



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

Thursday, May 21, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Honourable Speaker. Could you please call, from 10 a.m. to 10:30, Bill 233, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; and from 10:30 to 11, Bill 208, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (Farmer's Identification Number).

The Speaker: It's been announced that we will now go to debate on second reading, from 10 to 10:30 a.m., on Bill 233, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; followed by second reading debate, from 10:30 to 11, on Bill 208, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (Farmer's Identification Number).

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 233—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act

The Speaker: So we will now go to Bill 233, standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona, who has nine minutes remaining.

MLA Shannon Corbett (Transcona): I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 233, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act, and place it in context, because legislation like this cannot be looked at in isolation. It must be understood alongside the broader question Manitobans are asking every single day: does this make my life more affordable, and does it strengthen the services families and seniors depend on?

Our government has been clear from day one. We are focused on making life more affordable for Manitoban–Manitoba families by taking real action and delivering real results. Manitobans are feeling pressure at the checkout counter, at the gas pump and in their monthly bills, and they expect the government to act in a meaningful way. That is exactly what we're doing. Unfortunately, what we see from the members opposite is more of the same: no coherent plan and a fundamental misunderstanding of real pressures families are facing today.

Honourable Speaker, let us be clear about Bill 233. While it may sound targeted and modest, its real effect is quite simple. The bill proposes to increase the school tax exemption for certain properties—[interjection]—but on the—thank you—but on the surface, that may sound like relief, but in practice all it does is shift the tax burden. And that is the core issue, because when one property pays less, someone else must pay more. In many cases, particularly in rural Manitoba, this bill would shift property taxes away from publicly supported facilities and on to homeowners and local businesses. That is not affordability, that's just cost shifting.

Our government disagrees with that approach. We are focused on lowering taxes, not redistributing them in ways that increase pressures on families and small businesses. Instead of shifting the burden, we are addressing affordability directly across the board. We've increased the Renters Affordability Tax Credit to \$625, with even stronger support to seniors. We have raised the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit to \$1,600, providing real relief to families trying to manage mortgage payments in a high-cost environment. We have also taken steps to support Manitoba businesses, the backbone of our communities.

By increasing the payroll tax exemption threshold, we have ensured that thousands of businesses pay

no payroll tax at all, while many others pay less. Nearly 875 small businesses are benefiting from this change, reinvesting in jobs, wages and local economic growth.

And we are not stopping there. We introduced a large middle-class tax cut to help working Manitobans keep more of what they earn. At the same time, we're tackling the costs of essentials. Because, Honourable Speaker, affordability is not achieved through a single lever, it requires action across the entire cost-of-living spectrum. And that includes strengthening our care systems, because availability of care is directly tied to affordability for families.

Our government understands that seniors deserve dignity and security, not uncertainty. That is why we are making real investments in senior-care infrastructure and services across Manitoba. In June 2025, we opened a new 26-bed transitional-care unit at Holy Family Home in Winnipeg, supported by a \$1.9-million capital investment. That expansion helps seniors move out of acute-care hospitals sooner and into more appropriate environments for recovery. It improves patient outcomes while freeing up hospital resources, something families depend on. In February 2026, we acted to stabilize operations at the Golden Door Geriatric Centre, ensuring continuity of care for vulnerable residents and providing staff there.

Honourable Speaker, these are real actions. These are not theoretical proposals that reshape tax formulas. They are concrete steps to improve the lives of seniors and families today.

We are committed—we committed to creating an independent Seniors' Advocate, and we delivered. That office will provide seniors and their families with a strong, independent voice to identify gaps, elevate concerns and ensure accountability in the system.

We have also made major investments in long-term-care capacity. In February 2025, we announced a \$72-million investment to expand Park Manor personal-care home, right in my constituency of Transcona, with 90 beds. *[interjection]* Woo-hoo, yes, very exciting.

In January 2026, we committed to replacing the aging Lac du Bonnet facility with a new 95-bed personal-care home, adding 65 net-new beds for seniors who've been waiting far too long. For families, this means fewer missed visits, more reliable care and greater peace of mind. Honourable Speaker, this is what meaningful improvement looks like.

* (10:10)

Now, let us compare that to the record of the members opposite. When the PCs were in government, Manitobans did not see investments, they saw cuts. They closed emergency rooms, they cut hospital services, they drove nurses out of the province at a time when we needed them most. And they did nothing on affordability when costs were rising. Under their watch, inflation reached 8 per cent, yet there was no meaningful response to help Manitobans cope with that pressure.

The affordability changes we see today did not arise overnight. They were made worse by seven and a half years of decisions that weakened supports and reduced capacity across critical care systems. The PCs weakened Rent Assist, creating a two-tier system that provided less support to those on employment and income assistance, even when they were facing the same housing costs as other renters. And when it came to seniors, their record is even more troubling. They closed 222 personal-care-home beds, reducing access for seniors in long-term care. They shut down the Mature Women's Centre, eliminating a crucial support for vulnerable 'woming'—women facing housing instability, poverty and violence.

Honourable Speaker, those were not minor adjustments. They were decisions that had lasting consequences.

Our government is now doing the hard work of rebuilding what was lost. Nearly 70 per cent of those closed personal-care-home beds have already been reopened. We have added 96 transitional-care beds across Manitoba and we are restoring the Mature Women's Centre to serve those who rely on it. That is the difference between cutting and rebuilding. And the same pattern holds true on affordability.

The PCs like to talk to—talk about tax relief, but their record shows that their measures disproportionately benefited the wealthiest Manitobans while providing little or no support to those who needed the help the most. They did not help families when they were struggling, and now they are presenting ideas that simply do not add up to scrutiny—do not stand up to scrutiny, sorry.

So when we evaluate Bill 233, we must ask, does this bill actually help all Manitobans? Despite its intentions, it does not meet that test. It does not provide new care, it does not expand new services and it does not create new supports for seniors. It simply redistributes the existing costs in a way that risks increasing pressure on others. That is not the kind of solution Manitobans are looking for.

Our government believes that if we are going to act, we must do so in a way that delivers measurable improvements. That is why we have chosen to directly invest in care capacity, workforce expansion and system reliability. Our government is taking a different path: one grounded in fairness, practicality and results. We are lowering costs, we are stabilizing essential prices, and we are building a stronger economy so Manitobans can earn good wages and find opportunities close to home.

Honourable Speaker, I'm glad I had a chance to put a few words on the 'recor' and hope—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

House Business

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, I rise on House business.

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

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

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

* * *

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): It is a privilege to rise today and speak to Bill 233, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act. I want to thank my colleague, MLA for Roblin, for bringing such a great amendment to this Municipal Assessment Act.

For many people in my constituency of Spruce Woods, this is truly a policy that will help many Manitobans stay in communities that they helped build and love, and I think that it is something every one of us can understand. Many people are surprised to learn that under provincial law all property owners

in Manitoba pay school taxes whether or not they have children or not. They are—however, some important exemptions under section 23(1) of The Municipal Assessment Act. Those exceptions recognize that certain properties provide broader public benefit and should not face the same tax burden as ordinary commercial or residential property. That includes some seniors housing, personal-care homes, colleges and 'semineres' of learning, community halls and museums.

This bill would update one very specific part of the exemption by increasing the amount of land eligible for the school tax exemption from 0.81 hectares or two acres, to five hectares, roughly 12 acres, for properties used to provide residential care, housing or support services for seniors and others.

That two-acre limit has existed since October 30, 1989. Think about that for a moment. That exemption threshold was established nearly four decades ago. And a lot has changed since 1989. Facilities are larger, accessibility standards have changed, parking requirements have changed, health-care delivery has changed and expectations around quality of life for residents have changed as well.

We can already see that reality clearly in Manitoba. Personal-care homes are bigger than they used to be in every corner of the province. This is not something that only affects those living in Winnipeg but also in Westman, Parkland, northern Manitoba and the Interlake. In rural communities across Spruce Woods, facilities are often built on larger properties because that is how development occurs in small towns. Land parcels are larger. Facilities need room for accessible transportation, room for staff parking, room for emergency access, room for expansion, room for outdoor spaces that improve residents' quality of life. And often these facilities are expected to serve an entire region, not just one neighbourhood.

I think about the seniors in my constituency who spent their lives farming, gardening and working outdoors. For many of them, outdoor space is not just a nice addition. It is a part of maintaining dignity and connection to the life they—always known.

A walking path, a courtyard, a garden, a place to sit outside with family; those things matter. And I do know, because my mother-in-law is in our personal-care home in Souris, and we go to the courtyard in this nicer weather and sit out and have a nice visit. It's much nicer than sitting inside as we had to all winter.

