



**Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature**

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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



**Vol. LXXX No. 59B – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 21, 2026**

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	Ind.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
ROBBINS, Colleen	Spruce Woods	PC
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 1:30 p.m.*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Just before we begin with routine proceedings, there's a couple of guests in the Speaker's Gallery that I would like to introduce.

Seated on my left side of the Speaker's Gallery is my constituency assistant, Lyla Yaremchuk, and her husband Sheldon.

Lyla showed up in my campaign office, I guess it was—it wasn't my constituency office yet—looking for a campaign sign in 2016, and she's been there ever since. She has been an integral part of how the constituency office runs. She's known throughout the constituency. People phone and she has the unique ability to listen to people and hear what they're saying and very empathetic, and her and I have had the opportunity to see each other at our best, and some days, at not our best. And we've managed to figure out how to work together, how to respect each other and how to make sure that we've always put the constituents first.

So after 10 years, Lyla has decided that it's time to spend more time with Sheldon. Sorry, Sheldon. I suspect I haven't seen the last of her, that there'll probably be occasions when we will still cross paths and figure out how to do things for the constituents of the Flin Flon constituency.

So please join me in thanking Lyla for 10 years of loyal service to the people of the Flin Flon constituency and to myself.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**The Speaker:** And now we'll go to routine proceedings.

So—introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Vyshyvanka Day

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** I rise today to recognize celebration Vyshyvanka Day, also known as Ukrainian embroidered shirt day.

*Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

We recognize Ukrainians' rich culture, identity and history. Today we celebrate across generations and regions and communities. We honour the Ukrainians and their heritage, and their contribution to our province and country.

Since February of 2022, vyshyvanka has also been—become a very powerful symbol of Ukrainian fight in the face of international aggression. We stand united with Ukrainian people who carry the heavy burden of this conflict.

Today, one in seven Manitobans has Ukrainian ancestry. Our province is home to one of the oldest and strongest Ukrainian communities in Canada. Ukrainian community members have contributed so much to the public life, and Manitobans have welcomed them with open arms, as well built new lives.

Earlier today, our minister of sport and culture and heritage and tourism announced \$500,000 for the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to expand their English language training programs. English language training is among the most important tools to help out Ukrainian immigrants or newcomers to rebuild a successful life in Manitoba.

Two members of the UCC are here in the gallery. No stranger in Ukrainian culture is Joanne Lewandosky and Susan Zunk [*phonetic*]. Thank you for what all you do in our province and for nashi lyudi [*our people*], our people, in Ukrainian heritage.

On this day, our government is proud to celebrate and endure the contributions of the Ukrainian communities. I encourage all members of this House and all Manitobans: Please join me in recognizing the Ukrainian community and extending our friendship and support on behalf of the people and the province of Manitoba.

It is my sincere hope that peace, prosperity will soon return to Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini. [*Glory to Ukraine.*]

Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker. May we rise.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Today I rise to recognize Vyshyvanka Day, an international celebration of Ukrainian culture, heritage and, especially,

resilience. Manitoba has a long and proud connection to the Ukrainian community.

For generations, Ukrainian Manitobans have helped shape our province through their contributions to agriculture, business and education, public service and the arts. Their traditions, values and strong sense of community continue to enrich Manitoba today.

The vyshyvanka, their traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt, is far more than just a piece of clothing. It is a powerful symbol of identity, heritage and belonging. Each embroidered pattern carries meaning, with designs and colours often reflecting regional traditions, family histories and values passed down through generations.

Historically, the vyshyvanka has represented strength, protection and connection to one's roots in times of peace and in times of hardship. Ukrainians have worn it with pride as an expression of cultural identity and resilience.

As former Education minister, we had both curriculum topics ready to go: the Holocaust and Holodomor. I am happy and thrilled—and I know many Manitobans are—to see the Holocaust curriculum now embedded in the K-to-12 curriculum. But I ask this Kinev government: Why is it taking so long for a Holodomor curriculum to be put into the curriculum?

Manitoba's cultural diversity is one of our greatest strengths. Celebrations like Vyshyvanka Day remind us of the importance of preserving traditions, honouring our heritage and building understanding between all communities. This day also carries special significance, as the people of Ukraine continue to endure the devastating effects of war.

Wearing the vyshyvanka today is not only a celebration of culture, but also a visible sign of solidarity with Ukrainians here in Manitoba and around the world. I want to give a big thanks to Joanne Lewandosky and Susan and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Manitoba for the work that they do to promote all—

**The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott):** The member—*[interjection]*

Order. Order. Order.

The member's time has expired.

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott):** Is there leave for the member to continue? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Ewasko:** I encourage all Manitobans to take the opportunity to learn more about Ukrainian traditions and to celebrate the vibrant contributions of the Ukrainian community to our province.

Happy Vyshyvanka Day. Thank you. Dyakuyu *[Thank you]*. Slava Ukraini *[Glory to Ukraine]*.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, could you please canvass the House to see if there's leave for a moment of silence to reflect on the lives that have been lost and the continued conflict in Ukraine.

**The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott):** Is there a leave for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

*A moment of silence was observed.*

\* (13:40)

### Introduction of Guests

**The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott):** I would—before moving on to the following proceedings, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have 11 participants of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians twinning program. Their names are as follows: Tsion Abera, Alexis Antoine, Mina Azizi, Hannah Bowers, Cadena Brazeau, Arleen Kaur, Edyn LeDrew, Summer Prince, Bianca Santarsieri, Emmanuella Shaibu and Davida Ujah.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, CWP, Canadian Region's twinning program has three main objectives: to allow young women aged 17 to 25 to experience parliamentary life by accompanying women parliamentarians in their parliamentary activities to get young women interested in politics and to offer women parliamentarians an opportunity to speak with young women about their interests and concerns. This program aligns with the CWP's mission to assist Canadian women and girls to discover their political potential, experience the fulfillment of a career in public service and create a better society.

This effort is led by the member for Seine River (MLA Cross), who serves as president of the Manitoba branch, alongside the member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert), the branch's vice-president, who initiated the program in Manitoba. Tracey Payton and Andressa Fernandes from the Clerk's office have played a key role in co-ordinating the administrative side of the program.

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

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Agape Table's New Facility

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** This month marks a truly historic milestone for an organization that has provided nourishment, comfort and support to Winnipeg's most vulnerable citizens for decades. On May 7, Agape Table proudly celebrated the grand opening of its new 10,500-square-foot facility at 350 Furby Street, planting permanent roots for the first time in its 46-year history. And I'd ask that my guests from Agape please rise in the gallery.

Since 1980, Agape Table has lovingly served folks out of neighbourhood kitchens and church basements before beginning their 11-year quest to find a forever home. In May of 2022, their efforts were confirmed when the property adjacent to The Wave Church was sold to them in support of their mission. Since then, people from every corner of Winnipeg have rallied together, pouring their generosity into a historic \$8-million fundraising campaign to bring this incredible facility to life.

Working alongside Bockstael Construction, Agape Table built a state-of-the-art facility that beautifully reflects the mission—their mission, rather—of radical inclusivity. This remarkable building even achieved the prestigious Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification gold standard, making it the very first building and community kitchen in all of Manitoba to earn this pre-construction honour.

Today, with expanded kitchen space and refrigeration, the new facility will allow Agape Table to be available seven days a week and to extend its vital services. At the heart of the design is a spacious, 150-seat indoor dining space where guests can sit together and share meals in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Deputy Speaker, as Agape board chair Cathe Umlah beautifully stated: May this new building bring nourishment to those in need and comfort to those who are struggling with all of the challenges that life brings them.

I ask all members in the Chamber today to join me in celebrating Agape Table's incredible new home and in thanking their amazing leaders for all—and all of the dedicated staff and volunteers who have poured their hearts and their love into this incredible and life-changing endeavour.

Congratulations and thank you so much.

I just ask that the guests that are with us today—Jim Steep, Seren Jocelyn and Janet McLeod—that their names be added to Hansard.

Thank you.

### CWP Twinning Program

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** We are here to celebrate today the first CWP training program—twinning program to happen in Manitoba Legislature.

#### *The Speaker in the Chair*

Two years ago, I had the opportunity to attend the CWP Canadian Region steering committee in Toronto as the president of the women's commonwealth parliamentarians Manitoba chapter. In that non-partisan meeting, I was inspired in so many ways by women parliamentarians from across our country.

The twinning program happening over the next two days is a result of the gathering of women with a united goal of encouraging and empowering women to get involved in politics.

I enjoyed two years as president and would like to introduce the new president for the next two years, the member from Seine River. I want to thank my fellow MLA colleague and new president for inviting me to continue the—to work together with her to see this program to fruition. It has truly been a pleasure to be able to plan and host this non-partisan event with her.

Today, we are both honoured to help welcome 11 women from across Manitoba to the CWP training—twinning program here at the Manitoba Legislature. Over the next two days, these women will work alongside female MLAs to experience first-hand what public service looks like from question period to conversations about leadership, service and community.

This program is about more than politics. It's about connection, mentorship and showing women that their voices matter and that they belong in these spaces. When women see themselves reflected in leadership, it inspires confidence and opens doors for them.

That is why this initiative like—that's why initiatives like this are so important. I am proud that this program is being—brings women together across party lines with a shared goal: encouraging more women to step forward and lead because stronger representation leads to stronger, more inclusive decisions.

I want to thank everyone who helped make this program possible, including the staff in the Clerk's office, and Tracey and the women participating, as well as the MLAs in our Chamber.

Thank you.

### **Rendez-Vous Rivyayr Seine**

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** L'Honorable Président [*Honourable Speaker*], today I celebrate the return of an event that has quickly become a cherished highlight of the spring season in St. Boniface and across Winnipeg. On Saturday, May 30, 2026, we will gather for the third annual Rendez-Vous Rivyayr Seine, a celebration that invites everyone to paddle through history and connect with the natural beauty and Métis heritage of our province.

#### **French spoken**

Et je demanderais à mes invités de se lever, s'il vous plaît.

La rivière Seine est, bien entendu, plus qu'un simple cours d'eau, l'Honorable Président. C'est un ruban d'histoire qui serpente à travers nos quartiers, des sentiers paisibles du Parc Bois-des-Esprits aux terrains historiques du Parc Lagimodière-Gaboury.

#### **Translation**

*And I would ask my guests to please stand.*

*The Seine River is, of course, more than just a waterway, Honourable Speaker. It is a ribbon of history that winds its way through our neighbourhoods, from the peaceful paths of Bois-des-Esprits Park to the historic grounds of Lagimodière-Gaboury Park.*

#### **English**

This paddling event highlights the richness of our Métis culture, mirroring of our vibrancy and resilience. This year's festivities promise to be even more engaging by bringing in Red River Métis musicians, actors and artisans to help tell the river's history.

#### **French spoken**

Les participants peuvent choisir parmi cinq sites de départ uniques, dont le Parc Morier, organisés par des partenaires engagés tels que l'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba.

#### **Translation**

*Participants can choose from five unique starting points, including Morier Park, organized by dedicated partners such as the Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba.*

#### **English**

Whether you are in a canoe, a kayak or on a paddleboard, the journey culminates in a wonderful community celebration at Parc Lagimodière-Gaboury at 1 p.m., where we will gather to enjoy the vibrant sounds of Métis fiddling, share bannock and honour the stories of our ancestors.

#### **French spoken**

Je tiens à remercier la Société historique métisse et Fête Jockey, dont l'engagement permet d'organiser cette célébration pour la troisième année consécutive. Grâce à votre dévouement, notre patrimoine continue de rayonner dans tout le Manitoba.

#### **Translation**

*I would like to thank the Société historique métisse and Fête Jockey, whose commitment has made it possible to organize this celebration for the third consecutive year. Thanks to your dedication, our heritage continues to shine throughout Manitoba.*

\* (13:50)

#### **English**

I invite every Manitoban to join us down by the river—the Seine River—this May 30 to celebrate our shared history and heritage.

#### **French spoken**

C'est une célébration qui nous rassemble.

Dans la galerie, l'Honorable Président, nous avons Andrée Forest et Dave Danyluk de la Société historique métisse, ainsi que Crystal Desrosiers et Marjolaine Pelletier de l'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba.

#### **Translation**

*This is a celebration that brings us together.*

*In the gallery, Honourable Speaker, we have Andrée Forest and Dave Danyluk from the Société historique métisse, as well as Crystal Desrosiers and Marjolaine Pelletier from the Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba.*

#### **English**

Miigwech. Merci.

I invite everyone to rise and celebrate this wonderful activity: Rendez-Vous Rivyayr Seine.

### Education System Funding

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** As I was saying, before, of course, I was so rudely interrupted by the inappropriate and unparliamentary language by this Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister.

