, and I'm wondering how—what public education efforts will be undertaken to ensure that the public is aware of these new rules.

MLA Naylor: I appreciate that question from the member opposite.

We know that there has to be education that goes along with this. There's also some regulations that have to come into play before this is enforced, and so it is really important that we roll out an education campaign, similar to changes we made in The Highway Traffic Act last year around snowplows and other kinds of operators where we, through MPI, were able to do an education campaign. We will use all the resources available to us to make sure people understand the rules.

Debate

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

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I want to thank the minister for the bill briefing in her office and making her deputy minister and department officials available for questions and giving us the opportunity to learn more about this bill. I look forward to further input from Manitobans at committee.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question on second reading of Bill 43, The Highway Traffic Amendment and Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

MLA David Pankratz (Acting Government House Leader): Is it the will of the House to call it 5?

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the rule of the House—or will of the House to call it 5? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 21, 2026

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<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>