One of the conversations I heard often in Spruce Woods is the concern from families about what happens when parents or grandparents need more support later in life. This is about whether people can remain in the communities they love as they grow older. This is about rural Manitoba, and that matters deeply.

Honourable Speaker, when you drive through communities across Spruce Woods, places like Glenboro, Cypress River, Souris River, Wawanesa, Oak Lake or Shilo, you meet people who have spent their entire lives building those communities. These are people who farmed the land, who taught in our schools, who volunteered at rinks and community centres, who served on church boards and municipal councils, who raised families and built businesses.

And, after spending a lifetime contributing to their communities, and what they want most is actually very simple. They want to stay, they want to see familiar faces, they want to remain close to people and places they know. They want to attend the same church. They want their grandchildren to be able to visit after hockey practice or after school. They want to remain part of the community they helped build.

* (10:20)

Honourable Speaker, in rural Manitoba, home is not just a home. Home is a community. And this bill helps protect that connection.

It's also worth mentioning that Spruce Woods has an aging population, meaning the legislation is even more important. I have more than 4,000 seniors in my constituency. Bill 233 will literally make lives of tens of thousands of seniors in Manitoba better.

The demand for long-term care continues to grow, especially in rural Manitoba, where many communities have aging populations and limited local options for seniors and who need additional support. Personal-care homes are already operating under significant pressure, and many are caring for residents with increasingly complex medical and personal needs. At the same time, the financial challenges facing these facilities have become more difficult every year. The cost of staffing, maintaining facilities, meeting modern care standards and keeping up with inflation that has risen dramatically.

Many non-profit care homes are doing everything they can to stretch limited resources while still providing safe, compassionate, high-quality care for residents. In many cases, difficult decisions have to be made about delaying upgrades, postponing

maintenance or scaling back programs and services that improve residents' quality of life, not because operators want to make those choices, but because budgets are already stretched so thin.

That is why this change matters. Expanding the property tax exemption would help relieve some of the financial pressure and allow more resources to stay where they belong, supporting residents and front-line care. Property taxes are one of the highest fixed costs these facilities face. Unlike other expenses, they can simply be adjusted or reduced during difficult financial periods, but they must be paid, regardless of challenges a facility may be experiencing.

For many personal-care homes, especially in rural communities, reducing the burden could mean more funding available for residents programming, facility improvements, staffing supports and better overall care for seniors who depend on those services every day. And often communities are trying very hard to expand services, but they face challenges that are unique to rural Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, rural facilities are different. They are built differently, they operate differently and they need space. A seniors residence in a rural community may sit on several acres, not because anyone is trying to build something extravagant, but because this is simply how the land is available and developed in smaller towns.

Sometimes there's room for gardens, walking paths, outdoor gathering space, room for future additions, extra parking for staff and visiting families that are driving long distances. In many communities, land is not divided into tiny urban lots. Facilities grow where they can and often they become gathering places for the entire community.

I think about seniors in my constituency who spent their lives outdoors: farmers, ranchers, people who worked on the land every day. For many of them, being able to sit outside, walk safely, look across the open space or spend time in a garden is incredibly meaningful. That connection to the outdoors is a part of the identity.

I have visited facilities where residents gather outside—like I said, with my mother-in-law—and watch their grandchildren play, visit with neighbors or simply enjoy being with familiar surroundings. Those moments may seem simple but they are deeply important. They are a part of what makes a place feel like home.

Supporting them means supporting the families who rely on them every single day, and that is why I am proud to support this bill and so should all members of this Legislature.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): It's, as always, a privilege to rise, put a few words on the record on behalf of the good, good people of McPhillips.

But before I get into my comments, I'm going to digress, and I really hope you'll let me and indulge me, but I want to wish all Manitobans a happy Vyshyvanka Day to everybody celebrating, particularly to those folks of Ukrainian descent. I—we know that the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada is very big, and the contributions of the Ukrainian community to Canada have been immeasurable.

But as somebody who grew up in northwest Winnipeg and grew up with friends of Ukrainian heritage, I know that there's a certain sense of pride that people carry in preserving the culture, the attire, the music that they inherit. And so, personally, as I cherish my culture and some of the various things that we do out—throughout the year to keep that culture alive, I know people of the Ukrainian community also believe that as well.

I know my friend and colleague, the—

The Speaker: Order, please.

If the honourable member could please bring his comments back to the bill before us this morning, that'd be great.

MLA Devgan: Honourable Speaker, you know what all people celebrating Vyshyvanka Day want? They want a more affordable Manitoba, and that is what this government is delivering.

And so here we are, we're talking about another PMB this morning, kind of half-baked, designed to do something or the other. But what it does, it is—obfuscates the real objective here in this session, which is to deliver a PST cut on groceries for Manitobans starting Canada Day. And we come to this Chamber, day in and day out, and we have a lot of discussions and debate, and the members opposite continue to obstruct the passage of the budget implementation bill so Manitobans can get that relief.

So all that to say that we can have all these conversations about what the opposition thinks might help or might not help, but the reality is they have a real tangible solution in front of them in BITSA to

deliver a PST cut, zero PST, free transit for youth and a whole host of other reliefs and increased tax credits for Manitobans, but they're standing in the way. And there's a lot of drama and acting about, do this, do that, trying to hold the Manitoba Legislature hostage, trying to deny Manitobans the delivery of the mandate that they sent us here to do.

An Honourable Member: Relevance.

MLA Devgan: So we're here talking about this bill this morning, and, you know, if it's—it is about affordability, then I think it is very relevant that we talk about the measures that this government is undertaking in delivering that affordability.

And I know the members opposite seem to be quite bothered by that. They don't like hearing the truth so—that's not going to stop me from saying that they're obstructionist. That's the reality. Almost like the Republicans down south.

It's just, how do you bog down the operations of government so nobody gets anything out of government? That's the Conservative Party of 2026 here in Manitoba. What would Filmon say?

But let me talk about the PC record, Honourable Speaker. When the PCs were in government, they cut emergency rooms, hospitals, drove nurses and doctors out of the province and made a lot of severe, severe cuts to health care, education and so on and so forth.

What our government is doing is quite the opposite. We are investing in a lot of the critical services Manitobans rely on and delivering relief and affordability measures, all while maintaining the lowest deficit in the entire country, and not just that, but also the lowest debt-servicing cost in this province that we've seen, which is remarkable. And—see, that is what good fiscal stewardship actually looks like after seven and a half years of shoving money out the door to friends of the PC Party and the vast majority of Manitobans being left out of the benefits of policy. *[interjection]*

Yes, it seems like some members opposite really, really want to get on the record today, and I would welcome them to speak a little bit more about how our government is offering relief to Manitobans.

But what I can tell you is that this bill does not offer relief to Manitobans. It does not actually tangibly help Manitobans. It does not provide relief to Manitobans who are filling up at the gas station, who are going to the grocery store and buying groceries. This is not going to help them. What this does, actually, in reality, is it shifts the burden, that tax burden,

from one group of people who are paying the education tax and shifts it on everyday Manitobans. So who does this really help? It doesn't help anybody.

When the PCs were in power, they were cutting cheques to Cadillac Fairview and Galen Weston, shoving cheques out the door in providing relief to people who did not remotely need it. So here we are—
* (10:30)

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being 10:30, as previously announced, we will now move on to Bill 208. When this matter is again for the House, the honourable member will have four minutes remaining.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 208—The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (Farmer's Identification Number)

The Speaker: So we will now go to second reading of Bill 208, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (Farmer's Identification Number).

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I move, seconded by the member from Midland, that Bill 208, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (Farmer's Identification Number), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

The Speaker: And just before I move that motion, the honourable member for McPhillips (MLA Devgan) will actually have five minutes remaining, not four.

So it's been moved by the honourable member for Morden-Winkler, seconded by the honourable member for Midland (Mrs. Stone), that Bill 208, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act (Farmer's Identification Number), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

The honourable member for Midland—the honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

Mrs. Hiebert: It's an honour for me to rise today to speak on Bill 208. I appreciate the opportunity to bring this forward.

The sales tax amendment act—this is a common sense tax bill and, most importantly, a bill that responds directly to a concern raised by the people who know this issue best, Manitoba farmers and businesses that serve them every day.

Honourable Speaker, farmers and retailers asked for this change and we listened. They told us the current process is too repetitive, too time-consuming,

outdated and too disconnected from realities of how farm operations and agricultural retail actually works, especially during the busiest times of the year of harvest.

On this side of the House, we support our hard-working farmers and put food on—that put food on our tables and strengthen our economy, as well as the retailers that support them in their equipment. We also support reducing the red tape and we want to improve efficiency.