We already know that Manitoba Teachers' Society has talked about that this Kinev government seems to be disconnected from real grassroots teachers, and a lot of what they're doing is political optics. We hear, day in and day out, from various teachers that there is a crisis in education and it continues to worsen. We know that classroom teachers continue working in underfunded, understaffed, with fewer and fewer supports, and all they're asking is for education to be properly funded.

So in the Lac du Bonnet constituency, I have the pleasure of representing three school divisions. The first one, Sunrise School Division: in the last three years under the NDP, they have received \$1.6 million towards their funding; under the PCs, they had received five times that amount.

The Whiteshell school division had received, in the last three years, \$10,000, Honourable Speaker; under the PCs, they received 20 times that amount.

Lord Selkirk School Division had received, under this current NDP government, \$2.6 million; under the PCs, \$4.1 million. The community of Victoria Beach is paying, this year alone, \$330,000 per student that is a taxpayer or a resident of Victoria Beach community.

Manitobans just simply can't afford this Kinev government and their cuts to education. So on behalf of Manitoba students, teachers, parents, guardians, we're all asking: it is time for a Cabinet shuffle.

### J. Douglas Deans

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** I rise today to welcome Doug—family and friends who are joining us online, virtually, to recognize the honour of J. Douglas Deans for his lifetime of service and contribution to Dauphin community and broader Parkland 'reger'—region.

Born and raised in Dauphin, Doug was a proud graduate of the Dauphin Collegiate, where he received his Governor General's medal award and an early indication of his drive of excellence.

After earning his law degree from the University of Manitoba, Doug returned home in 1975 to begin his legal career with Johnston & Company. Over nearly

five decades, he built a respected practice grounded in his professionalism and service to others.

Doug's commitment was to community, extended beyond the legal profession. He generously donated his time and leadership to organizations and strengthened the life in the Parkland region.

His service included a number of events: Scouts Canada, Dauphin Golf and Country Club, the Parkland Regional Library, Parkland Community Futures, the Dauphin Regional Hospital Foundation. And Doug was a very strong supporter of the conservation efforts of Ducks Unlimited, and he championed the local fundraising events throughout the region to ensure success.

Doug is a well-known strong voice in his role as master of ceremonies at many community events. Whether recognizing volunteers, welcoming guests or bringing warmth and humour to special occasions, Doug was a special way of connecting with people.

In 2002, Doug was appointed to Queen's Counsel in recognition of his distinguished and the legal career. He retired from active practice in 2024, leaving behind a legacy of leadership and community spirit.

As Doug now faces health challenges in retirement, we offer sincere gratitude and best wishes to him and his family. His contributions to Dauphin and the Parkland region left a lasting impact and will long be remembered for his professionalism and his volunteerism.

So I ask for fellow people to recognize us as he is online as well.

Thank you so much.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** Prior to moving on to oral questions, today is the last day for another one of our Legislative pages. Chielo Jose is proudly set to attend her final year of high school at Transcona Collegiate this upcoming fall. Calculated from her mid-term marks, Chielo holds a 98 per cent average across all of her classes and hopes to further her education at the University of Manitoba's faculty of science in the fall of 2027.

As this chapter in her life comes to a close, Chielo holds eternal gratitude to have had the honour of serving this Legislature as a page. Through this role, she developed a deeper understanding of how the provincial government operates and its profound impact on our communities.

Chiello would like to acknowledge that this was not done without the love and support of her parents, Arnold and Rosalinda Jose, the greatest examples of determination and ambition that have shaped Chiello's very being.

Lastly, Chiello would not be standing here today if not for her history teacher, Mr. Navneil Singh, who introduced her to this wonderful program.

To everyone at the Legislature who supported her, would like—she would like to thank and express a heartfelt thank-you. There was not a single second of the Legislature that failed to represent the Manitoba attributes of kindness, resilience and dignity.

This experience will remain with Chiello for the rest of her life, and from the bottom of her heart she thanks all of you once again.

Congratulations, and we look forward to seeing your future.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Further, would draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today the summer tour guides for the Legislative Building: Emma Fomgbami, Andreas Detillieux, Brooke Slobodian, Isabella Houghton. And they're accompanied by Claire Normandeau, manager of the visitor tour program; Shay Jolicoeur, Indigenous tour officer; Marit Stokke, tour officer.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Affordability Measures for Manitobans

#### Call to Increase the Basic Personal Tax Exemption

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Manitobans are asking: When will this Premier get serious? Enough with the theatrics, enough with the heckling, enough with the threats from this Premier.

Manitobans did not elect us to fight each other. They elected us to work with each other to make Manitoba a better place for everyone. And right now, they want us to work together in an affordability crisis.

Our team has offered to work together with this NDP government on real solutions for Manitobans because that's what they're asking for. But this Premier refuses to.

This Premier also seems to forget that he has a majority government. He has the votes to do whatever

he wants. He can implement his PST junk food tax savings if he chooses to, but he's choosing not to. Why has been working together to make Manitoba a more affordable place for everyone such a non-starter for this Premier?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Before I begin, I wanted to congratulate Chiello on their last day. And I'm told that there's a 98 per cent grade point average. That's amazing. Congratulations. All the best with your future success.

And when it comes to politicians in this place, I would say that we have a responsibility not to exacerbate divisions in our society. The PCs did that in the last election to Indigenous women; they did that to LGBT folks, and, apparently, they were doing it again this morning.

\* (14:00)

So I—as somebody who has spent time with the family of Colten Boushie, I would encourage the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) to reach out to that family and to apologize for the comments that he made. There is a way to have a debate without having to divide Manitobans.

When it comes to political leadership, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition—

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

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

**Mr. Khan:** The Premier talks about one Manitoban, but all he is doing is continuing to posture, threaten, heckle members on this side of the House when we're trying to work together for one Manitoba. We're trying to work with this NDP government to pass real cost savings, tax savings on to Manitobans.

The Premier is refusing to listen to us and he's refusing to listen to Manitobans. He is refusing to make life more affordable for Manitobans. Families are struggling right now. Cutting the PST off of a handful of junk food items might make for a great headline, but it's not helping families. This NDP government is offering you \$100 of relief for a family of four.

On our side of the House, we're proposing a savings of up to \$3,000: \$100 under this NDP, \$3,000 under the PCs.

Will the Premier do the right thing today and support—

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

**Mr. Kinew:** The death of Colten Boushie was a very sad situation, and when we're talking about the impact that it had on our country, it certainly became national news. Unfortunately, I expect that the misguided comments for the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) will also be national news today.

With that in mind, I want to know what the Leader of the Opposition is going to do to hold him accountable or, maybe in the very basic instance, just to talk to him about why those comments are not helpful. The PCs should have learned by now that they have a responsibility not to exacerbate divisions in our society. They have consistently targeted people on race. They've targeted people because they're trans. They've targeted people because they're bi or LGBT. It needs to stop.

I want the leader to address those points right now.

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

**Mr. Khan:** It's clear that the Premier forgets that he's the Premier. It's question period. We ask questions; he's supposed to answer them. The—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —Premier is refusing to answer questions when it comes to affordability. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** I'm asking the Premier questions about making life more affordable for Manitobans, and he's refusing to answer them. He's offering Manitobans pennies.

On our side of the House, we're offering them savings up to \$3,000 a year. Families are feeling the reality of inaction and failure by this Kinew government.

This Premier is offering you pennies off of junk food. How is that going to make your life better? It's not. If the Premier will put his ego aside, listen to Manitobans and support our call for an increase in basic personal exemption to \$30,000, he can save you up to \$3,000 a year today.

Will the Premier listen to Manitobans and do the right thing?

**Mr. Kinew:** The budget we brought forward is a remarkable document. Not only does it save you money at the grocery store and at the gas station, it also has record investments in health care, in education and the lowest deficit in all of the country. The members opposite could pass it right now.

Now, of course, if we were to pass the budget today, we could deal with many other important things in the Legislature, but the PCs need to deal with the comments for the member for Borderland. I anticipate that they're going to have to go and do the bob-and-weave thing in the media today, but I would like them to put on the record right now how they intend to address this issue in their caucus.

They have a consistent pattern of trying to divide Manitobans on issues of race and class and gender and things like that, and I think it's completely wrong. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition, before he comes through with any other political strategies and stunts today, tell us what he's going to do for the very divisive comments made by the member for Borderland.

**Mr. Khan:** Health care is worse under this NDP government. Education is worse under this NDP government. And now only this Kinew government, an NDP government, would applause a \$500-million deficit like that's a good thing. They are over \$4.5 billion over what they promised Manitobans they would spend.

Our PC team on this side of the House has called for real measures to make life more affordable for Manitobans. That means increasing your basic personal tax exemption. That means on every single paycheque, 26 times a year, Manitobans will get hundreds of dollars more back every paycheque.

The Premier can do this if he wants to. He has a majority government. He is the Premier of Manitoba. He can do it if he wants to.

Why is the Premier not listening to Manitobans and refusing to make real-life affordable changes for Manitobans?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, I don't see seriousness on the other side of the aisle here. There's no seriousness when it comes to fiscal policy; there's no seriousness when it comes to health care, certainly no seriousness when it comes to being a credible opposition.

No Manitoban is going to vote for the sort of comments that were made by the member for Borderland today, particularly not in swing ridings.

So I ask the member opposite, if not for the good of our province, at least for his own political self-interest, tell us how he's going to address these hateful and divisive remarks.

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

**Mr. Khan:** The Premier does not have a leg to stand on when he talks about fiscal responsibility. In two and a half years, this NDP government has run back-to-back deficits at over \$5 billion. And now they applaud a \$500-million deficit. It's comical. It's embarrassing. This Premier needs to do the right thing and start supporting Manitoban families.

Our PC government, previous PC government, raised the basic personal exemption—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —and lifted—more than 70,000 low-income Manitobans were able to keep more of their paycheque.

This Premier has opportunity to do that exact thing right now. He can help Manitobans that need the most help, the ones on minimum wage, the ones working two jobs, the ones struggling to get by.

Will the Premier put his ego aside, listen to Manitobans, do the right thing and support a common-sense call to increase your basic personal exemption to \$30,000, giving you back—

**The Speaker:** Honourable member's time is expired.

**Mr. Kinew:** The reason why it's noteworthy for Manitobans to know that we have the lowest deficit in the entire country because Donald Trump has been attacking the Canadian economy for the past year, and, unfortunately, some of our provincial neighbours are seeing the impact. That's why it's so shameful that the member opposite thanked Donald Trump.

But it's the same kind of divisiveness that we saw on display this morning from the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter). The member from Borderland fancies himself a morally upstanding person but he does not have the self-awareness to see the harm that his remarks would cause. I would encourage him, on a level of man to man, to reflect on those remarks and perhaps come back tomorrow with a new approach.

But for the Leader of the Opposition, who fancies himself the leader of a serious political party, who has proven himself time and time again to be quite the opposite, he has a responsibility, not just on a moral level, but also for the careers of the people whose seats are going down the tubes under his watch, to castigate and to speak out against those comments.

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

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

**Mr. Khan:** I've now asked five questions in a row to this Premier about what he's going to do to make life more affordable. Will he support the basic personal exemption increase to \$30,000? Will he do the right thing and listen to Manitobans?

Out of the five questions I asked, not one serious answer from this Premier. He's avoiding the question. He is trying to distract Manitobans. He refuses to acknowledge the fact that, in his budget, he has nothing to help Manitoba families other than a savings of PST on junk food, saving you pennies.

Greg Selinger promised Manitobans he wouldn't—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Khan:** —increase the PST. He did without passing his budget bill. Brian Pallister dropped the PST without passing the BITSA bill.

Now the Premier has the opportunity to do the same thing. He can do it. It's been done before in the past, he can do it now. He has the majority. He is the Premier.

Will the Premier do the right thing and increase the basic personal exemption, or at the bare minimum come clean to Manitobans and say—

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Member's out of touch. Help at the grocery store, help at the gas station, help paying rent, help paying your mortgage. These are all important things for Manitobans, and he dismisses them because he doesn't know what it's like out there for people like us.

The other person who doesn't know what is like out there for people like us is the member for Borderland, because the vast majority of Manitobans are non-Indigenous. But those non-Indigenous, good-hearted Manitobans don't want to see neighbour pitted against neighbour. They don't want to see trivial resolutions brought before here just to try and score cheap political points.

Manitobans categorically rejected that—uncategorically, I should say—in the last election. The PCs, time and time again in this term in office, have been given the chance to turn over a new leaf, and yet they never have. I submit to you: they never will. Let's keep them in the opposition benches forever, and let's keep working together to build up our great province.

### **Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans Call to Increase the Basic Personal Tax Exemption**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Manitobans are being squeezed from every angle under the NDP. Manitoba has the highest inflation in the country, the highest education property taxes in the country, rising hydro rates, higher fuel costs and one of the highest income tax burdens in Canada. Yet the NDP have provided no meaningful tax relief for Manitobans who are really struggling right now.