That is exactly what Bill 208 does. It reduces red tape. It cuts unnecessary paperwork. It modernizes outdated 'ministrative'—administrative processes. And it makes life easier for farmers, small businesses, agricultural retailers and suppliers who are trying to do their best, work efficiently while continuing to feed our province, support our economy and strengthen rural Manitoba.

This bill recognizes that producers and suppliers already face enough pressures, whether that is weather, input costs, labour challenges, transport issues or market or tariff uncertainty; the list is long. They should not also have to be burdened by repetitive forms and avoidable administrative hurdles every time they make a qualifying purchase for a—at a farming operation.

Anyone familiar with agriculture understands that farming does not happen on a 9-to-5 schedule. Farmers and agricultural retailers work long hours, especially during seeding, spraying and harvest. They often operate in remote areas. They may be in the field, on the road, at a machine shop or shed, or coordinating urgent repairs and deliveries across long distances, from the cab of their combines.

In those moments, they should not have to worry about travelling back and forth for a signature, dealing with spotty cell service or delaying the unnecessary purchase—delaying the necessary purchases because the—of a process that no longer makes sense and is outdated.

Bill 208 brings more practicality and common sense to that system. Under this bill, a farmer would be able to provide a farmer's identification number to a supplier instead of signing repetitive declarations for every single purchase. Even if it's just for one bolt, they still have to sign for that that PST exemption.

Rather than requiring a declaration every single time, the declaration would only need to be completed once every two years and kept on file. This is a positive change, reducing the burden on both the

producer and the retailer. That means fewer interruptions, less paperwork and more efficient way to document eligibility for the retail sales tax exemption. The current system is outdated, burdensome and inefficient.

Bill 208 streamlines the process and removes red tape that has been frustrating producers and agriculture retailers for far too long. I hear this frustration often. It does not eliminate accountability, though. It does not weaken oversight. What it does is replace repetitive process with one that is simpler, clearer and better aligned with how modern farming businesses operate.

This bill replaces that exemption that agriculture retailers obtain a wet signature or a fresh digital signature for every single purchase by a farmer of products that are not already clearly exempt. That may sound like a small procedural issue, but anyone involved in this process knows it creates a constant cycle of repetition that costs time for staff, delays in transactions and creates unnecessary frustration at the point of sale, including having to send people to pick up parts and sign for things that they're not comfortable signing for.

Right now, agricultural retailers and other suppliers are often required to obtain a signed declaration each time a farmer claims an exemption for a product using—used in a farming operation. In theory, that might appear manageable. In practice, it means repeating the same administrative step again and again. Even when suppliers knows the customer, knows the operation and knows the purchase is part of an ordinary farm activity, he still needs that physical signature.

Bill 208 would allow the farmer to provide a farmer's identification number so that the supplier can record that number and link it to the declaration already on file. That means once the paperwork has been properly filed, that it has—sorry—once the paperwork has been properly established, future routine transactions become simpler. The farmer can provide the number over the phone or electronically, and the retailer can document the transaction without chasing down a signature every time.

This approach is not complicated. In fact, it is similar to the principle other identification systems in businesses already use to validate tax-related transactions. It creates a practical way to verify information while reducing repeat paperwork. It keeps the necessary record keeping in place, but it does so in a manner that's more efficient and more respectful of

how a business is actually conducted in the agriculture sector. This matters especially in remote regions and in time-sensitive situations.

When delivery is being made to the yard or to the farm, when the employee is picking up parts, when the repair is needed immediately to keep equipment running or when a producer is trying to keep operations moving during a narrow window weather—of bad weather approaching, the last thing anyone needs is—sorry—the last thing anyone needs is an avoidable paperwork obstacle. The current requirement does not always fit the realities of those—of the situations, and 'realtailers' have been very clear about that.

Agriculture retailers ask for this—have asked for this requirement to be simplified because they don't want to—not—because they want to comply with the rules, but they also need a process that is workable for them. Staff should not have to send valuable—spend valuable time tracking down signatures that add no meaningful value when the customer's eligibility can be documented in a more straightforward way. Bill 208 responds to that concern by providing a clearer, more manageable path for record keeping and compliance that protects the retailer as well.

* (10:40)

And there is a broader principle here as well. Good government is not only about creating rules, it's about reviewing existing rules and asking whether they still achieve the intended purpose in the most effective way. If a process can be simplified without undermining accountability, then we should simplify it. If a burden can be reduced without compromising the integrity of the tax system, then we should reduce it.

Agriculture is one of those fundamental industries of Manitoba. It supports jobs, sustains communities, drives economic activity and feeds families here at home and far beyond our borders. When we make it easier for farmers and businesses that support the—and support them in their operations efficiently, we are not only helping individual producers or individual retailers, we are strengthening rural communities, helping local economies and supporting a sector that matters deeply in this province.

It also means that reflect—it also—it is also a measure that reflects trust in Manitoba—who are acting in good faith and trying to comply with our laws. Our job is not to make compliance harder than it needs to be, our job is to create systems that are clear, fair and efficient, and I hope to have the support of this bill today. It's good policy. It makes things better for our

farming communities and our agriculture retailers. It saves them—it'll save them thousands and thousands of dollars, because the archaic system of signature every time needs new technology and there's no more new technology for signatures. We've moved past that.

So I ask right now for this House to support this bill and to make sure that we can make life easier for our farming retailers.

Questions

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

The floor is now open for questions.

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): My question for the member for Morden-Winkler is, who did they consult for drafting this bill?

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I actually consulted quite a few agriculture retailers, some very large ones, some of them that are basically have six or eight retail locations across rural areas of Manitoba. They're the ones who are asking for this bill and for the changes to be made. They're finding it's a lot of red tape, a lot of extra—the wet signature is so outdated. And this is what they've come to me and asked me specifically for.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Can the—first of all, I'd like to thank the member for Morden-Winkler for bringing forward bill two-eight. You know, coming from a farming area, I've certainly heard issues like this raised by retailers and even the producers themselves.

I'd just like to ask the member why farmers couldn't just use their federal GST number instead of creating a new farm identification number?

Mrs. Hiebert: Thank you to my colleague for that question.

Currently, the federal government doesn't allow Manito—or provinces to use the system that the federal government uses. So we do need—each province needs to come up with their own solution and their own policy in this area.

MLA Redhead: Bill 208 means cost to develop and administer the proposed farmer identification number.

Does the member have an estimate of these costs and what would be required?

Mrs. Hiebert: Thank you for that question.

The cost shouldn't be any extra cost because we're just changing the process from one way to another. There's no—we're actually taking away the burden of extra paperwork and extra time spent. It should be—there shouldn't be—I can't say the 'tost' exactly, but it should not. This goal of this bill is to reduce and not to increase any costs.

Mr. Nesbitt: Can the member for Morden-Winkler explain in very simple terms why this bill is needed and how it will benefit farmers and make it much simpler for them to declare by using this farmer identification number?

Mrs. Hiebert: Thank you to my colleague for that question.

So, yes, there's many different ways that this will actually help farmers and help the retail businesses. One of the big ones is that a lot of our farmers, most of our farmers are all on the fields working and they're not—they don't have time to personally go pick up parts. Often they have to drive a long ways, whether that's an hour or two, possibly longer, and they don't have time to go and do a wet signature on every single purchase for everything that—part that needs to be picked up. They're working, trying to get ahead of bad weather; they're sending, like, their staff to go pick up parts for them. This is just really cumbersome for them.

This makes it much easier for them, so they don't have to worry about it. They sign this declaration once every two years. It's on file—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Redhead: One of the responses from the member for Morden-Winkler was, farmers have been asking for this legislation.

My question is, how long have they been asking for this legislation? Why didn't their government act for seven and a half years? Why now?

Mrs. Hiebert: So I've only been—thank you for that question.

I've only been an MLA for the last two and a half, three years, so this is—I'm taking this up—burden up as I go. But, apparently, this was asked already before the Conservatives were even in government, when the NDP were in power, and they didn't do anything then. It was worked on and it was actually coming forward,

but then things changed, so now I'm bringing it back again.

So, thank you for that question. It's important to be doing—done.

Mr. Nesbitt: Can the member explain to the House, you know, how this bill will certainly benefit farmers who might be—we all know farmers work long hours, they battle weather, they battle time. Time is of the essence for farmers in feeding and in harvest.

Can the member explain how this will benefit the producer that's out in the field and has to call in for parts and maybe can't put a wet signature on something, he can't stop something, but a piece of equipment needs fixed?

Thank you.

Mrs. Hiebert: That's a really good question, thank you.

So a big part of this is to alleviate the red tape, to make it more simple for farmers and also the retailers as well because the retailers are—during harvest time or seeding time, they're sitting there. They actually are on call 24 hours a day and they're ready to get that part out. They're ready to do all the things that they need to do for the farmers. And for them to be able to just get a call or a text saying, hey, this is so-and-so this is my—you know, and they have all the information on file.