So why has the NDP allowed Manitoba's cost of living to become the worst in the country?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, if the members opposite want to help Manitobans with affordability, we've got an idea for them. Why don't they pass BITSA today, stand up and get that bill passed? Wow.

Let's take the PST off all food in grocery stores. Let's also work to make life more affordable for renters by raising that renters tax credit. Let's help out homeowners to make it more affordable to own a home by raising their education property tax credit. Those are the things that are contained in this BITSA bill. And, again, the only people in the province standing between Manitobans and those savings are the members opposite.

Will they stand today, finally, again, make use of their time in this House, support the bill? Let's bring those savings to Manitobans today.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** We're willing to work with the NDP. We've said this time and time again. But what we're saying is Manitobans need more because Manitobans are living in a cost-of-living crisis: highest education taxes in Canada, highest inflation in Canada, highest food inflation in Canada. And on top of all that, the NDP froze indexation, pushing more Manitobans into higher tax brackets.

Let's be clear: every other province has recognized inflationary pressures and kept indexation on income taxes, except for this NDP government while 50 per cent of Manitobans are within \$200 of bankruptcy.

So will the NDP do the right thing, work with our team and increase the basic personal exemption to \$30,000, yes or no?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, again, their proposal is a proposal to send huge amounts of dollars

into the hands of the wealthiest people in the province while they send the province into the fiscal ditch, which is exactly what they did before they left government about three years ago. They left Manitobans with a \$2-billion deficit.

We have turned that around and now we have the lowest deficit in the entire country. We're doing the work of making life more affordable while we fix health care, while we continue to make investments where they were needed after years of cuts, while we bring forward a fiscally sustainable and responsible approach, something Manitobans didn't see for years under the members opposite.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** This minister has the highest inflation in the country and the highest food inflation in the country and the highest education property taxes in the entire country, and he still wants to collect more from Manitobans by cancelling indexation and freezing the basic personal exemption.

Manitobans need relief now. Manitoba is the only province in Canada that's not indexing and not increasing the basic personal exemption.

So I ask the minister: We have put forward a very common sense proposal giving \$3,000 back to Manitoba families; will he commit to meeting with our PC caucus today to move forward on all this tax relief measures for Manitobans, yes or no?

**MLA Sala:** Manitobans do need more relief now, Honourable Speaker. So we say to the members opposite: Get out of the way. Pass the BITSA bill. Let's bring in the PST savings. Let's increase the credit for renters. Let's increase the credits for homeowners. Let's do the work of making life more affordable.

Again, the members opposite stand in the way of Manitobans having those savings on July 1. Why don't they want to bring those savings to Manitobans? If they're standing here talking about affordability challenges, we've got a solution for them. We're going to take the PST off all groceries on July 1—that is, if they stand today and support the bill.

Will she stand up today and actually do the work of bringing savings to Manitobans, yes or no?

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

Just—I need to note that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan), in his last question, made the

comment about coming clean. So I would caution the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to be more careful in the language he uses. That comes dangerously close to being unparliamentary.

**Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans  
Call to Increase the Basic Personal Tax Exemption**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** With Manitoba families facing the highest food inflation in Canada, residents in Interlake-Gimli are asking, when will this NDP government provide meaningful affordability relief?

The Progressive Conservative proposal to raise the basic personal exemption to \$30,000 would help hard-working families keep up to \$3,000 more of their earnings and remove many low-income Manitobans from paying provincial income tax altogether.

Considering the average household income in Interlake-Gimli is just over \$60,000, why is the government refusing to provide real tax relief for struggling families, low-income workers and seniors?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, the member opposite isn't serious. The party isn't serious. Their offer that they're putting on the table isn't serious.

We know where that offer would lead us, and that's back to a \$2-billion deficit; or, as we saw in their tenure, they tended to make decisions like that that gave benefits to the wealthiest in society which were accompanied with huge cuts to things like health care, losing health-care facilities in rural communities, cuts to schools, cuts to child care. That's their record. Again, not a serious proposal.

What is serious, Honourable Speaker? The work that's being done this—by this team to make life more affordable and the work that's reflected in this BITSA bill. What we're saying is we're going to take the PST off all groceries in Manitoba, we're going to raise credits for renters, we're going to make life more affordable for honers—homeowners. Why can't they get in support of that?

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

The honourable member for Interlake-Gimli, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Johnson:** Families in Interlake-Gimli are struggling with rising grocery, fuel, utility and housing costs while this NDP continues to offer no meaningful affordability relief. The Progressive Conservative

proposal to increase the basic personal exemption to \$30,000 would immediately help lower and middle income Manitobans by allowing them to keep up to \$3,000 more of their own paycheques.

Why does this government continue to take more from hard-working Manitobans instead of supporting practical tax relief measures that would help families and seniors manage rising costs?

**MLA Sala:** The member stands in the House and reads a list of things that he feels are getting more expensive in Manitoba. Well, it's that very list he just outlined—those are all the things we're trying to reduce the cost for, Honourable Speaker.

Food, rent, the costs of owning a home: all of these things are things that we're trying to make lower. We're trying to reduce those costs. And that's exactly what this BITSA bill does.

The member opposite stands in the way of that bill. In fact, he and the rest of that team seem to be fighting to go back to the way things were: make life more expensive for homeowners, make life more expensive for renters. Manitobans reject that. They reject the proposals being brought forward by the members opposite.

What they want to see is relief now; relief that's in this BITSA bill. Will he support the bill, yes or no?

\* (14:20)

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

The honourable member for Interlake-Gimli, on a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Johnson:** The minister quite well knows that Manitoba now has the highest—highest—food inflation in the province. And it is only getting higher under this failing NDP government, yet the only affordability measures that they seem to be focused on is removing the junk food tax.

The Progressive Conservative proposal to raise the basic personal exemption to \$30,000 would provide real relief in the tune of \$3,000 per family.

Why is this government ignoring meaningful affordability solutions for hard-working Manitobans?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, when our team came into government, we had 8 per cent inflation after they left government, 8 per cent inflation as a result of when—their inaction. What did we do? We instantly came in and we eliminated the fuel tax for an entire year, crushing that inflation in very short order.

And now, again, with this recent budget and this BITSA bill, more savings we're trying to bring to Manitobans: taking the PST off all groceries, better credit for renters, better credit for homeowners. We're trying to do away with the cost of transit for students in Manitoba, free child care for the lowest income families in the province.

This team is focused on making life more affordable after years of Manitobans suffering 'uver'—under a government that didn't take action. Manitobans—

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

### **Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans Request to Support Income Tax Relief**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Honourable Speaker, this failing Kiewit government has a chance to offer real tax relief, and they are choosing not to. Instead, they come into this Chamber every day and tell Manitobans that \$100 is enough. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Well, it isn't. Families and seniors need more. We've offered to work together.

Why is this Minister of Finance unwilling to work together for the betterment of all Manitobans?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** We are working for the betterment of Manitobans. What we're not going to do is accept proposals that will again send Manitoba into the fiscal ditch. Their record is clear: a \$2-billion hole that we had to climb out of. If we were to accept what the members opposite are putting forward: hello, credit downgrades; hello, massive fiscal challenges for Manitoba. That's not a path we want to go down again.

What are we going to do? We're going to keep doing the work of fixing health care, investing in education and, yes, making life more affordable while we continue to do the very important work of fixing the fiscal mess they left Manitoba. And, again, we're very proud to have the lowest deficit in the entire country and be working towards that balanced budget next year in our final year of our first mandate.

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

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Honourable Speaker, we propose real relief. Thousands of dollars back off income taxes, money saved on every paycheque. This would immediately help those that need it the most. When government takes less tax, families have more to spend in

their local economy on the things they need most. It's been proven to help already.

Why is this minister unwilling to offer more than 100 bucks?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, since coming into government, we've put thousands of dollars back into Manitobans' pockets, whether it's through huge middle-class tax cuts, whether it's through fuel tax cuts, whether it's through increases to renters tax credits that the members opposite cut. There's no denying there's only one team in this province that's actually focused on making life more affordable.

The members opposite bring forward proposals that are going to only benefit the wealthiest in Manitoba while they send us into a fiscal deficit position. We know what they're capable of. We know we don't want to go back there.

What we know is we're going to keep doing the work we're doing: investing where it counts, making life more affordable while we bring forward a fiscally responsible approach; again, something we didn't see for seven and a half years under the members opposite.

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

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Honourable Speaker, in 2023, we raised the 'bersic'—basic personal exemption to \$15,000. PC indexation increased it to \$15,780, where it has stayed to this day. While Manitoba has the worst inflation in the nation, this government has decided to freeze this exemption. That means that every dollar earned is taxed a little bit more.

Why did this minister raise taxes on Manitobans?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, this team is lowering taxes for Manitobans. That's what we've done since the first moment we got into this building. We're doing the work of making life more affordable while we fix health care, while we invest in education, while we make Manitoba into a safer place. And, as I said, we're doing that while we bring forward a fiscally responsible approach.

Honourable Speaker, I'm delighted to share that just today, S&P has announced that our credit rating is going to remain at an A+, outlook stable. That's the work we're doing right here. Let's keep it going.

**Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans  
Call to Increase the Basic Personal Tax Exemption**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Today, Manitobans are coping with higher inflation than any other province, 53 per cent higher than the Canadian average. And the reason for that is that property taxes and food costs are rising faster in Manitoba than anywhere else. And this has real impacts on Manitoba families' budgets. Parents are making difficult choices, cutting back, postponing purchases and worrying about their monthly bills in ways they never had to before.

Our team has proposed a real affordability measure to give Manitobans back more of their own hard-earned dollars.

Will the NDP raise the basic personal exemption and provide Manitobans with real, meaningful cost relief today?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** What their team is proposing is going to bring a fiscal disaster. That's what we know happens under the PCs, and there's certainly no A+ credit ratings with those types of proposals coming forward. What we know we're going to see is, again, credit downgrades, \$2-billion deficits. That's what Manitobans can expect if we ever let them anywhere close to the reins of government again.

Under this team, we've been working very hard to ensure that we focus in on those areas where Manitobans are facing those affordability challenges: areas like food which, again, this BITSA bill, that we're looking to the members opposite to support so we can bring savings by July 1, does exactly that. Let's take the PST off all groceries in Manitoba by July 1.

Again, we ask the members opposite—I ask this member: Will she stand in the House today and—

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

The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Cook:** The only thing the NDP is working hard to do is to actively make life more expensive for Manitobans. They increased property taxes. They increased income taxes. And while inflation in Manitoba is outpacing every other province, they absolutely refuse to allow Manitobans to keep more of their own hard-earned money.

Why is this NDP government so oblivious to the struggles of Manitoba families and so unwilling to provide them with any real cost relief?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know that we cut their taxes. That's the work we've been doing since we got in: whether it's the gas tax cut, whether it's the education property tax rebates that we brought in, now the biggest education property tax rebate cheques Manitobans have ever seen. And, again, this recent budget, we announced we're going up to \$1,700 to make it even more affordable to own a home.

But today we ask the members opposite: Why won't they support this bill? It's a bill that not only does away with PST in grocery stores, it also proposes to raise the renters tax credit, which they cut, which they lifted taxes on renters. It also proposes to raise the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit to \$1,700.

Let's bring those savings to Manitobans. Let's—

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

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

**Mrs. Cook:** Honourable Speaker, homeowners in the Roblin constituency are not better off under the NDP's plan. Through both its actions and its inaction, this NDP government is making life harder for Manitobans. They stand idly by while Manitoba leads the country in inflation, oblivious to the real-world impacts that this has on Manitoba families.

Then they actively make the problem worse by jacking up property taxes and jacking up income taxes. And then they just keep taking from Manitobans, refusing to allow them to keep more of their own hard-earned money to ease the pressure families are facing.

Will the NDP finally get over their own ideological opposition to allowing Manitobans to keep more of their own money and raise the basic personal exemption today?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, the basic personal exemption is higher under us than it ever was under them.

I do want to table this article that broke during question period for the members opposite, that says that the Leader of the PCs and the people suing him settled a \$562,000 lawsuit.

Specifically, the lawyer for the other party in this suit said, and I quote: A settlement occurred. End quote.

\* (14:30)

Now, we know that the leader of a political party is bound by the conflict of interest law to disclose any legal actions against them.

So I wonder whether the member for Roblin was aware of the amount of the settlement, the nature of the settlement; or are these details only known to the member and not the rest of the PC caucus? Because, certainly, he will have to disclose these details to everyone very, very soon.

**Safety Improvements for Downtown Winnipeg Funding Announcement for Community Organizations**

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** Honourable Speaker, every summer, Winnipeg's downtown is a hub for families—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Brar:** —and businesses to gather together. Earlier today, our government announced a very exciting investment that will ensure everyone feels safe this summer in downtown Winnipeg.