They can get their driver from the retail business to drive directly to the farmer and get that part to them as soon as possible. And that's a huge win, I think, for any farmer, especially when they're trying to get ahead of weather, they're trying to get ahead of—you know, getting things off the field on time because they've got a lot of harvesting to still do. Those are all things that are really important.

We need to make sure—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, the previous PC government closed 21 agricultural service corporations and agricultural offices across the province, leaving Manitoba farmers without access to in-person services they enjoyed. Our government is bringing these services back with two new offices in Virden and Shoal Lake.

My question for the members opposite is, if they truly want to support farmers in Manitoba, why did they abandon them by shuttering 21 rural offices?

Mrs. Hiebert: I just want to bring to the attention of the government that groups and retailers have actually approached them to change this legislation and they haven't even taken meetings from them, so why is that not happening?

We need to make sure we listen to agriculturists when they need us—we need to talk to them, we need to listen to them, we need to be open to meeting with them and hearing their concerns and making sure we take care of what they need done.

Mr. Nesbitt: We haven't heard from the Ag Minister yet this morning. Perhaps he will get up and speak. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: I think that the Ag Minister is a farmer, or he has been a farmer producer for many, many years. I think he would see the benefits of this bill, and we certainly hope he will get up and speak to it moving forward here.

I'd like to ask the member from Morden-Winkler, why do farmers need a declaration at all?

Mrs. Hiebert: That's a really good question.

It's important for us to make sure we have accountability; it's protection for both the retailer, so that when the retailer does get that declaration signed that they're—the obligation and the responsibility goes on to the farmer. It's important to protect them and it's important for them to have that declaration, so that we can protect both the farmer and the retailer, to make sure that we show that this item that they're picking up is for farm use, and that's something that's expected across our province in other tax areas as well.

* (10:50)

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, the greatest Ag Minister in the province's history will get up shortly and speak to this bill.

Bill 208 would still require vendors to collect information and keep it for verification purposes. Did the member anticipate any benefits to retailers?

Mrs. Hiebert: Thank you for that question. I was waiting for that—a good question like that. It's great.

It's a great question because one of the biggest things that's happening right now with retailers is that they can't even get equipment technology that actually services this archaic signature process. That is something that's not happening anymore in our province. It's not happening at—credit cards rarely need that

signature. They don't need the signature pad. It's been very, very outdated, and they're having to spend thousands and thousands of dollars in this day and age to put in a signature pad in their business.

That just makes no sense to me, Honourable Speaker. We need to make sure we move with the times and take care of our farmers.

Mr. Nesbitt: Can the member explain how this bill will benefit family members and employees on these—some of these large farm operations we have scattered across southern Manitoba?

Mrs. Hiebert: Thank you for that question.

Yes, this will be a benefit to farmers, to their families, to their employees who are picking up parts. They will not need to sign something every time they go pick up a part.

I know sometimes if you're working somewhere or you—they—you go somewhere and they're like, we need you to sign your name, it's like, whoa, why do I want to sign my name? What am I signing for? This isn't a responsibility of that staff or that child that you're sending, that's 16, to go pick up a part. This is the farmer's responsibility to make sure that this part is being used for farm use, and that should not—that burden should be put on family members or staff just picking it up for them.

MLA Redhead: The previous PC government had seven and a half years to lower costs for Manitoba farmers and producers, yet they only ever raised costs on them—shame. Our government froze Crown land rent for 20 and—'25 growing season.

My question to the member opposite is, why did the PC government fail to make life more affordable for farmers in their seven and a half years of government?

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, this is about—this is good policy. This is a good bill. It's simple. It couldn't be more simple than this bill. We want to make life more affordable; we want to make less red tape for our farming communities. This is nothing but win-win for everybody, including the members across the way. This is something that we should all be supporting.

We are working hard to lower costs. We have done that. We've always valued our farming community, and we will continue to stand up strong for our rural community and make sure that we do all we can to make sure that they have what they need to do their jobs to feed the people of our province.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is now open for debate.

The honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker, and it is my pleasure—and thank you, team—it is my pleasure to talk about agriculture.

I seem to always inquire in my mind about why we got question period, and, I don't know, I'm talking—two months, maybe, is the last time I had a question. So I'm sensing members opposite really feel that we as government are doing the right thing for our agriculture producers.

But, more importantly, Honourable Speaker, I want to take this minute to thank the farmers of what they do and what they've—challenges they face on a daily basis. And, obviously, it's pretty evident this year is exceptional year where there's—unfortunately, some places have too much rain, and some places have had not enough rain, but they're challenged now because of the seeding operations because of the rain. But I just want to acknowledge the agriculture producers.

Our government respects the importance of what they do and, more importantly, the cost of food that they produce for us. And, obviously, in the media today, food is the number one subject of discussion. And thanks to the opportunity of decisions made by the opposite member—the Leader of the Opposition supports tariffs and supports Trump—poor farmers today are forced with a 30, 40 per cent increase of fertilizer prices, simply because of that situation. And yet members opposite seem to stand behind and want to make false accusations that they're the government that stood up for farmers. Well, let me tell you, let me tell you the situation when we want to stretch out the menu of opportunities.

I attended and spoke to a number of producers. The day in Ste. Rose, Manitoba, 250 producers showed up and there was not one elected official talking about the importance of the liability of Crown lands. And so here we go. If they are so accountable of their conscientious feeling of making life affordable for producers, why in the heck was there no opportunity for those producers to be there?

And I sit back and I say to myself, why? Why is this government across the road talking about the importance of agriculture and the importance of opportunity? Yet, you know, we'll leave that alone for now and I'm sure I'll be back on that subject very shortly.

So, to the members opposite, I'm kind of 'inquizzed' by the legislation that they are requesting to bring forward. I kind of wonder why the one and only province in Canada that is dealing with this kind of a situation is British Columbia

So I'm kind of wondering as well—we talk about Saskatchewan always does better than Manitoba agriculturally. Alberta does better. But yet, why has the Province of Saskatchewan and Alberta not took over this initiative, right? That's my question. But obviously, they feel about it.

As a farmer for 40 years of my life, or damn near 40 years of my life, you know, you walk into a retail store, you buy the necessary products, you sign the receipt, it existed for 40 years. And where is the fact that members opposite says who is going to cover the cost? When we talk about the administration of the credit card or whatever form of identification, who is going to cover those costs? That's the question I'm asking members opposite.

But there's silence over there because they don't really have an answer. And I'm sure there would have been other parts of the agriculture and other provinces would have brought this forward, and they have not. And they choose not to.

But what—probably what bothers me and the common denominator in—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: NDP bench needs to calm themselves because I can barely hear the member who's speaking.

Mr. Kostyshyn: So, in the closing comments, Honourable Speaker, Keystone Agricultural Producers say, there's a lot of good things in the announcement with agriculture and our works. It puts us in a good place going forward in the current government. That is Jill Verwey in her commentary April 8, 2024.

It is critical that 22,000 Manitobans who rely on our sector to know the provincial government recognizes what they do for our provincial 'econol', and we saw in today's budget. And that was going back in 2025, and that is Mr. Cam Dahl of the Manitoba hog industry, complimenting our government because we're on the right page.

And we continue, we continue, Honourable Speaker, we continue to work on that premise. We work with farm organizations, we work with agriculture producers and we are doing whatever we need to do to attain the profitability that our producers are.

And the importance about all this is 10 per cent of—almost—the GDP is all agriculture related, and our government is dedicated to continue to grow that, because we're in a new marketplace of opportunity, of added values, opportunities in our province of Manitoba.

And I want to assure you, Honourable Speaker, this government is focusing, not creating havoc like they did on the Crown lands, closing MASC offices for producers and yet they feel, they really feel they did efficiency, but they did not. In fact, the people that were employed had to travel great distances. And we want to talk about saving dollars for people that work for our government? You closed 21 offices. It took this side of government to bring back two offices—

* (11:00)

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. *[interjection]* Order. Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have three–four minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 11—Right to Defend Your Home and Family

The Speaker: The hour being 11 o'clock, it's now time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is resolution No. 11, the—Right to Defend Your Home and Family, brought forward by the honourable member for Borderland.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth), that

WHEREAS those in this Chamber acknowledge violent crime has become an epidemic in Manitoba, as exemplified by the recent violent home invasions and aggravated assaults of two Winnipeg seniors and a couple in Thompson; and

WHEREAS the soft-on-crime laws of the Liberal Federal Government and the Provincial Government have created a scenario where violent repeat offenders can be released on bail to re-offend within hours; and

WHEREAS in rural and remote communities, law enforcement presence and policies are often insufficient to ensure a timely response in an emergency situation; and

WHEREAS sections 34 and 35 of the Criminal Code of Canada allows Canadians to use "reasonable" force to defend themselves, others, and their property; and

WHEREAS, too often, people in that situation must make a split-second, life-and-death decision and do not have time to consider the nine questions and conditions currently specified in the law; and

WHEREAS, too often, those individuals who must make that split-second, life-and-death decision are hounded by the criminal justice system afterwards, while the real criminals go free; and

WHEREAS responsibility for incidents of this nature should lie solely with the criminal who illegally enters someone's home and assumes the risks associated therewith, not the person who rightfully lives there; and

WHEREAS being the victim of a crime and possibly facing prosecution for acting in self-defence has negative impacts on the mental health, financial health, well-being, and sense of safety for Manitobans and Canadians; and

WHEREAS the Criminal Code needs to be amended to reduce and clarify the conditions of self-defence in situations where people illegally enter their home and pose a threat to themselves or others, eliminate the duty to retreat before using force before acting in such self-defence, and provide civil and criminal immunity to persons who legitimately take such actions against illegal intruders; and

WHEREAS Canadian juries have consistently upheld the self-defence rights of homeowners in relation to people and property, as everyone has a right to feel safe in their own home.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to clearly establish that a person is justified in using reasonable force, including deadly force, to protect themselves, their family, others or their home when an individual unlawfully enters or attempts to enter their dwelling and is reasonably perceived to pose a threat to life or safety.

Motion presented.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Borderland.

Mr. Guenter: Thank you, Honourable Speaker—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Guenter: It's an honour to rise this morning to bring forward this important resolution. I bring it forward again after I first introduced it with the support of my PC colleagues last fall and, unfortunately, the NDP caucus, the NDP government talked it out and prevented it from coming to a vote. And so I've made the commitment to Manitobans, to my constituents that I will continue to fight to see this resolution adopted by this Legislature. It is the right fight, and this is a righteous cause.

I will say, as well, that we, as Canadians, are proud inheritors of a long tradition of English common law, a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy that stretches back 800 years, all the way back to Magna Carta. And one of the things we inherit through English common law is the concept of castle doctrine. In English common law, upon the—upon which the majority of Canada's jurisprudence has historically been based, the term is derived from a—the dictum that an Englishman's home is his castle. And this concept was established all the way back—*[interjection]*—in England in 1628—that's for the Justice Minister.

The legal concept of the inviolability of the home has been known in Western civilization since the age of the Roman Republic. So we are talking about a concept here that goes back many, many hundreds of years, and I think it's one today that needs to be affirmed by the Manitoba Legislature more than ever.

Manitobans understand that it's common sense that if you or your loved ones are attacked in your home by an intruder, you should have the right to defend yourself and your family against that threat, including with the use of lethal force. It's just common sense that you shouldn't be harassed by the legal system afterwards while the real criminal goes free.

Too often, we've seen those who are forced to defend themselves and their loved ones treated like criminals while the real criminal is treated like the victim. This is not justice. Laws change, but no matter what the law of the day may say, we all know in our hearts that this is wrong. It offends our innate sense of natural justice that we all have, or should have, as natural—as human beings.

Responsibility for incidents of this nature should lie solely with the criminal who illegally enters someone's home. They should assume the risks associated with making that decision to break the law and to try to unlawfully enter someone's home and inflict harm, not the person who rightfully lives there.

And that's why we say today with this resolution that a person is justified in using reasonable force, including deadly force, to protect themselves, their family and others in the home when an intruder unlawfully enters or attempts to enter that dwelling.

I bring this resolution forward today because Manitobans and Canadians deserve clarity on this issue. There is too much confusion, and while Canadian juries have consistently upheld the right of Canadians to defend themselves, the right to self-defence only exists as a defence at trial, in court, before a judge. And the problem is that that means that the homeowner or the victim who has been attacked has to be charged by the police, lawyer up and go through the emotional and financial stress of defending their lawful and righteous actions.

This has led to cases that have caused outcry across this country. We all know of the case last year in Lindsay, Ontario, where a man successfully defended himself with a knife against an intruder who had broken into his home armed with a crossbow. When all was said and done, the intruder got airlifted to the hospital and the victim, the homeowner, was charged. This is wrong.

Sections 34 and 35 of the Criminal Code of Canada lay out nine different tests to determine whether the force used in self-defence was reasonable, but nobody in a terrifying split-second life-or-death decision is thinking about these nine legal requirements. And that's why with this resolution we are saying that the only two questions you should have to consider are these: (1) is this person illegally in my home or trying to illegally enter my home, and (2) do they present a threat?

The reality is that no matter what the law says, Manitobans are going to do what they have to do to protect themselves against an intruder seeking to inflict harm or even take their lives. Moms and dads, friends and neighbors are going to do whatever it takes to defend themselves and their loved ones. To ask them to do anything less would be both cruel and insane. In homes all across Manitoba, there are many Manitobans who understand that this is just common sense. Our sense of justice, of moral law and natural law, tell

us that we ought to protect what is good, beautiful and innocent from harm and evil.

And the reality is this—that we don't all have police officers standing guard over us 24-7 at the end of our driveways. That is never going to happen. This isn't a resolution about more resources for police or even police response times. You can have a dozen officers within two minutes of your house, but if someone breaks into your home with the intention to do you and your family harm, what does the law—what does this government—allow you to do? That is the question we are debating today. The principle that I believe in and that I support is that in that situation, that family has a right to defend themselves.

And this speaks to a very important principle, and that is that you are your own first responder. Sadly, in too many cases, by the time police arrive on the scene, all that is left for them to do is to conduct the investigation and lay charges. And I support the work of our police, and I appreciate our police. But, again, this is about what happens when the police are not able to make it to your home in time.

And I cite the case of a retired couple living near Lorette five years ago when a man broke into their home at 1 a.m. in the morning. They called the police. They called 911. St. Pierre-Jolys RCMP detachment sent cruisers up. Officers raced to the home to respond to the situation. When they got there—the police got there—there were two bodies lying on the ground in the kitchen, stabbed to death. The telephone wires had been cut.

This isn't about police response times, although we would love to see improvement; we would love to see more police officers. That's—all of that is great. But this is about the principle, about what a—what Manitobans are allowed to do under the law when they are faced with that threat, and the police are not there, in that terrifying split-second decision.

* (11:10)

I think, also—and I'm not going to name that evil, murdering, two-legged animal that went on a rampage in 2022 in Nova Scotia; his name does not deserve to be remembered. But, sadly, he took the lives of 22 Canadians.

And, you know, I—one of the stories that came out after that was by the—in the CBC, and the headline reads: Nova Scotia man stood guard with shotgun—with a shotgun after the mass shooter rang his doorbell. And I'll just read the first little bit of the article here. It says: An RCMP officer racing to one of the

scenes of Nova Scotia's April 2020 mass shooting drove past and recognized the gunman responsible for more than a dozen murders, but lost his trail when the shooter turned into a long driveway off the main road.

The gunman then knocked on the door of Adam and Carole Fisher's house in Glenholme, Nova Scotia, but never passed in front of the window while Adam Fisher was watching with a gun, prepared to, and I quote, blow his effing head off, end quote, according to documents released by the Mass Casualty Commission.

The gunman was only at the Fishers' property off Highway 4 for about two minutes before taking off again as the noise of a helicopter helping police in the search grew louder. Five minutes later, a group of RCMP officers—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would just call the member's attention that, even when quoting something, you're not allowed to use language that could be deemed as unparliamentary. So I'd ask the member to withdraw that part.

Mr. Guenter: Thank you, Honourable Speaker; I withdraw.

Five minutes later, a group of RCMP officers and emergency response team members pulled up near the Fishers' driveway and began planning to surround the house. No one had seen the gunman leave. He would go on to kill five more people that morning before being shot dead by police.

I just wish that this brave Nova Scotia man had had his opportunity because he certainly was ready—

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

Questions

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

The floor is now open for questions.

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Under our NDP government, there are more police officers on the streets. We're recruiting new officers after the former

PC government let 55 police officers go through their cuts and inaction.

My question for the member opposite is why he refused to protect Manitobans and their property and, instead, get rid of 55 police officers?

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): You know, that—nothing there is true, but the member also hasn't read the resolution because his question has nothing to do with the resolution. This is about the right to self-defence, and his question was not at all related to that.

The Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: I'm happy to see this resolution come forward and proud of the member for Borderland for having the courage to bring it forward.

So my question to the member is, can he explain how the failed bail policies that this NDP government, this Justice Minister is responsible for are contributing to this problem?