Can the Minister of Justice please tell the House more about—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Brar:** —how our government's investments to community safety are seen as the national gold standard and how we continue to make it better?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** What a great question from the member for Burrows. This is about keeping people safe downtown.

We, today, announced a \$2.2-million investment in downtown safety, supporting organizations that are doing the work every single day to tirelessly work to keeping our downtown and surrounding communities safe. It's providing the Downtown Community Safety Partnership with \$750,000 and new partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations. Also included: Downtown BIZ, West End BIZ, West Broadway BIZ and the Exchange District BIZ, also receiving funding.

They're doing the important work alongside our government. We're keeping Manitobans safe.

**Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans  
Call to Increase the Basic Personal Tax Exemption**

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Honourable Speaker, this government is just playing political games while Manitoba families are struggling to just get by. The best affordability policy is a strong economy, because strong economies create strong pay-cheques.

But under this NDP government, Manitoba is moving in the wrong direction. Exports are collapsing, businesses are leaving and the investment is drying up. And while families are falling further behind, the only things going up are taxes, debt and the cost of living.

If this Premier (Mr. Kinew) truly believes his policies are working, why does life keep getting more expensive under this NDP government?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Honourable Speaker, we are building a strong economy right here in Manitoba.

And how do we know that? Because we have the lowest unemployment rate in the whole country. More Manitobans are working right here. Over 36,000 of them, in fact, have found new jobs in our province over the last two and a half years. We'll continue to make sure that Manitobans can work here in our great province.

Unlike members opposite who would rather see those jobs go to people from out of province, unlike members opposite who would rather thank Donald Trump for their tariffs, unlike members opposite whose failed government let inflation get to 8 per cent, we, instead, are trying to drive real good jobs, real economy and real affordability at the same time here. And that's why I encourage members opposite to pass our budget so we can bring tax relief to all Manitobans.

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

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

**Mr. Narth:** Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we've been crystal clear. If this government wants to present a BITSA bill with any value, then they'd include affordability relief for Manitobans.

Families do not need headlines, gimmicks or temporary band-aids. They need real money left in their very own pockets. That is why Progressive Conservatives are calling to raise the basic personal exemption to \$30,000 so Manitobans can keep more of what they earn.

Will this government finally support a common sense affordability plan that could put up to \$3,000 a year back into the pockets of working families?

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker, members opposite have been crystal clear: they want higher taxes for Manitobans. They've been crystal clear they don't want to see reduction in your grocery prices. They've been

crystal clear they'd rather sow division amongst Manitobans than actually work together to build a strong economy or put more Manitobans to work.

On this side of the House, instead of taking their divisive path, we will build Manitoba up together by delivering a strong economy, with more Manitobans working and an affordability that all Manitobans can join.

So won't they please get out of the way and pass our budget today.

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

**Mr. Narth:** I'll tell you what, Honourable Speaker. I encourage the Premier to go ask 10 ordinary Manitobans a simple question—not his political insiders, not union bosses, not partisan activists—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** —just everyday Manitobans trying to pay their bills—ask them this: Would you rather save a few pennies at the grocery checkout or keep an extra \$250 each and every month, up to \$3,000 a year for your family? *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** What does this Premier honestly think that Manitobans would answer to that question?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, when it comes to affordability, Honourable Speaker, we know that Manitobans supported our gas tax reduction. We know the members opposite tried to stand in their way. We know when it comes to affordability and we're trying to remove PST off of all groceries, Manitobans side with us and not with the members opposite.

We know when it comes to bringing our province together, Manitobans sided with us and not the divisive politics we saw out of the former failed government and their campaign that pitted one Manitoban against another. We reject those ideas, and we're so glad that Manitobans side on—stand on our side.

So we'll keep working with Manitobans, keep delivering affordability for them, keep building up a strong economy for all of us and ensuring that we can have a better and brighter Manitoba into the future, for this generation and next.

### **Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans Request to Support Tax Relief Measures**

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** Manitobans are dealing with the rising cost of living, and this NDP government is not offering serious solutions. In fact, they reinstated the gas tax and cancelled the indexation of income taxes, forcing Manitobans to pay more and more in tax.

When will this money-hungry government recognize that their tax hikes are hurting Manitoba families and support real tax relief measures?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** When it comes to helping you, there's a lot of ways we can take action: at the grocery store, by taking off taxes; at the gas pump, by cutting the gas tax; in the health facilities, by hiring more nurses; in education, by building schools. Budget 2026 does all of those things, and that's why the PCs need to pass it today or, at the very latest, by May 28.

The member opposite though, however, said something unfortunate. Perhaps he was worked up in the context of debate, but he does have the opportunity to apologize now. Rather than spending the rest of the afternoon letting political staff hide him from the media, I would encourage him to speak on the record and let Manitobans know how he clearly feels, perhaps with the tension of debate a little bit behind him. For the good of the province, I encourage him to do so.

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

### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** And I have some more guests I'd like to introduce.

Draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Joanne Lewandosky and Susan Zuk, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn).

And we welcome you here today.

And we also have seated in the public gallery Eva Cameron, manager of Spruce Woods Housing Co-op, and board member Noreen Mitchell, who are guests of the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mrs. Robbins).

And we welcome you here today as well.

## PETITIONS

### Spruce Woods Housing Co-op

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** I wish to present this following petition.

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

(1) Spruce Woods housing 'corperative' limited operates important apartment- and townhouse-style affordable housing units in the North Hill of Brandon and make them available to western Manitoba residents in need.

\* (14:40)

(2) Very few organizations like Spruce Woods Housing Co-op exist in Westman, making it an important asset that must remain operational.

(3) This organization has undertaken a multi-year renovation of its housing facilities that are aging and in need of significant improvements.

(4) Because of various challenges, including the increasing pressures of inflation, particularly on construction materials, Spruce Woods Housing Co-op is in need of financial assistance to complete its renovations to townhouse units.

(5) Spruce Woods Housing Co-op purchased \$250,000 worth of new windows several years ago but has been unable to install them because of cost pressures, so these windows remain unused and in storage.

(6) Cost pressures continue to rise because the provincial government has eliminated the PC's Education Property Tax Credit and rebate system and replaced it with a flat rate credit, adding \$27,600 to residents' annual school tax bill.

(7) If the provincial government were to provide financial support to Spruce Woods Housing Co-op, the organization would be able to access further funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

(8) This provincial and federal funding would greatly assist Spruce Woods Housing Co-op, allowing it to complete renovations of all of its units and ensure they all remain open in order to house as many people and families in need as possible.

(9) It is critical that the provincial government does everything possible to ensure that all affordable housing in the province remains open and operational.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to grant financial assistance to Spruce Woods Housing Co-operatives Limited and to specify this financial support in the provincial government's budget.

This petition has been signed by Eva Cameron, Allison Beamish and Chickie Bibault and many, many more Manitobans.

**The Speaker:** Further petitions?

### Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(10) Construction of dedicated turning lanes to reduce collision risk and other traffic calming designs

will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities at the intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

And, honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Michael Northam, Jacquelyn Northam, Rudyard Austero and many other fine Manitobans.

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

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** Honourable Speaker—Deputy honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

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

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

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

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

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

This petition is signed by Bob Edgar [*phonetic*], Brenda Fidler, Leanna [*phonetic*] MacDonald and many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

### **Medical Assistance in Dying**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

\* (14:50)

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This was signed by Cliff Wiebe, Laura Wiebe and Effie–Elfie Frank [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba—*[interjection]* We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This is signed by Claude Robert, CP [*phonetic*] Tremblay, Travis Dreger and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities**

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) While developing children may be entering into extracurricular activities, school clubs or spending time with friends independently, children

with disabilities have reduced opportunities for such social and recreational opportunities due to the lack of spaces.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

\* (15:00)

This petition is signed by Alyssa Anderson, Alyssa Ducharme, Marie Gebauer and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail reform, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This has been signed by Jean Rugg, Dale Bass, Frank Perrin and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility in the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Anthony Madden, Trey King, Jan Brownlee and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

#### **Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Children with disabilities often require child care beyond the age of 12. Children with disabilities

aged 12 to 17 face a gap in publicly available care programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

\* (15:10)

This is signed by Amber Locoshavich, Brady McRae, Brian Locoshavich and many, many more Manitobans.

### Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

### Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I wish to present the following petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

(3) To urge the Minister of Families to arrange for a full review of employment supports provided by Children's disABILITY Services for children with disabilities aged 12 to 17, including direct consultation with impacted families and to explore a full spectrum

of options to support families, empowering them to choose solutions that best fit their needs.

This petition has been signed by Sierra Fleming, Victoria Goubet [*phonetic*], Hazel Fleming and many, many more Manitobans.

### Provincial Road 210

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 210, PR 210, is a 117.3 kilometre–72.8 mile–highway in the Eastman region of Manitoba that connects the towns and communities of Woodridge, Marchand, La Broquerie, Ste. Anne, Landmark, Linden, Île des Chênes and St. Adolphe.

(2) A significant portion of PR 210 also runs through the constituency of La Vérendrye.

(3) PR 210 is a significant commuting route for Eastman families and is also notably used by those in the agriculture, tourism, trade and commerce industries.

(4) The condition of PR 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

(5) The planned pavement upgrade was promised more than 20 years ago when it was constructed with a flat surface suitable for pavement but has yet to be completed.

(6) The condition of PR 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 is in such bad shape that firefighters, police and paramedic services are severely delayed when responding to emergencies.

(7) The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure as well as the Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize the reconstruction of Provincial Road 210, and;

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Road 210 from Woodridge to Highway 12 in its reconstruction plans.

\* (15:20)

This petition has been signed by John Hiebert, Carol Hiebert, Dino Gimarco [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

### Hecla Village Road and Highway 8 Repairs

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Highway 8 traverses Hecla Island for approximately 30 kilometres from the south where it crosses the causeway to the northern tip at Lindsay tower.

(2) Hecla Village Road should be a 10-kilometre lakeside journey that connects people to the history of the island, including its Icelandic heritage.

(3) The drivers are instead faced with a patchwork of broken pavement, collapsing shoulders, dust clouds that impede motorcycle traffic and gravel potholes that damage vehicles, all of which impact the quality of life of residents, businesses, visitors and tourists alike.

(4) Highway 8 and Hecla Village Road are vital to the economic and social well-being of Hecla Island. With the 150th anniversary of New Iceland occurring this year, the Province should be showcasing its heritage and history, not infrastructure failings.

(5) Hecla Village Road is a–unique in that its location makes its repair and maintenance the responsibility of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, while Highway 8 is the responsibility of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

(6) On May 18, 2023, the PC provincial government minister of natural resources and resource development, along with the then-minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, announced historic funding for infrastructure repairs and upgrades to provincial parks.

(7) Provincial park infrastructure spending was significantly cut, with a reduction of 47 per cent in the '24-25 budget, and the '25-26 budget under the current provincial government also failed to return infrastructure to the previously announced 2023 spending levels.

(8) Highway 8 and Hecla Village Road have become extremely dangerous, unsafe and have 'deteriated' to the state that disrespects residents, businesses, visitors and tourists, and truly embarrasses the province as a whole.

We petition the Legislative of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately allocate funding to rebuild Highway 8 and Hecla Village Road to ensure they are safe, dependable, well maintained and restored to a condition that will not detour tourists.

This petition was signed by John Ingalls, Maxine Ingalls, Bill Moffat and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Placement Vetting for Elderly Persons Housing**

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba Housing will be placing homeless people and people with multi-layered mental illnesses and addictions into what has always been known as seniors housing.

(2) Manitoba Housing is placing people in elderly persons housing, EPH, buildings without vetting them.

(3) There is no minimum age limit stated on the Manitoba Housing information page for elderly persons housing buildings.

(4) The tenant service co-ordinator and/or the building manager of EPH buildings should be given the right to deny applicants based on their first-hand knowledge of the applicant being homeless, having multi-layered mental illnesses and/or addictions, or any other reason that they are aware of that could cause potential harm to residents.

(5) Proper vetting should include a criminal record check, a vulnerable persons record check and the consent of the tenant service co-ordinator and/or the building manager of the elderly persons housing building.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to use seniors housing for what it was intended: the seniors.

To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to require a minimum age of 55 years for residence in all elderly persons housing, EPH, buildings.

(3) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to engage in proper vetting of all applicants—or applications of people desiring to live in EPH buildings.

This petition has been signed by William Kedansy [*phonetic*], Cody Hart, Joyce Donaldson and many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately implement official policies and procedures that are more respectful and collaborative, which also

minimize harm faced by families seeking help from Children's disABILITY Services.