Mr. Guenter: You know, it's interesting. The first thing that this NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew) said when he was asked in the leaders' debate in the last election—what he would do in his first 100 days, and the very first thing he said was bail reform. And we're now going on three years and we haven't seen bail reform, no matter what the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) likes to say.

The reality is there is a revolving door within the justice system in Manitoba and across Canada, thanks to NDP-Liberal laws. And, as a result of their dangerous ideology, there are many violent criminals who are—who offend and are charged and then let out again and go and commit terrible, heinous crimes, all while they should be locked up—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, the member opposite says this PMR is about keeping Manitobans safe. But, under their failed PC government, crime skyrocketed and police funding was froze year after year.

Why should Manitobans believe the PCs suddenly care about community safety now?

Mr. Guenter: Here's what happened when the NDP took office in their very first year: the homicide rate

in Manitoba increased while it fell nationally. It increased in Manitoba while it fell nationally. Statistics Canada cite—says the number of homicides in Manitoba went up from 75 the last year the PCs were in office to 94 the very first year the NDP were in office, a jump of 19 homicides for a 25 per cent increase. That's their record.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I want to say thank you to the member from Borderland for bringing forward this resolution, and I'm just going to ask him a question here.

Clearly, the NDP don't quite get it, and I'm just asking the member if he can clarify the very specific parameters of what we're asking for with the resolution that he's brought forward here today?

Mr. Guenter: I thank the member for Agassiz for that question.

What we're calling on is for this Legislature, this government, to support this resolution so that this Legislature can affirm the very important principle that Manitobans are justified in using force, if they have to, to defend themselves and their loved ones in the event of a home invasion, in the event of being attacked.

We are, through this resolution, asking for the elimination of the duty to retreat in Canadian law. We are asking for the nine tests in sections 34, 35 of the Criminal Code of Canada to be collapsed into just two, and to add clarity for Manitobans who are put in that terrible position of having to defend themselves.

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, has the member opposite considered how dangerous this kind of rhetoric can be when we've seen in Canada the claims of defending property have led to deadly, racially charged outcomes, like the killing of Colten Boushie?

What reassurances does the member opposite have that this PMR is not going to make those tragedies more likely, instead of preventing them?

Mr. Guenter: The victim, the farmer, in the case that that member cites, was—*[interjection]*—the farmer was the victim—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —and he was acquitted. This is for the member of—the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine). He was acquitted—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —by a jury. *[interjection]*

So does the member, does the Minister of Families, does this NDP caucus think that that innocent man should be retried?

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, I'd like the—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Members can—*[interjection]*—order.

Members can stop hollering back and forth.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, could the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) please tell us about how the soft-on-crime policies of this government are now contributing to the epidemic of violence we see in our province under the NDP?

Mr. Guenter: We have an NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew) who gets up and says, bury them under the prison. That's his version of justice, when he's the Premier. And these members across the way, including the Minister of Families, all clap and cheer when he says things like that. And they say things, outrageous things like that, because it gets them off the hook of actually having to do any real work.

But they have an opportunity today to support, to stand by Manitobans who are put in that terrible position of having to defend themselves. And they could support this common sense resolution, which is supported by the majority, the vast majority of Manitobans. It's a common sense, just resolution, grounded in a common sense of justice.

They could support it today—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

* (11:20)

MLA Redhead: Honourable Speaker, the victim was Colten Boushie. He was walking away when he was shot in the back of the head.

Why are the PCs pushing a motion that encourages Manitobans to take the law into their own hands, instead of focusing on real public safety solutions like hiring more police officers, investing in community safety programs and promoting de-escalation over confrontation?

Mr. Guenter: Oh, the member for Thompson (MLA Redhead) wants that innocent man to be retried.

Their—the NDP sense of justice is that right is wrong and wrong is right. And that's why we are seeing

this epidemic of crime, because the NDP-Liberal sense of justice, it's the revolving door: letting criminals out, letting them go offend. Because they side with the criminals. They never talk about the victims.

They never do anything to support victims, and that's why they're not supporting this resolution today.

The Speaker: The—[*interjection*] Order.

The honourable member for Agassiz (Ms. Byram).

Ms. Byram: Thank you, Honourable—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms. Byram: I want to ask the member from Borderland: Can he explain a little further as to why this change is necessary to become law in the province here?

Mr. Guenter: I thank the member for that question, as it allows me to finish what I was going to say during my remarks, and I ran out of time, unfortunately.

But this resolution calls on the provincial and federal governments to affirm that law-abiding citizens, folks just trying to do the right thing, protecting themselves and their children, shouldn't and won't have to go through the indignity of arrest, indictment and trial for a case that never should have been brought.

The home is sacred and those who live there should always feel safe and be safe.

MLA Redhead: What evidence do the members opposite have that encouraging individuals to use deadly force, rather than strengthening emergency response and community safety programs, will reduce crime rather than increase fear and escalate violence in our communities?

Mr. Guenter: Does that member honestly think that when an intruder breaks through—breaks into your home, that Manitobans should just sit there and take it? You know, I've got four young daughters, I have—and a son. Nobody is going to lay their hands on my children if there's anything I can do about it. There is nothing under the sun that I would not do to protect my family. And the vast majority of Manitobans feel the same way.

But the nonsense of suggesting that we should just sit there and take it and watch these rampaging criminals inflict harm on innocent—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter:—pure and beautiful lives is simply turning justice on its head—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable—the time for questions has also expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is now open for debate.

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): Honourable Speaker, public safety is one of the most important responsibilities entrusted to any government.

Manitobans deserve to know that when crime affects their neighbourhoods, when families feel unsafe or when communities are struggling, their government will respond with seriousness, evidence and compassion, not fear, division or false choices.

Every member in this Chamber wants Manitobans to feel safe in their homes, their neighbourhoods and their communities. Every one of us in this Chamber condemns violent crime. Every one of us wants fewer break-ins, fewer assaults, fewer repeat offenders and fewer families living in fear.

And to the Manitobans who have experienced violence, theft or the fear of not feeling safe in their home, your concerns are real. Your fear is real. Government has a responsibility to respond with solutions that genuinely reduce violence, not solutions that risk increasing it.

Honourable Speaker, like many Manitobans, unfortunately, I also have experienced theft. I understand the anger and violation people feel when their safety is disrupted or their home is targeted. But I also know that lasting public safety cannot depend on fear, confrontation or split-second decisions made in panic. Manitobans deserve solutions that prevent these situations from happening in the first place.

And that is why this resolution concerns me. I do not question that the member bringing forward this resolution wants Manitobans to feel safer. We all do. But good intentions alone are not enough if the result risks greater harm.

While I understand the frustration and anxiety many Manitobans are feeling about crime, this PMR moves us in the wrong direction. It risks escalating violence rather than preventing it, and it risks making already tense situations even more dangerous. Real safety is not built in moments of panic and confrontation. It is built long before that moment ever happens through prevention, strong policing, faster

emergency response, effective courts and communities people can trust.

The resolution before us seeks to expand protections around the use of deadly force and remove the duty to retreat in certain situations. Canada's Criminal Code already allows individuals to use reasonable force to defend themselves, their families and their property. Courts already consider the realities that people face in each dangerous situation. But this proposal goes much further. It seeks to weaken accountability around the use of deadly force and expand legal immunity in ways that could have serious consequences for communities across Manitoba.

Our laws should de-escalate violence, not normalize it. Public safety cannot rest on split-second decisions made in fear. Governments have a responsibility not only to respond to fear but to prevent fear from defining us. Leadership means lowering the temperature, strengthening trust in institutions and ensuring that people feel protected, without encouraging more violence in our communities. The answer to fear cannot simply be more fear.

And we must be honest about the risks that come with policies rooted in confrontation. The death of Colten Boushie remains a painful reminder of how quickly fear and assumptions can escalate into irreversible tragedy. We should not be sending legislative signals that risk making those situations more likely.

The safest confrontation is the one that never happens. Manitobans are asking for safer streets, stronger policing, faster response times and fewer violent offenders in their communities. They are asking for governments to invest in prevention, accountability and public safety systems that work. And that is exactly where our government has focused its efforts.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

For the first time in more than a decade, Winnipeg saw a meaningful decline in violent crime severity. Province-wide, Manitoba's Crime Severity Index also declined in 2024. That matters because it means fewer families experiencing violence, fewer victims and safer communities. These improvements did not happen because Manitoba expanded stand-your-ground laws or encouraged greater confrontation.

They happened because Manitoba invested in policing, co-ordination, prevention and public safety strategies that deliver results. That is the difference between rhetoric and responsible leadership.