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

This petition has been signed by Danielle Maud, Easton Hedley, Regan Hedley and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

\* (15:30)

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

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada 'disproportionally' face barriers in access to

services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

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

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Helen Miller, Verna Cunnington and Dawn Crabtree and many other Manitobans.

### **Phoenix School**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

In 2022, the Phoenix School expansion and renovation project was approved to proceed to the design phase. The project included, among other amenities, a new gymnasium, two new classrooms,

a multi-purpose room and room for 74 child-care spaces.

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

There are currently hundreds of children on a wait-list for child care in Headingley. The daycare operator in Phoenix School has been told that they will continue to have space within the school for the 2024-2025 school year only, that further expansion of child-care space within the school is not possible and that space may be reduced moving forward due to the shortage of classrooms. If new space is not constructed as planned, many families may be left without child care.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Jessica Gillespie, Megan Cretton, Jasmin Spence and many, many other Manitobans.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no further petitions, grievances?

Orders of the day, government—

**An Honourable Member:** No, no, no. There's a grievance.

## GRIEVANCES

### Spruce Woods Constituency—Resident Concerns

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** Good afternoon. It's always an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the people of Spruce Woods, people who are hard-working, community-minded and deeply invested in the future of where they live.

Today I want to speak about issues that I hear about constantly when I'm out in my community: Manitoba Housing, 55+ senior housing, daycares, critical support for local infrastructure, red tape, Manitoba jobs agreement, affordability and, of course, health care. These are not abstract policy decisions; these are real challenges affecting real people, our

parents, our young families and our communities trying to stay strong.

Let me begin with senior housing. Across Manitoba and especially I am hearing from Crescent Manor in Souris. We are seeing increasing pressure on this 55+ housing. These spaces were meant to provide safe, stable and appropriate environments for seniors who have contributed so much to our communities. But what I'm hearing is concerning. Seniors are feeling uneasy; they are worried about safety; they're worried about whether these housing units are still meeting their intended purpose.

We need to ensure that senior housing remains exactly that, housing that prioritizes seniors' safety, dignity and quality of life. That means proper supports in place, clear guidelines about who these facilities are meant to serve and ensuring that the seniors are not left pushed aside or overlooked. Our seniors built our communities. They deserve stability, respect and peace of mind of—in their later years.

The seniors asked me how my question went last week, and my answer was, the minister sent a letter across the floor that Canada Post had thanked them for their new boxes that made them secure. So it wasn't talking about the people, safety or the concerns that I asked. It—I—it's great that they've fixed these mail-boxes, but let's fix the people problem, too, and that's our seniors in these facilities.

We have a daycare crisis and a workforce shortage for daycares. Families across every corner of Spruce Woods have expressed concerns of daycares. Parents are frustrated, they're stressed and, quite frankly, they're running out of options. I've spoken with families who have been on the waiting list for not months or years. Parents who want to return to work can't. We had a doctor wanting to take her residency. She was supposed to start in January. She had to cancel; she had no daycare. She was supposed to start in July; she still has no daycare. So we are now taking this problem, and it's going to result in a doctor not getting her residency. We've already going to lose almost six months.

Parents want to return to work. Families are struggling financially because child care isn't available. This is not just a family issue; it's an economic issue. If parents can't access child care, they can't participate fully in the workforce, businesses struggle to find employees and communities cannot grow.

\* (15:40)

We need action, and one of the biggest gaps is early childhood educators; we need more trained professionals. We need to make sure that this career path is attractive and accessible. Financial incentives to recruit, maybe, is something because without staff, we cannot create spaces, and without spaces families are left behind.

Spruce Woods co-op, I read the first petition today. Financing is a very big issue of maintenance to this building. It's great—we're short of housing, and what better can we do is to keep the maintenance up in these buildings that already exist. So, yes, they gave money during my by-election to help them, but what did they do in turn? They increased their property taxes like unbelievable. I think it was 38 per cent increase. That doesn't help.

They have windows in storage units that they can't fix because every time they go to put a new window in, it's not just a small problem; it becomes a big problem because they've leaked for so long. So we need to add and consistently make sure that financing for these places are continually rolling in, not just at election time. Also, right now, the co-op invested—or sorry—but here's the issue. They do not have the funding to install them, so these windows sit there unused while the building continues to age. This is exactly the kind of situation we're targeted. Practical funding can make a real difference. It—the upgrades like this will improve energy efficiency, reduce long-term costs and extend the life of community infrastructure.

Under this NDP government, they raised the school taxes so high for so many of these places that they're continually coming to me—like how we're—our finances have come shortened and the bills are coming bigger.

Infrastructure is another concern. It's pretty bad when you start getting emails from out-of-province, people travelling on your highways to say, what is wrong?

And what I find out about No. 2 Highway that they made promises during my by-election, it's not going to be fixed to 2027. Someone is going to be killed on this highway. I think they need to relook. They were out there. They have to look at this timeline. It is dangerous. And if you don't know this highway and you're driving in the dark, it's going to be shocking when you hit some bumps that are so big because they've piled the holes too full.

Manitoba jobs agreement worries me as I haven't heard from anyone other than the NDP that likes this. This will be very concerning for Spruce Woods in retaining developers and tradesmen. The apprentice ratio, one-on-one, is not working, and we're seeing the results. But this government will not listen to the industries. People in Spruce Woods are not asking for special treatment; they're asking for fairness. They're asking for support that reflects the realities they want.

When we brought the \$30,000 basic personal exemption, I had so many young families, seniors, say this will be amazing; this will help us so much.

So we need accessible child care for families, investment in the community spaces they rely on. Farmers deserve to be heard. These are reasonable expectations, and they deserve real action. And I will continue to advocate strongly for Spruce Woods, for our seniors, our families and our future, for our communities. They deserve it.

It is very, very concerning of the way this government is going. And I—the junk tax, every—I've had so many people come to me and say, you know what, I don't care about saving on junk food. I need money in my pocket. And that's what our basic personal exemption will do on every paycheque.

So I ask that this government listen and help in all of the situations I brought, because it's not just Spruce Woods. I'm speaking for all of Manitoba.

Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Ian Bushie (Acting Government House Leader):** Honourable Deputy Speaker, can you resume debate on all stages of Bill 53.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It has been announced that we will resume debate at second reading of Bill 53.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill 53—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The debate is currently on the referral amendment to the main motion, moved by the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River, who has 28 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** It gives me great pleasure to be able to stand up and speak on Bill 53.

I just had a minute yesterday and had a lot more to say, so I'm quite—feel quite privileged to be able to complete what I wanted to say.

At its heart, this amendment is about one very important principle: that Manitobans deserve to be heard before major tax and affordability changes are rushed through the Legislature. Because when legislation touches families' finances, small businesses, housing costs, food prices, municipal taxation, investment rules and industry competitiveness, it can't simply be treated as another procedural exercise at the end of the session. It deserves careful review. It deserves public scrutiny. And, most importantly, Manitobans deserve the opportunity to tell the government directly how these services will affect their lives.

For Manitoba families, affordability is not a slogan that gets repeated by this NDP government at their press conferences; it's about whether their paycheque lasts until the end of the month. And we are seeing over and over again that that disposable income is very little. Our alternatives would put money immediately when they need to buy food to fill their freezers at the end of the week. It's a reality families face every single day when they try to balance household budgets that no longer stretch far enough.

And we are seeing this more and more under this NDP government, that they're just stretched to the max. People notice when groceries cost more. They notice when fuel prices climb. They notice when mortgage renewals jump dramatically. There are many families who just—they can't afford to go to the pumps anymore to fill their vehicles. They sit there. They either have to walk—they can't take their families to these spring soccer activities. They can't take their families to these—to spring baseball, things that students look forward to after being cooped in—or, like, children look forward to after being cooped in all winter long.

They notice when rent increases year after year. And they certainly notice when taxes continue rising while government claims affordability is improving. That is why so many Manitobans are frustrated by this NDP government's approach. This Kinew government is increasing financial burden on families. The government points to saving your pennies while households are absorbing far greater increases in housing, in utilities, in groceries and in everyday expenses.

\* (15:50)

Hydro costs continue increasing. Property taxes—bills continue rising. Bracket creep continues taking more income from workers every year. Fuel costs remain painfully high. And everyday essentials continuing—continue becoming less affordable. Rather than—you know, it's really heartbreaking to see when families go to the grocery store and the children want to buy something because they look at it as a treat, but under this government, they cannot afford it. Or when they go to the toy store and they want that special little toy that means so much to them, and mom has to take it out of the cart and put it back on the shelves, because under this NDP government, they cannot afford to buy it.

Rather than focusing on broad affordability relief that benefits all Manitobans fairly, this government increasingly relies on selective tax measures that favour certain purchases, certain sectors or certain activities while ignoring the overall cost pressures families face. That is not a long-term affordability strategy; that is a piecemeal policy making. And, unfortunately, this bill is another example of that approach.

Government would like Manitobans to believe that this legislation delivers affordability relief, but it does not. Saving a couple cents here and there on junk food isn't going to be the solution. But when families compare the small savings offered against much larger increases they're experiencing elsewhere, the math simply does not work. A few pennies saved on selected purchases does not offset set hundreds or thousands of dollars in rising annual costs. That is the reality Manitobans are living with today.

Honourable Speak—or Deputy Speaker, one area where this imbalance becomes especially clear is in the treatment of prepared food under this legislation. Under these proposed changes, prepared food purchased from the grocery store or convenience retailers may receive different tax treatment than nearly identical prepared foods meals sold by restaurants. It would be far better to remove the provincial sales tax in restaurants. Then families could go together and there would be a saving every time they want that Friday evening treat to go to their favourite restaurant. That creates a serious fairness issue.

A sandwich is a sandwich. A salad is a salad. Prepared meal is a prepared meal. Yes, one of those delicious hot dogs that we get at Costco, too, is always a treat. I know even for some of us, the member from Lac du Bonnet and the member from Riding Mountain, we look forward to those treats.

Yet under this legislation, the tax treatment changes in—are depending entirely on where the customer buys it. That's government interfering in the marketplace by favouring one sector over another, and consequences of that decision are very real.

Manitoba restaurants already face enormous challenges. Yes, they're closing up daily. You know, we're seeing a lot of those family restaurants having to shut the doors. They've been an icon within a lot of those communities for many, many years. They're dealing with inflation. They're dealing with labour shortages. They're dealing with rising food costs, rising utility bills, rising lease costs and, ultimately, declining margins.

Many are family-run local businesses operating on extremely tight margins. They employ thousands of Manitobans, especially young Manitobans entering the workforce for the first time. And now this government is introducing a tax policy that may encourage consumers to purchase prepared food somewhere else. That is not neutral tax policy. That is government picking winners and losers.

Fairness matters in taxation policy. Predictability matters. Constituency—consistency matters. Businesses need confidence that government won't arbitrarily disadvantage them through uneven policy decisions and consumers deserve policies that make sense. If the government truly believes prepared food should receive tax relief for affordability reasons, then the principles should apply consistently regardless of where the food is purchased. Anything less creates distortion and creates unfairness.

Another major concern is the continued use of the ominous BITSA legislation to push through broad policy changes with limited scrutiny. We've seen this repeatedly from this government. Complex unrelated measures are bundled together into a massive budget implementation bills and then rushed through the Legislature under tight—or, tight timelines. That weakens transparency, it weakens accountability and it limits meaningful public participation.

Committee review exists for a reason. It exists for Manitobans can speak directly to the legislation about it before it becomes a law. It exists so experts, our businesses, municipalities, industry associations, citizens can identify unintended consequences or weaknesses in proposed legislation. And, frankly, when stakeholders are already raising concerns, that should tell the government members something important. It should tell them this legislation deserves the deeper examination.

There are many legitimate questions surrounding this bill, questions about the impact of changes to film tax credits, questions about bare trust and beneficial ownership provisions, questions about municipal taxation authority for short-term accommodations, questions about borrowing power and financial oversight, questions about the long-term impact of competitive investment in Manitoba. Those aren't minor administrative details; those are substantial policy issues with economic consequences and Manitobans deserve answers before these changes are finalized.

I also want to speak more broadly about competitiveness because affordability and competitiveness are directly connected. When taxes rise faster than incomes, affordability suffers. When investment declines, affordability suffers. When businesses lose confidence, affordability suffers and Manitobans are suffering under this NDP government because of all these things that they are try—they are putting through. And when young workers leave the province seeking better opportunities elsewhere, affordability suffers because economic growth weakens.

And I see that a lot of times in Swan River. Where do the young people go? They want to go to Alberta because they say Manitoba does not present a future. There's not opportunity here. There's all kind of red tape that, you know, inhibits development and entrepreneurs, et cetera, happening. Right now, Manitoba faces increasing competition.

So I just kind of, just want to wrap up. I know I had a lot to say, but I know there's other people, or, you know, that our leader has a lot to say about this, too, and we want to, you know, we want to give everybody a chance to talk because it's just not right what we are seeing happening under the current NDP government, as the approach moves in the opposite direction of which way Manitobans want to see it moving.

This amendment provides government with an opportunity—an opportunity to listen, for once; an opportunity to improve legislation before unintended consequences become permanent policy. Let restaurant owners speak. Let municipalities speak. Let taxpayers speak. Let industry experts speak and let families struggling with affordability explain what meaningful relief would actually look like in their daily lives.

Manitobans aren't asking for gimmicks. They're not asking for slogans. They're asking for policies that genuinely reduce the cost pressures they face every month. They're asking for fairness. They're asking for transparency and they're asking for a government

willing to listen before pushing major legislation through this Legislature.

\* (16:00)

That's why this amendment matters. It strengthens accountability, it strengthens transparency and it gives Manitobans the voice they deserve in legislation that will directly affect their livelihoods and household finances.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak on the amendments of Bill 53, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act, commonly referred to as BITSA bill, or the budget bill, or this terrible budget bill brought forward by this failing NDP government.

But, respectfully, honourable Deputy Speaker, this debate is about much more than one bill or one amendment. This debate is about affordability. It's about trust. It's about economic leadership in a province that is failing under this NDP government. It's about whether Manitobans still believe they can build a future in this province, because as I travel across Manitoba and as many of my colleagues on this side of the House travel all across Manitoba, we all hear the same thing over and over again from families, from workers, from seniors, business owners, students, children, that they're worried. People are worried; there's no denying that.

The NDP will also even acknowledge that people are worried, that we are in an affordability crisis, but the question is: What are they doing about that, honourable Deputy Speaker? It's clear that this NDP government is choosing their ideology before they choose to do what's right for Manitobans.

It should not be an ideological debate. It should not be a partisan debate. It should be something that we can come together on and support for all Manitobans, and Manitobans are seeing this is not the case with this government. They're worried about groceries; they're worried about taxes. Manitobans are worried about housing costs, increasing education and property taxes under this NDP government to an average over 20 per cent, three times the increase of any other average in any other province—three times under this NDP government.

Manitobans are worried about debt. They're worried about their children's future. And, increasingly, they are worried that, despite working harder than ever,

they are falling further and further behind under this NDP government.

We all remember in this Chamber, everyone at home remembers growing up, our parents would tell us work hard; you'll be rewarded. Do the right thing; you'll be rewarded. Go to school, get an education, get your homework done, show up to work early, stay late. Do the right thing, work hard and you will be rewarded. And that reward—or that dream has been completely taken away by this NDP government.

This NDP government believes the harder you work, the more money you should pay them. How does that even make sense? Members opposite don't want to acknowledge the simple fact that that is clearly laid out within their budget, within their budget implementation, and that's why we propose amendments to change that, to rebuild that trust with Manitobans, to put ideology and political partisanship aside and do what's best for Manitobans. And this NDP government refuses to do that.

Now, it's also very ironic, sad, embarrassing, actually pathetic, that this NDP government won't even stand up and defend their own budget. They've had days upon days to stand up and put words on the record defending their budget. They won't do it. They might not like the amendment that we have put forward for political ideological reasons, not for common sense, but none of them have the courage to stand up and say that. Why not?

Everyone on our side of the House, every single PC member has stood up passionately, empathetically and said why this is a bad budget, why the amendment is better, and yet not one person on that side of the House has done that. Why? It makes you think that they actually don't support their own budget, that all of this 'political' rhetoric that they're saying, they don't actually believe and they don't want to put words on the record, honourable Speaker. Historically, it's been practised that you'd always stand up and defend your own budget, and this NDP government is simply not doing that.

Affordability today is not an abstract political talking point. It is a lived reality in Manitoba. Families feel it every single time they buy groceries. They feel it when they renew their mortgage, make a mortgage payment, when they pay rent, when their hydro bill arrives, when their astronomically historically high property tax bills arrive in the mail. They feel it every single month when household costs continue rising faster than their ability to keep up.

In April—just last month, 2026—Manitoba's inflation rate reached 4.3 per cent, tied for the highest in Canada and well above the national average of 2.8 per cent. Nothing to be proud of, but this NDP government just today stood up in the Chamber and applauded themselves for their financial performance, for having an inflation rate of 4.3 per cent, while Manitobans are struggling to make ends meet at home.

Now, why would they do such a thing? Why has inflation reached 4.3 per cent? Because costs here in Manitoba are rising faster than almost anywhere else in the country. Property taxes surged, as I mentioned, by an average of almost 20 per cent. And food inflation in Manitoba now sits at 4.9 per cent year over year, the highest rate of any province in Canada and far above the national average. Inflation: 4.3 per cent; education property taxes up 20 per cent; food inflation: 4.9 per cent—all the highest in the country. Nothing to be proud of.

On that alone I could rest my case that this is a failing NDP government. And yet, they still think they're doing well. Manitobans are struggling to get by, and this NDP government applauds themselves, pats themselves on the back for having the highest inflation, highest food costs, highest education property taxes in the country. Think about that.

The essentials of daily life are becoming ever more expensive faster here in Manitoba, and the consequences of these rising costs are becoming more and more severe.

Today, in Manitoba, nearly 50 per cent of Manitobans are within \$200 of insolvency. Think about that. Almost half of the population of Manitoba is within \$200 of insolvency. That's just one unexpected bill. Sadly, maybe one car accident. Maybe one shift at work you missed. One increase in rent, groceries, utilities; one increase to any other cost in your life. Maybe your child comes to you and says, Mom, Dad, can I register to play a sport? That's the 200 bucks. Fifty per cent of Manitobans are within insolvency.

And what does this NDP government propose? Pennies. They want to give families pennies. And that's not just a talking point. It's the reality of what this NDP government is doing. They are offering families 2 cents on one litre of milk. And this is the most funny, absurd, idiotic thing I've ever heard in my life, that they would tout themselves as giving 2 cents on one litre of milk as the miracle to save a family. Yet, if you buy two litres of milk, there's no savings.

It's cheaper to buy two litres of milk. You will save 50, 60, 70 cents just by buying volume or four litres of milk. But, no, this NDP government says you only buy one litre of milk; you'll save two pennies.

It's ludicrous that this Premier (Mr. Kinew) would go out and have the audacity to film a video at a grocery store, grabbing one litre of milk and smile to that camera and say, we're freezing the price of milk: 2-cent savings. Congratulations, Premier: 2 cents on a litre of milk. You should be ashamed of yourself.

\* (16:10)

Honourable Speaker, when we talk about the amendments to this bill, the amendments are driven solely on making life more affordable for Manitobans. But this NDP government has completely missed the mark.

#### *The Speaker in the Chair*

When I mentioned that they're—Manitobans—50 per cent of Manitobans are within \$200 of insolvency, you have to remember how fragile affordability is and has become under this NDP government. Nearly half of the families in this province are on the edge of financial ruin. Government must be focused—not should be—must be focused on serious affordability measures, not symbolic announcements and political gimmicks, not smiling for the camera, posing, doing an Instagram or TikTok video and saying this is going to help Manitobans. Because the reality is, it's not. Manitobans are feeling the pressure of—under this NDP government more than ever before.

Now this is not theoretical economics, Honourable Speaker. It's the lived reality Manitobans are facing under this NDP government. Young Manitobans are increasingly asking themselves—I get this question all the time. I was out with the member from Interlake-Gimli last week. We were at an event and we had a young family come up to us and they said: Will we ever be able to afford a home here in Manitoba? Why should we stay in Manitoba? We're thinking of leaving Manitoba and going to Saskatchewan because of the decisions made by this NDP government.

And like my great colleague from Interlake-Gimli—has that ongoing optimism and positivity in him—says: Don't worry, Manitobans are seeing this NDP government for what they are, and they will make the choice to elect a new government in the next election.

Manitobans are concerned because Manitobans are feeling that pressure every single day. We should

be building here in Manitoba. We should be keeping talent here in Manitoba. We should be creating futures here in Manitoba. This should be the mission of the government.

Instead, too many Manitobans, like the ones we met last week at an event, are feeling the pressure by this NDP government and feel like creating a life in this province is becoming harder and harder every single month under this NDP government.

Now, the concern with this legislation, with this Bill 53 that members opposite have brought forward that they refuse to stand up and talk about, that they refuse to defend, is not that it does nothing. The concern is that it does almost nothing, and that it does the wrong nothing. It does the wrong stuff in this budget. This budget is solely designed on the Premier (Mr. Kinew) going out, taking a picture, posting it, pretending like he's saving the world.

In reality, this budget doesn't do any of that. It does all of the wrong stuff. The NDP government presents BITSA as some sort of affordability legislation. But Manitobans understand—and now they are understanding more than ever—the difference between symbolic affordability and meaningful affordability. Families are not asking for announcements. They're asking for relief, real relief, structural relief, relief they actually feel in their household budgets.

Yet this NDP government, when they talk about affordability—property taxes continue to rise. Bracket creep continues increasing taxes. Housing remains under pressure. Businesses continue to warn about the environment in which they are operating under this NDP government. Municipalities continue warning about infrastructure deficits.

And Manitoba families continue carrying more and more financial pressure. That is why so many Manitobans feel disconnected from this NDP government, have lost hope in this province because of this NDP government, because, frankly, they do not see the reality of their lived lives reflected—lives reflected in this province anymore under this NDP government.

Nothing demonstrates how disconnected this NDP government has become from the affordability crisis more than its approach to the so-called affordability plan. Manitobans, as I mentioned, are struggling with mortgages. They're struggling with rent, hydro bills, property taxes, highest inflation rates in Canada, highest food inflation in Canada; and what is the centrepiece of this NDP's government's affordability measure, Honourable Speaker? A change, a tax change

on junk food, on processed food that we should not be encouraging Manitobans—or anyone—to eat anyways.

Offering an incentive on junk food is the exact opposite of where we should go as a society. Let's just address that concern first, that saving 7 cents on a \$1 can of pop or 21 cents on a \$3 bag of chips is not where we want to go. Do we all agree on that?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Khan:** Everyone on this side of the House agrees. No one on that side of the House agrees. It's clear that this NDP government has lost the priorities. Why not offer more tax relief or—I mean, there's no taxes on fruits and vegetables anyways, but why not offer a relief there? Why not offer a relief on healthy food? So that we encourage people to eat healthy so that they can live healthy lives so that maybe, you know, under this NDP government, they're not waiting 20 hours in an ER room if they have to.

This tells you how out to lunch this Premier is. Probably eating a rotisserie chicken right now that, oh, you might save some pennies on, but that's going to make your life more affordable. It's not going to make your life more affordable, Honourable Speaker.

The reality is, at a time when food inflation in Manitoba is the highest in the country, saving pennies isn't going to help at a time when families are worried about whether they can afford groceries at all, let alone junk food or Oreos or chips; they're worried if they can even get by with their day-to-day costs.

I went grocery shopping—I'm sure many of you go, they say, well, you know, people come up to me and say, well, how much are you saving? I said, well, you know, it hasn't gone through yet. The Premier can do it if he wants. He's choosing not to. But at the bottom of your grocery bill, if you go down and scroll to the bottom, it tells you what the PST charged is.

I went out grocery shopping the other day. I think it was about \$188, and I saved about \$2 of PST. Two dollars is what this NDP government thinks is going to make your life better; \$2 isn't even enough to buy a can of soup these days. And this government, this Premier, has the audacity to stand up and applaud himself for making your life worse in this province.

Manitobans are asking a very reasonable question, Honourable Speaker: How did this possibly become the centrepiece, the priority of the NDP's budget? Now, when you think about that, the budget is the big document that the government brings forward every year, and the centrepiece—this is like, province, you

know, reforming, changing, growing, prosperity, vision for the future of how the province is going to do. It should be about economic stimulus and growing and supporting families and education and health care. And every one of those has gotten worse under the NDP. But the centrepiece, the main objective of this NDP government is saving you money on—saving you taxes on junk food.

Manitobans are saying, how did this become a priority? How did we go from talking about affordability, economic growth, lowering costs for families, to debating junk food taxes while property taxes and household bills continue skyrocketing? It is the masterpiece of this NDP government with the smoke and mirrors, the distractionary techniques they use to get you off of your day-to-day necessities and talk about something that is not even happening in our province.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) loves to talk about international affairs, loves to talk about what's happening south of the border, loves to throw daggers south of the border. But in reality, he is distracting you from the issues that this province is facing. The issues are, affordability under this NDP government does not exist. And their priority is saving you seven cents on a can of pop.

You deserve better. You must demand better. And members on this side of the House are advocating for better. We will continue to work for better affordability measures for you.