* (11:30)

Under the previous approach to public safety, communities across Manitoba experienced rising crime pressures while police services faced years of frozen funding. Winnipeg lost a net total of 55 police officers, even as the city's population continued to grow. At a time when communities were asking for more support, police funding remained frozen year after year. Manitobans paid the price for the lack of action.

Our government believes Manitobans deserve a different approach, one that combines enforcement and prevention.

Public safety is not built by governments alone; it depends on police officers, educators, community leaders, Indigenous partners, front-line workers, families and neighbours all working together. And this is why we delivered record investments into policing and public safety after years of frozen funding.

Budget 2026 continues that work with an additional \$39-million investment into policing, law enforcement and public safety initiatives across Manitoba. Those investments strengthen RCMP capacity, support First Nation policing, expand correctional resources, improve downtown safety, combat retail theft and fentanyl trafficking, strengthen protections for survivors of intimate partner violence and invest in prevention programs that help stop crime before it even starts.

And that is why passing BITSA matters. If this Chamber is serious about reducing crime, then we must be serious about the investments that actually reduce crime. That means passing BITSA so we can continue strengthening policing, expanding mental health and addiction supports, investing in—pardon me—prevention and addressing the root causes that too often lead into cycles of violence.

We should never normalize the idea that violence is an inevitable outcome of neighbour against neighbour encounters. Manitobans deserve to feel protected without feeling like they must become the first line of law enforcement themselves.

For the first time in years, Manitobans are beginning to see measurable progress because of evidence-based investments in prevention, policing, accountability and community safety. Violent crime severity is declining. Police capacity is increasing. Communities are receiving stronger supports and co-ordination. There is still more work to do, but Manitobans are seeing what becomes possible when government chooses investments and collaboration over cuts and confrontation.

Honourable Speaker, the question before us is not whether Manitobans deserve safety; they absolutely do. The question is what kind of public safety approach truly delivers it. Manitobans deserve communities that are safe, compassionate and connected. That future is built through prevention, accountability and investments that bring people together instead of pushing them further apart.

Thank you.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I rise today in support of this important resolution brought forward by the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), a common sense resolution rooted in something that should be fundamental for every Manitoban: the right to feel safe in your own home. Because, at the end of the day, if a person cannot feel safe in the place where their children sleep, where their family gathers and where they're supposed to find peace and security, then something is deeply wrong. And Manitobans know that something is wrong.

Across our province, from Winnipeg to Thompson, from rural farms to small towns and northern communities, people are increasingly worried about violent crime, home invasions, random assaults and repeat offenders being released back onto the streets.

This is no longer a concern isolated to large urban centres. For many years, rural Manitobans would hear about violent crime in Winnipeg and think: thankfully, that sort of thing does not happen here. But, unfortunately, now it does.

In our smaller communities, people are locking doors that never used to have a lock. Families are installing cameras and security systems where none were ever needed before. Seniors are afraid to answer the door late at night. Farmers living miles outside of town know that police response times can sometimes be measured not in minutes but far longer.

And, in those moments, those terrifying moments, Manitobans should not have to wonder whether defending their family will make them the criminal. That is what this resolution is all about. This resolution is not about extremism. This is not about importing American politics into Canada. It is not about, shoot first and ask questions later. It is about recognizing a very basic principle: if someone violently and unlawfully enters your home and you reasonably believe your family is in danger, you should have the right to defend yourself without the

fear of prosecution afterwards. That should not be something that's controversial.

Honourable Speaker, today, under Canadian law, a person acting in self-defence must later have their actions measured against a long list of legal factors and conditions. Many times, these legal prosecutions are long drawn out and the people that are making those decisions, those decisions in a split moment, know that they come with extreme costs. And, while those considerations may make sense sitting calmly in the courtroom months later, they are completely unrealistic in the middle of a home invasion at 2 o'clock in the morning.

At that moment, a parent is not analyzing legal theory. They are not consulting nine separate legal criteria from the Criminal Code. They are not conducting a psychological debate. And they are—what they're doing is trying to simply protect their children. They may be simply trying to survive themselves.

And I think most Manitobans understand that instinctively. Because the reality is that criminals do not announce their intentions politely. Violent offenders do not wait while homeowners access every legal factor with perfect clarity. These situations unfold in seconds. Sometimes the decisions are needed to be made in split seconds. People act under fear, adrenaline, confusion and panic.

And yet, too often after enduring the trauma of being victimized, the homeowner then faces another trauma: arrest, investigation, those expensive legal bills, public scrutiny and, in some cases, criminal prosecution. Meanwhile, Manitobans see repeat offenders released on bail over and over again. They see violent criminals cycling through the justice system and they ask a very reasonable question: when did we become more concerned about protecting criminals than protecting victims?

Honourable Speaker, this is something that I think is near and dear to everyone that has experienced this first-hand. And, unfortunately, the people that have experienced this or are experience it—experiencing it are growing.

As I've said, throughout many communities in Manitoba, this was not a reality. This is something that you saw on—in Hollywood movies and something that you heard on the 6 o'clock news in those large urban centres. It's also not only the people in rural communities that are concerned, it's the people on the streets of our largest urban area of Winnipeg.

* (11:40)

These are people that see—are seeing violent offenders walking the streets once again, only days later. That brings fear, and it brings reasonable fear.

So, again, honourable Speaker, this resolution is not about adopting US-style politics into our Canadian system. This isn't shoot first, ask questions later. This is the fundamental belief being accepted that if you are threatened, threatened with violence in your own home—this isn't out in the yard; this isn't protecting your shed—this is if somebody comes into your home and threatens the life of you and your family, that you have the right to use whatever force it may be that you see fit to defend your family.

Honourable Speaker, this is about a principle more so than any specific law. But what we do need to see is the reasonable adoption of that principle into the law of not only our province but our country. So we ask today that the Justice Minister take this resolution and promote this concept to his federal counterpart to make the changes a reality and make Manitobans that have for the first time in generations felt unsafe in their own home have that reassurance that they can protect their—themselves and their family.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): It's interesting that the member opposite just kind of closed out his comments with defending the fact that this was not an Americanization of what they want to be able to do here in terms of stand your ground, the right to defend. And it's interesting in the Q & A part of debate here this morning, when the member was asked about what does this mean in terms of how does this apply when he talks about right to defend, and he has tunnel vision on what he sees that. And quite honestly, he sees that as the Americanization of what that would look like.

When my colleague, the member from Thompson, asked about 55 less police officers in the system from the previous government, he said that has zero to do with anything. That has everything to do with what's going on here. That impact is felt. That impact is felt across all of Manitoba—rural, urban, northern. Wherever you may be, the impact of less law enforcement absolutely has an impact.

But the other part that the member failed to clarify when we asked who's calling for this. Nobody is calling for this. Nobody is calling for this other than the members opposite—[interjection] and the few members opposite.

And I mean, we're hearing chirps from the member from La Vérendrye, for sure, because what did he do when he came up to stand for Manitobans? He didn't stand for them at all. So when we talk about the right to defend, as they put in that phrasing, it's about defending Manitobans in general from all aspects.

So I ask the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth), where was he in defending trans kids? He was hiding in the stairwell, hiding from the media when that happened. Where was the member from Borderland? Was he even here? Was he here or not here? Did he—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

We can't make reference to a member's absence or presence.

Mr. Bushie: I apologize, deputy Speaker, and I thank you for that direction.

At the end of the day, we ask, who's asking for this? When we talk about the—and the member stands up saying, oh, I have the right to defend, it's about creating division. It's about creating confrontation, which is exactly what they do each and every day.

So when the member gets up and talks about his constituents and talks about what this is going to do, who's calling for this? I asked that member: Did he go to Roseau River—which is in his constituency—did he go to Roseau River and say, this is something I want to bring forward? And was the community, even one person in that community, in that First Nation community, on board? No. Because we know that this is about division for Indigenous communities from that member from Borderland.

And that's exactly what he's bringing forward here today. So nobody is talking for this. [interjection] I know the members are chirping opposite because they are the masters of division. That's exactly what they're trying to do.

So we have the opportunity in this House to debate serious bills, serious resolutions that would actually bring positive change to Manitoba. So, instead, they bring up something that does nothing but want to be able to create division. So the member talks—stands up and talks about righteous and the righteous decision and the righteous way to do things.

That's the top-down, paternalistic approach to be able to say he thinks he knows what's right for all Manitobans. Did he have this conversation outside his constituency? Did he have this conversation outside of his caucus room, even?

The answer is no. Because Manitobans will stand up against division. They stood up against division in the last election, because they clearly seen it from members opposite, that attempt at division.

So he brings forth the resolution on the right to defend, claiming that it's standing up for rights and health and safety. Absolutely not. That's about that member trying to create division, trying to create the us-versus-them mentality. So the audacity for that member to stand up, and he also couldn't say the name Colten Boushie in this Chamber, because he knows Colten is the victim. But he knows he could not stand up there and say that, because it's not true.