\* (16:20)

Prepared meals bought at a grocery store—oh, this is another, tells you how—sorry, I'll take a second here. It really tells you how out to lunch this government is. So, when they came up with this junk food tax, they left out local grocers. They left out the grocers that are at the corner of your streets, in rural communities—mom-and-pops—they left them out. They said they don't need the break. They don't need to drive more business to them. We're going to give it to the big-box chains, the billion-dollar companies. Leave out all the mom-and-pops. Leave out all the ones that communities across Manitoba are reliant on across the entire province, from the north to the south, from La Vérendrye to Interlake-Gimli to Lac du Bonnet.

And maybe they left them all out because a lot of them are on our side of the House. That's how ideological these guys are, Honourable Speaker, that they just left them out. So we advocated, just like we're doing today. I said: Honourable Premier, will

you do the right thing and support mom-and-pop shops? Day after day after day, we asked for it. And, finally, the Premier said, all right, fine, we'll add in mom-and-pop shops.

Along with that, we were asking for restaurants: Premier, add in restaurants, support restaurants, local restaurants. If someone buys a pizza from Costco where he wants them to go—where the Premier wants Manitobans to go—they buy a pizza from there, they're not paying PST. But if you buy a pizza from your local restaurant, from Silver Heights, mom-and-pop shop—any shop in the province, local restaurant, you got to pay PST.

How does that even remotely make sense for you for one second, that you're going to penalize a small business that creates far more jobs, grows our economy, supports other industries, teaches young Manitobans skills to move on in their life, employs far more people than a large grocery chain would at that economic offset level? And yet they completely left them out.

So we said: Okay, Premier, add that in. Nope. Add it in. Help local businesses. Nope. Will not make that change. Why? I don't know. I ask you, sitting at home watching this, how does it make sense for the Premier of Manitoba to save you—or try to save you—pennies out of a multibillion-dollar grocery chain, get the PST off of the junk food, but he won't do it for a local restaurant? It makes no sense whatsoever, other than the simple fact that this Premier and this NDP government actually don't have a plan. They actually don't care about you. They actually haven't thought about the economics of this.

All he cares—all the Premier cares about is a flashy announcement that he can post and clip on social media, that he could pretend like he's saving you some money and making your life more affordable. In reality, he's destroying the backbone of families, the backbone of our local economy and crushing local restaurants, mom-and-pop stores.

It hurts workers. It hurts small businesses, and it also creates a more uneven, unfair system in this province. I'm going to talk more about that later, but now we have clear proof that this NDP government is picking multibillion-dollar chains over mom-and-pop shops. Completely unfair. He can change it; he's choosing not to. There's one—we'll come back to that one afterwards.

This NDP government needs to look at serious affordability policy. They need to lower costs. They

need to lower taxes. They need economic growth. Economic growth in this province is not only stagnant, it's declined under this NDP government. The government—this NDP government needs to focus on the fundamentals, which they've completely forgotten. Families, as I mentioned, are feeling the affordability pinch more than ever right now.

We've talked about groceries a little bit, we've talked about their junk food tax, how it actually makes absolutely no sense. Now I'm going to move on to gas. Price of fuel in this province is at near historical highs. Since January of 2026, just this year, gasoline prices in Manitoba have increased so dramatically—by up to 65 cents and higher per litre. So you got about a 65-cent litre jump in this last six months—five months.

And what has this NDP government offered you? One and a half cents off. One and a half cents off is what this government is offering you when you are paying 60 cents more, 65 cents, 70, 80 cents more a litre—that's more a litre. One and a half cents.

Think about that, what that means for the working family. Think about that, what that means for a tradesperson driving across the province. Think about that means for the single parent or married couple who has to drop their kid off at daycare in the morning or school in the morning, fly to work, from work they have to get back to the daycare, then back home. Think about what that means to them.

**An Honourable Member:** Soccer practice.

**Mr. Khan:** Well, they can't afford soccer practice because 50 per cent of families are within \$200 of insolvency. So they can't afford to take their kids to soccer practice, but this Premier (Mr. Kinew), this Kinew government will save you 1 and a half cents a litre. Think of what you can do. I don't think you can buy a gummy anymore for 1 and a half cents.

Manitobans, I'm just laying out the facts for you. It's up to you to decide what this NDP government is really doing. Do they actually have your best interests in mind, or are they just focused on flashy announcements with no backing? As I mentioned, symbolic affordability and meaningful affordability. And right now, Manitobans are clearly seeing that.

When it comes to families at home paying bills, an uninspected bill might come by, and you're now broke. You don't have that 200 bucks. Under this NDP, hydro rates hike 12 per cent over the next three years. Think about that: 12 per cent increased rates to hydro over the next three years under this NDP government.

I mean, reading these notes, talking about the stuff that we discuss day in and day out in this Legislature, at times you just feel like you are smashing your head against a rock when it comes to this Premier—against the Legislature building. There's no moving an object—well, I was going to say there's no reasoning with somebody who won't listen to you. There's no reasoning with someone who refuses to listen to Manitobans.

You can't move an object, you can't move in a debate, when none of the members opposite want to stand up and debate. When none of the members want to engage with what we're discussing, you can't move that, you can't move an issue forward. We will continue to stand up every single day for you and fight for affordability measures for you. And that's exactly what we're doing today.

One issue here—I talked about it earlier in this speech, and I'm going to circle back to that—is dreams. We all had dreams growing up. We talked about that, right? Having a family, having a great job, working hard, getting to the peak of, you know, your career, whatever it may be. And you should be rewarded for that.

On our side of the House, we believe you work hard, you should earn a little bit more money. You have to help people, got to pay your taxes, but to what point? To the point where you are now being forced out of the province, like this NDP government is doing? To the point where graduating students don't want to work here because Saskatchewan and Ontario and Alberta are offering more incentives for them to come? To the point where every other province in this country does not allow bracket creep, where every other province in this country believes the harder you work, the more money you earn and the more money you should take home.

But not this NDP government—not this NDP government. They have removed—the Premier campaigned that he would not remove the indexation protections that were in place. He promised he wasn't going to remove that, and he removed it right away. He removed proper indexation, proper protections, which—meaning inflation. As inflation grows—4.3 per cent, 4.9 for food—it quietly pushes Manitobans into paying more taxes.

\* (16:30)

That's exactly what this NDP government has done. They removed that protection from your income, so as inflation goes up, your money is worth less. Because they got rid of that protection—it always

rises together. That protection will go up with inflation rate, you're good. You make a little bit more money, inflation's gone up, you're going to keep that money. On our side of the House, we believe that's the right thing to do.

On that side of the House, they think it's right to take more money from you. How does that even make sense? It doesn't. You know what it does do? It gives this NDP government more of your taxpayer dollars without you even really knowing what's happening.

Well, now Manitobans are waking up to the reality under this NDP government, and they're seeing that. They're seeing that their life, no matter how hard they work, is getting harder. They see that they will never be able to afford a house, maybe go on a vacation, buy the niceties of life that they have sacrificed so hard for, provide for their children, that everyone, as they grow up and is blessed to have a family, wants to strive towards, will never be a reality under this NDP government simply because they don't want you to have that. They don't want you to have that extra money that you've worked hard for.

Families are already struggling under this government and they removed all of the indexation. So the more money you make, the less money you take home with you. Instead of one hand in your back pocket, now they've got both hands in your back pockets. Oy, it's tough; it's tough in Manitoba under this government. You have to get up and wonder why sometimes you even go to work here, why you live here under this government when they want to destroy, they want to crush every single thing you are doing.

On our side of the House, long before we were in this position here, the previous PC government realized this, and the previous PC government before that, and the previous PC government before that, all the way back to the beginning of time when the Conservatives were formed. We realized a simple, fundamental policy: that any tax cut to a Manitoban is a good tax cut. Anytime you can take more money home with you is a good thing.

Not these guys. Under the previous PC government, the basic personal exemption was almost doubled from \$9,000 to \$15,000. What has this NDP government done: \$780, and that's what this—

**An Honourable Member:** That's under our legislation as well.

**Mr. Khan:** Yes, under the previous PC legislation as well, Honourable Speaker.

And, you know, this Premier (Mr. Kinew)—*[interjection]*—loves to—so we've got members opposite who want to heckle now. They don't want to talk when it's their time, but they're more than happy to heckle me when it's my time. They were more than allowed to stand up over the last few days and talk, Honourable Speaker. They're choosing not to, and yet for some reason they want to heckle now.

Maybe the minister of advanced ed can stand up and put some words on the record, or maybe the minister of advanced ed can talk about why they closed down MITT.

**An Honourable Member:** Happy to.

**Mr. Khan:** Yes, and now the member says they're happy to. They're happy to close down MITT, is what they just said. They are happy to close down MITT. They're happy to take away your dreams that I just spoke about.

The member is happy that they closed MITT, that they're crushing your dreams, that you'll have no future under this NDP government; and she says, I'm happy to. It's really, really, sad. It's sad that this is the angle they want to go on.

Before I was so rudely interrupted, I was talking about the basic personal exemption. The previous PCs had raised it up from \$9,000 to \$15,000, bringing almost 70,000 Manitobans to benefit from that—70,000 Manitobans took home more money because of that. And those people that took it home were the ones that needed it the most, the ones that were making 10, 15 thousand dollars. You get to keep all that money.

So fast forward to today. This NDP government, we've doubled it by—we increased it by 6 or 7 thousand. What do they do? Increase it by \$780 and they say, oh, that's higher under us than it was ever before, but we only did \$780. I don't say \$780, so we said, okay. You want to talk about that? Let's increase it to \$30,000. Let's increase your basic personal exemption from \$15,000 to \$30,000. We're going to put more money back into your pockets, and they don't want to clap for it—they don't want to clap for it.

We are wanting to put up to \$3,000 back into your pockets, and not one member opposite clapped for it. It literally shows you how out to lunch, how ideologically visceral this NDP government is driven to destroy your life.

We're simply proposing a tax measure that will give families of four up to \$3,000 back. A single individual would earn just over \$1,500 back, and we're not talking about at the end of the year in one big rebate cheque with the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) face on it, smiling, so he can take all the credit. No, there's no credit to be had here.

The credit to be had is for you; you have worked hard for your money; you should keep more of your money. On every single paycheque, under our proposed plan, you would see up to \$250—sorry, \$125; \$250 a month back in your bank account. And not one member claps for it. But they're okay saving you pennies. They want to clap for pennies off of junk food, but they don't want to clap for \$125 a paycheque, \$3,000 a year. That tells you right there how far this NDP government has fallen from supposedly helping Manitobans. From the supposed party that is there to work for more Manitobans, it is the exact opposite.

Our tax relief is targeted specifically at Manitobans that need—the ones earning \$30,000, \$40,000, \$15,000. You shouldn't pay any tax, provincial tax, on that: \$20,000, no provincial tax; \$25,000, no provincial—\$30,000, no provincial tax. You need that money. In a time of inflation and a time of economic destruction and drought, under this NDP government, we want to put up to \$3,000 back in your bank account. This NDP government wants to sprinkle pennies at your feet.

**An Honourable Member:** Shame.

**Mr. Khan:** It is shameful, Honourable Speaker.

It's not relief, what this government is proposing. Utilities are higher: I talked about 12 per cent over the next three years. Fuel costs are historic highs, nothing that—1.5 pennies. Food is astronomically high, historically high, under this NDP government, and nothing but junk food. This cumulative effect matters. This cumulative effect of increased costs is destroying Manitoba families. It is the sum of all pressures that families face and the inaction by this NDP government, the inability of this NDP government to bring forward a plan.

And while this NDP government talks about affordability, Manitobans should understand what is actually happening inside the budget. Inside this NDP budget, on page 7 of this own—go back. Inside this NDP budget, on page 7 of this government's own document, it states that the education and property tax revenues are projected to increase by approximately \$1.1 billion this coming year.

Increase of 1.1—where's that money coming from? From you, from families.

**An Honourable Member:** Raise taxes.

**Mr. Khan:** They have raised taxes on education and property taxes on Manitobans' families by \$1.1 billion, three times, four times what the Greg Selinger PST hike was.

Let's not forget, this Premier's mentor, close friend, adviser told Manitobans he wasn't going to increase the PST, and what did he do? He increased the PST. I guess the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. When this Premier campaigned on we're not going to raise your taxes, and the very first thing did—he did was increase your taxes, and now to the point of \$1.1 billion.

That is money coming right out of your back pockets, money that under the previous PC government was working towards removing the education property tax completely, so much so that it was at 50 per cent rebate back to you. You were getting thousands upon thousands of dollars back and we were going to phase it out under the previous PC government.

What did they do? Increase your education property taxes by three, four thousand dollars, but they're going to give you a rebate of pennies, 1,500 bucks. We'll raise it \$4,000 and we'll give you \$1,500 back. And they want you to be grateful for that \$1,500 that they hand to you while they take \$2,500 out of your back pocket. That is clearly how this NDP government works.

There is a better path forward. Our position is straightforward, Honourable Speaker. Governments should allow—must allow—Manitobans to keep more they earn. That's why the Progressive Conservatives have proposed increasing your basic personal exemption to \$30,000.

\* (16:40)

You will keep up to \$3,000 of your hard-earned money because broad-based tax relief helps everyone. It helps nurses, it helps teachers, it helps tradespeople, it helps truck drivers, it helps health-care workers, it helps the single mom and dads. It helps the mom and dads. It helps the families. It helps the seniors. It helps the grandparents. It helps people living on fixed incomes. Every single Manitoban will benefit from a broad-based tax relief of increasing your basic personal exemption. Everyone in Manitoba gets it,

everyone but this NDP government, Honourable Speaker.

Under our proposal, as I mentioned, you'll get up to \$3,000 back and this government says no. We're simply asking the Premier (Mr. Kinew), asking the NDP government to work with us. You don't want to work with us? Fine. Take the idea for yourself. Take all the credit; we'll never mention it again. You take it. You do it because it's the right policy. But don't hurt Manitobans because of your own ego, because of your own self-worth and what you believe to be your virtue to be the government. It is not a right to be a government; it is an honour for them to serve as government; it is an honour to serve the people in the Legislature, and they have forgotten those very people.

Honourable Speaker, \$3,000 to Manitobans. Think about what that means today: \$200–50 per cent of Manitoba families are within \$200 of being insolvent. We're going to increase that to \$250 on top—we're going to get you another \$250 back. Now you've got some breathing room. Now maybe you can save. You can put your kids in camps. You can buy your kids healthy food. You can take your kids on a nice trip or go watch a movie or go camping with your kids. But this NDP government says, no; we'd rather give them pennies off of junk food.

Now, when you talk about affordability, you cannot separate that from economic growth. You cannot build affordability while competitiveness declines. You cannot build prosperity while investments leave our province. You cannot retain young people if opportunity is disappearing. Manitoba should—must be competing for this aggressively, and we simply aren't. We aren't even in the game. We aren't even in the same league as other provinces under this NDP government, and that is why this province is hurting. It's hurting for investments, for jobs, for people, for young people, for growth, for wealth to stay here, for investments to come here.

Increasingly, more and more of these opportunities are leaving this province under this NDP government. And that must be a concern of this House, because for all of the programs that we, as a society, as government, as opposition, must help people, you also have to grow the economy to help people. If you don't increase the tax base, if you don't increase the people working here, if you don't increase that group of people in this province, how can you possibly help others?

You could do what the NDP are doing and continue to drive investments away, jobs away, wealth

away, and go further and further into debt, like they've done. Historically, one of the highest deficits back to back—they're almost at \$5 billion. And then they applaud themselves in this year's budget for having a \$500-million deficit. They think that's a good thing.

Back under the previous PCs, there was balanced budgets, there were surpluses. When we left government, there was \$377 million for this NDP government, and they've taken that and turned it into almost \$5 billion of debt in just two and a half years.

And what do they have to show for that? Health care is worse. Education is worse. Infrastructure is worse. Investments are worse. Affordability is worse. Wait times in the ER is worse. Every single accountable measure under this NDP government is worse, and yet they've managed to spend an extra \$5 billion. They simply do not grasp the simple concept that you have to grow the economy to pay for the social services and the programs we need.

You don't grow the economy by making it harder for businesses, by increasing more red tape, more bureaucracy under this government. And that's exactly what's happening.

Just last year, Manitobans were province a deficit of seven—about \$800 million. What did that climb to: \$1.3 billion. This year, they promised \$500-million deficit. I guarantee you it's going to grow over a billion again because they have no plan to grow our economy.

While Manitobans struggle to balance their household budgets, this NDP government continues spending at a pace that should concern every single taxpayer in this province. Manitoba's debt is now projected to reach nearly \$35 billion. Interest payments alone under this NDP government are \$2.3 billion. Interest payments alone. Think about that. More than \$2 billion that cannot go to front-line services, that cannot go to health care, that cannot go to security and police officers and fire and paramedics; \$2 billion that can't go to helping seniors, schools. Two billion dollars that could be spent here is being spent—\$2.3 billion—on interest payments under this NDP government. That's more than \$1,500 more per Manitoban.

Families understand something that this government often forgets: You cannot spend money you don't have. Municipalities are running into that same problem—municipalities that are meant to grow and support communities. Municipalities, areas throughout this beautiful province, are begging for more money at the table, and this government refuses to

give it to them because families and municipalities understand, you cannot spend something you don't have.

**An Honourable Member:** Water and waste water.

**Mr. Khan:** When you look at water and waste water management and treatment plants in this province, a colleague mentions here, these are investments that you have to make to grow our economy. Without water and waste water treatment, communities, municipalities are shutting down. And they might run out in three years, but which investor is going to invest now, when they know in three years, they're done?

And we're seeing this across the board in this province. Investments are drying up because they don't believe this government is going to do anything to make it better. Because they're not; they're actually making it worse. From red tape legislation under the previous PCs, there was a ranking of A+ or an A. Under this NDP government, it's gone to an F. More red tape, more artificial hurdles and barriers under this NDP government.

At some point, Honourable Speaker, the dam is going to burst. Communities are suffering. People are dying in ER waiting rooms. And this NDP government is offering pennies' savings on junk food. And I go back to that because that's all they're doing. Nothing else in this budget has been talked about by this NDP government other than that one. Oh, sorry, and the increase in education property taxes, that they're going to take \$1.1 billion out of your back pocket, but they'll give you pennies back.

Government spending is out of control, Honourable Speaker. Manitobans are tightening their belts. Families are cutting back. Seniors are watching every single dollar, but not this NDP government. Small businesses are struggling just to remain competitive. Small businesses are closing at record rates in this province. But while Manitobans make sacrifices, this NDP government continues spending like there's no tomorrow.

The latest numbers show, the Manitoba government has more than doubled since 2020. More than 25,000 employees under this Manitoba government are now earning more than \$100,000; 25,000 employees under this Manitoba NDP government are making more than \$100,000. Think about that at home. Think about that when the average Manitoban earns only \$61,000, this NDP government has ballooned bureaucracy under their term by \$1.8 billion.

And what do we have to show for it? Absolutely nothing. Every single thing is worse in this province under this NDP government. They spent one—imagine you're a business owner or a household. You spend that much more money—I mean, I don't know if you're spending \$1.8 billion, but you're—spend a couple thousand bucks more. You spend ten thousand on your business. You have more money into your household. You would assume that things would get better. Productivity would go up, results would get better, house would be better. No. They could spend \$1.8 billion and things get worse under this NDP government.

\*(16:50)

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans have had enough, and this NDP government needs to start listening. The government has a responsibility to listen. In fact, the NDP government constantly describes itself as a supposed listening government. But listening means more than holding a flashy press conference. Listening means actually hearing the concerns of Manitobans and actioning those concerns. Right now, this NDP government refuses to listen to the Manitoba Nurses Union. Darlene Jackson came out the other day and said they refuse to listen to what they're saying. For about two weeks or two months they listened and now they're done, shut them out.

Manitoba Teachers' Society is concerned with the way this government is operating and says the Premier (Mr. Kinew) refuses to listen, that him going out and making these broad proclamations on banning YouTube across the province for kids isn't listening to the Teachers' Society.

Refusing to listen to Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, the Construction Association of Rural Manitoba, Winnipeg Construction Association, Merit association, CLAC and many others, that this NDP government is destroying the construction industry, that they have built an unlevel playing field between union and non-union workers, that this NDP government—*[interjection]* And then you have the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle) who says absolutely—absolutely.

The member for St. Boniface wants to pick a fight with you—88 per cent of construction workers—*[interjection]* And now the member for St. Boniface wants to continue to heckle. He's had plenty of opportunity to stand up. Why hasn't he done it, Honourable Speaker? I don't understand. He has the guts. He has the courage to heckle me while I speak, but he doesn't

want to stand up and say it when he has his opportunity. It's the cowardice behaviour by this NDP government that Manitobans are seeing.

And now he doesn't want to say anything. Telling. It's telling from—that the member from St. Boniface doesn't want to say anything now, that he knows what we're saying by him supporting dividing Manitobans with winners and losers, by him picking union over non-union is wrong, that he should support all Manitobans.

It's your right to choose where you work and we will always support that decision equally, not like this ideologically driven NDP government.

They're refusing to listen to every single person that they said they'll listen to, but most concerningly, they refuse to listen to you. They refuse to listen to Manitobans, and that is what is very concerning about this NDP government.

This province should be the province where people want to come and live. I moved here myself from Ottawa, went to school in Vancouver and chose to live in Winnipeg. Why? Because I fell in love with the province at the time and I'm still in love with the province and I'm still fighting for the province today, because I know there can be a better province.

This province needs to be attracting industry, families, opportunity. We have to develop jobs. We have to grow our infrastructure. We have to support families. And yet this government does absolutely nothing to do that. So what we've proposed in our common sense amendments is to do that—tackle those issues that this government refuses to do.

Politics often focuses on what's wrong, but leadership must focus on what's next. So let me speak briefly to you about what Manitoba should build: a Manitoba where young people stay; a Manitoba where families can afford homes; a Manitoba where seniors want to retire with dignity; a Manitoba where businesses invest; a Manitoba where workers get ahead, compete again, grow again and lead again. The future is possible, but it requires choice. That choice is yours.

Government has a choice today. They have a choice to listen to our amendments and give Manitobans up to \$3,000 back, or they can choose to sprinkle pennies for you to save money on junk food; continue with symbolic affordability or pursue structural affordability; continue with short-term flashy announcements and empty promises or build on long-term opportunity; continue with reckless spending or

restore fiscal discipline; continuing managing decline or compete for growth.

Because, ultimately, this debate is not just about BITSA; it's about whether Manitobans believe tomorrow can be better than it is today.

On this side of the House, under a PC government, we believe that is possible, Honourable Speaker. I believe it can. I believe Manitoba's best days are still ahead of us. I believe our people are capable of extraordinary things. I believe this province can lead again. And I believe our responsibility in this House is to make that happen for families, for workers, for seniors, for young people and for every single Manitoban.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Are there further speakers?

Then is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** Question before the House is the budget implementation and tax structures amendment act, referral amendment.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

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

#### Voice Vote

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Recorded vote, please, Honourable Speaker.

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

\* (17:10)

Order, please.

The question before the House is the referral amendment moved by the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), to the second reading

motion on Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

Do members wish to have the motion read?  
[Agreed]

So-motion is The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following: bill 30-53, The Budget Implementation and Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, be now-be not now read a second time but the order for second reading be discharged, the bill withdrawn from the Order Paper and the subject matter thereof referred to a Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

**Division**

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

**Ayes**

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

**Nays**

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

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 18, Nays 31.

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

\* \* \*

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 21, 2026

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Ministerial Statements</b>		Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans	
Vyshyvanka Day		Guenter	2262
Kostyshyn	2249	Kinew	2262
Ewasko	2249	<b>Petitions</b>	
<b>Members' Statements</b>		Spruce Woods Housing Co-op	
Agape Table's New Facility		Robbins	2263
Asagwara	2251	Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305	
CWP Twinning Program		Goertzen	2263
Hiebert	2251	Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders	
Rendez-Vous Rivyayr Seine		Wharton	2264
Loiselle	2252	Medical Assistance in Dying	
Education System Funding		Hiebert	2264
Ewasko	2253	Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305	
J. Douglas Deans		Schuler	2265
Kostyshyn	2253	Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities	
<b>Oral Questions</b>		Ewasko	2265
Affordability Measures for Manitobans		Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders	
Khan	2254	Bereza	2266
Kinew	2254	King	2266
Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans		Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities	
Stone	2257	Stone	2267
Sala	2257	Medical Assistance in Dying	
Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans		Guenter	2268
Johnson	2258	Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities	
Sala	2258	Byram	2268
Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans		Provincial Road 210	
Nesbitt	2259	Narth	2269
Sala	2259	Hecla Village Road and Highway 8 Repairs	
Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans		Johnson	2269
Cook	2260	Placement Vetting for Elderly Persons Housing	
Sala	2260	Wowchuk	2270
Kinew	2260	Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities	
Safety Improvements for Downtown Winnipeg		Nesbitt	2270
Brar	2261	MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility	
Wiebe	2261	Piwniuk	2271
Cost-of-Living Concerns for Manitobans		Phoenix School	
Narth	2261	Cook	2271
Moses	2261	<b>Grievances</b>	
		Spruce Woods Constituency–Resident Concerns	
		Robbins	2272

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Debate on Second Readings**

Bill 53—The Budget Implementation and Tax  
Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

Wowchuk 2273

Khan 2276

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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