So as he stands up and tries to feed into that rhetoric, and feed into that rhetoric of what that is, I go back and I look at some of the commentary that was made when Colten lost his life; some of the commentaries made in there: He should have shot all five of them and given them a medal. That's the rhetoric that that member helps portray and helps bring forward.

In my mind, his only mistake was leaving witnesses. That's the rhetoric that that member helps put out there, that helps confide in. I'm sure he liked it and shared it, did whatever he could to do it. And at the end of the day, honourable deputy Speaker, the social media debate around that was again over the right to defend. So again, no coincidence that that rhetoric and that explanation for what happened to Colten Boushie is now worded in this PMR from that member opposite, because that's exactly what he is trying to do here as well; to create that division, create that us-versus-them mentality. And this discriminatory piece of conversation and legislation and resolution that he's bringing forward is exactly what that's attempting to do. And he couldn't stand up.

And again, I'll say this again—and I say this again and I speaking to the people of Roseau River First Nation. The fact that he's not representing you here, but you—that is your MLA, you are his constituents, so he's standing here and saying he's speaking for you; is he really? Is bringing forward the resolution such as this, the right to defend, the us-versus-them mentality?

So when you leave your First Nation community, what is that member trying to do? What is that member talking for other folks to do? *[interjection]*

Again, members opposite are chirping again on division. So it's no coincidence that the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) brought this forward, that it was seconded by the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth). The only speaker they have put up so

far is the member for La Vérendrye, because that's about division, that's about what they do, each and every day in this House, each and every day out there for Manitobans.

So I ask the members often, and I say this quite often, and I ask them: Do you get out there and speak to all of Manitoba? Do you get out of your constituents, do you get out of your office, do you get out of your caucus room? No, they do not, because they would hear the fact that this resolution is dangerous. This resolution is creating division. It's discriminatory and it's what they are on. That's their base. That's what they want to be able to campaign on time and time again. They still have not apologized for the campaign. They try and word themselves and wordsmith themselves around apologies, because they just don't have it in them to just say they're wrong, just have it in them to get out there and say, I apologize.

As again, those members can't do that, created on division. And maybe that's why—maybe that's why they're seeing a mass exodus from their caucus, because people just don't believe in the rhetoric that's being brought forward time and time again. The second time this is brought—let alone the first time. It's now the second time this is brought forward, because that's how much they believe in that division. That's how much they believe in wanting to divide Manitobans, wanting to create us-versus-them.

At the end of the day, honourable deputy Speaker, we need to bring Manitobans together. We need to support Manitobans wherever they may reside: on-reserve, off-reserve, rural, urban, northern, south, east, west, everywhere. And that is what we are doing. We're bringing Manitobans together.

So when we talk about the right to defend, as this member tries to categorize that terminology, it's about supports. It's about knowing that Manitobans have that support, have that support from law enforcement. Have that enforce from—have that support from municipalities, from their government, municipal, federal, provincial—everybody's at the table, everybody's part of the conversation.

Because, at the end of the day, the tragedy that happened with Colten and the killing of Colten Boushie is something that we can never, ever forget. That member opposite is trying to forget that; he could not even say his name here. Instead he calls the person that killed him the victim. Like, what kind of thought process is that? What kind of justification does he think he has to be able to do that?

* (11:50)

At the end of the day, honourable deputy Speaker, it's about us being able to stand here and say, we're going to help protect and help the welfare and safety of Manitobans wherever they reside, because that's what we have as support. *[interjection]* So as they come forward and they get up there and they talk—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

I ask all members, if you have anything to contribute, wait 'til you're acknowledged. We don't need any hollering back from either side of the Chamber.

Mr. Bushie: Of course, the members opposite, they try and get their words that are off the record so they can say they didn't say it. But, at the end of the day, they're out there spewing that rhetoric time and time again. They sit there trying to hide behind privilege in this House. We can get out there and talk exactly how we talk here.

We'll talk that way out there as well too, because we believe in Manitobans. We believe in what Manitobans brought us here to do, and the diversity and the inclusivity of Manitobans is reflective in this bill. And that member's saying, come to his constituencies. You get out of your constituency, how's that? *[interjection]* Exactly. They are not out there doing anything. They're getting out there trying to spew the rhetoric of division.

At the end of the day, honourable deputy Speaker, it's about bringing a unified Manitoba together. *[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order. Order. Order.

I did a gentle caution to all members on both sides to not be interjecting and yelling across the floor. If you'd like to have conversations, please go do so on the side.

The honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures (Mr. Bushie) has the floor and should be the only one speaking.

Mr. Bushie: It's about us being able to speak out against the hateful, discriminatory, divisive rhetoric that the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) brings into this Chamber every day, and we will do that every single day.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Any other members wishing to speak?

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): Well, thank you so very much, honourable deputy Speaker.

I'm really blown away by this private members' resolution, because it's not about safety, it's about manufacturing fear and disguising ideology as public policy. Manitobans already have a Criminal Code that recognizes reasonable self-defence, but this motion would push us towards a dangerous stand-your-ground mentality, and that invites confrontation instead of prevention.

Honourable Speaker—honourable deputy Speaker, real safety does not come from telling frightened folks to make split-second, life-or-death decisions alone. It comes from trained police, faster response times, prevention and investments that reduce violence before it reaches someone's front door. That is the difference between responsible government and performative outrage.

As the MLA for Kirkfield Park, I believe every Manitoban deserves safety in their home. But I also know safety must be built through evidence, accountability and community supports, not through reckless slogans that make violence more likely.

I also need to speak plainly as a transgender man. When Conservatives talk about whose home, whose property and whose family deserve protection, they often mean some people more than others. Trans Manitobans, two-spirit people, racialized folks, Indigenous people and other marginalized communities know what it means to be vulnerable, what it means to be harassed, to be intimidated and to face violence. And we know that self-defence—that self-defence rhetoric—it has all too often been used to excuse harm rather than prevent it. See the gay panic defense if you need any reference, or the trans panic defense.

I am not going to accept a version of public safety that leaves trans people or any community to defend themselves against transphobic violence while pretending the law is neutral. If the Conservatives truly believe in this right to protect your family, then that right must include my family, my community and every Manitoban who is threatened because of who they are. Anything less is not public safety; it is selective compassion dressed up as principle.

And that is the irony at the heart of this motion, honourable deputy Speaker. Conservatives are always eager to defend rights when those rights belong to people they already see as respectable, familiar or politically convenient. But when it comes to trans rights, Indigenous rights, women's rights or the right to live free from hate and violence, they suddenly become

selective, cautious or even openly hostile. Manitobans can see that contradiction clearly.

Our job here as MLAs is not to celebrate a fantasy of rugged individualism while ignoring the real causes of violence, and this resolution is a total distraction from all of that. We need to pay attention to the real causes of violence, and we need to build on a province where prevention and justice, mental health supports, housing and community safety work together. This is the kind of Manitoba that I'm fighting for, one where no one is left behind and where the right to be safe is not reserved for a chosen few.

Honourable Speaker, you know, when you're in your own space, or even a public space that is maybe deemed as a safe space, and someone enters into that space that isn't necessarily welcome, depending on the situation, there's an opportunity there to talk to someone who maybe doesn't understand the ramifications of what they're doing, but they certainly do not deserve to be killed. You know, I just—it's just—resorting to violence, why does that have to be the answer?

I have a family, honourable Speaker, and this—it's not out of the ordinary for me to protect my family and—whether that's online or out in the community, but there are moments where I've faced violence. And it's been through words, and it's also been through physical confrontation. And I can tell you from experience that being in that position and, you know, when someone is coming at you and they're very upset, you really don't know how you're going to respond until you're in that situation.

So I don't think it's really wise to, you know, encourage folks to grab a deadly weapon and use force to deter someone from doing something. You know, I have to shield my family from a lot of the things that are said and some of the actions that are made. But not once, honourable deputy Speaker—not once—did I ever think that I should resort to violence in my response, even when someone's coming at me.

Honourable deputy Speaker, I worked 12 years in corrections. I worked with folks who were breaking into properties, who were, you know, committing some of those crimes. And while I sat with some of those folks, I had the opportunity to—you know, we had opportunities to discuss how their actions impacted other people. And we had had the opportunity to have that conversation, and that person had an opportunity to potentially change their behaviour. Why? Because they weren't dead because someone shot them in the back because they happened upon their property.

So, I mean, in my role as a correctional officer, having folks coming at me in a violent manner, I'm not trained to respond in a violent way—to subdue someone, sure; but, you know, expecting a—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham) will have two minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., the House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 21, 2026

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