

First Session – Forty-Third Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
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
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
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	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	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	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
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 10, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills?

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I'm pleased to table the annual reports for Families for the fiscal year of '23-24: the 2023-24 annual report for Manitoba Families; the 2023-24 Ministerial Annual Report: The Accessibility for Manitobans Act; the 2023-24 Ministerial Annual Report: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy; the 2023-24 Ministerial Annual Report: Social Services Appeal Board.

The Speaker: Further tabling of reports?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): I am pleased to table the annual report for the Apprenticeship and Certification Board for the fiscal year of '23-24; the Department of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources for the fiscal year of '23-24; and the Manitoba Development Corporation for the fiscal year '23-24.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2023-24 annual report for Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

The Speaker: Any other tabling of reports?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I am pleased to table the following seven reports for the 2023-24 fiscal year. This includes the Manitoba Finance annual report; Manitoba tax credits, enabling appropriations, public debt annual report; the Public Service Commission annual report; Employee Pensions and Other Costs annual report; Manitoba Financial Services Agency annual report; Manitoba Hydro annual report; and the Province of Manitoba Public Accounts and the annual report.

The Speaker: No further tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

International Day of the Girl

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity): I rise today recognizing October 11 as International Day of the Girl, a day we acknowledge the rights of girls and the unique challenges they face, including barriers to education, food insecurity, forced child marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence and access to legal and medical rights.

Girls and gender-diverse youth are disproportionately impacted by the rising tide of political instability, violence, climate change, economic inequality, child sex human trafficking and all the devastating armed conflicts we see across the globe.

The world's conflicts and wars, whether in the Congo, Haiti, Chad, Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan or elsewhere, are all fought at the expense of girls: their rights, their bodies, their education, their futures and their very lives.

I particularly want to highlight the plight of little girls in Afghanistan, some as young as six years old, being sold into child marriage, sexual and physical abuse. They're denied the right to go to school. Girls' very existence is being erased. Despite this, Afghan girls continue to raise their voices and demand their human rights, often at great risk.

The ongoing climate crisis also exacerbates these issues, with girls often being the first to lose access to vital resources like food and water, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Despite these enormous challenges, girls and gender-diverse youth continue to lead the way in creating positive change. Whether in their families, their communities, their nations, and beyond, they are standing up as advocates, innovators and leaders, and again, often at great personal risk.

I know so many incredible girls and gender-diverse youth, and they continue to inspire me with their courage, and their resilience and their determination. They are fierce and smart and brave young citizens who not only stand strong in the face of 'adversity' but envision a world where equality, justice and opportunity are within reach for all.

What we want for girls here in Manitoba we want for girls around the world: a safe and nurturing environment, connection to communities who care for them, access to quality health care and education and ultimately the freedom to pursue their dreams.

We must continuously speak up and stand up for girls here at home and also across the globe. We must be unapologetically relentless in building an equitable world for girls and gender-diverse youth.

To all the girls in Manitoba and beyond, your dreams and ideas are powerful. You are strong and beyond capable. You are transformative agents of change. You deserve every opportunity.

Don't be afraid to speak up. Don't be afraid to lead. Take up all the space and make your mark on this world.

You are our future.

Miigwech.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to celebrate tomorrow, which is October 11, the International Day of the Girl.

In October 2011, the United Nations declared October 11 as the day dedicated to the role young women and girls have as powerful voices and change-makers in their families, communities and countries.

The theme for this year's International Day of the Girl is Girls' Vision for the Future. This theme is a message of hope and action for the future driven by girls' voices and their visions.

This day serves as a reminder that at home and around the world, there are still inequalities that disproportionately impact women.

However, we know that with the right support, resources and opportunities, there is a future where every girl can fulfil her full potential.

This is also a very personal day for me to celebrate, as I have a young daughter of five years old. And she wants to be an engineer. And I want to have every possible opportunity for her, free of gender barriers, as we all do for the young women here in Manitoba, across the country and around the world.

I am encouraged to see STEM programming for young women in schools and more women entering traditionally male-dominated careers.

Together we must protect, respect and empower the young women and girls not only in our communities, but globally.

So today, let's celebrate all the girls in our lives: sisters, daughters, nieces, who'll be the future trail-blazers and changemakers in the society working towards a more equitable future for all.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? [*Agreed*]

MLA Lamoureux: On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly declared October 11 as International Day of the Girl, a key global moment to celebrate the power of girls and highlight the barriers they face simply for being young and female.

It's imperative we recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges that they face all around the world.

The theme for International Day of the Girl in 2024 is Girls' Vision for the Future. And where better to encourage that vision than right here in the arena of politics.

* (13:40)

It has long been demonstrated that women are necessary and vital in the world of politics; that decisions are made to help advance gender equality. There is also strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is an increase in policy-making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women and ethnic and racial minorities.

So to all the girls who's vision for the future includes entering politics, I say: Do it. And amplify your voices. Share the issues you experience and make the world a better place.

Happy International Day of the Girl.

World Mental Health Day

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister responsible for Mental Health): Today is World Mental Health Day, an opportunity to destigmatize mental health and reflect on our own mental well-being and that of our loved ones.

Mental illness and mental health issues affect one in five Canadians. We all struggle or have struggled with our mental health at one point or another in our lives. There is not one person who hasn't. And that's okay.

Whether you are living with a mental illness or supporting family or friends who are, we acknowledge you and lift you up. Our government is committed to supporting the mental health of Manitobans, young and old, across this beautiful province.

Since being elected we've shown our commitment through action. We've increased the number of clinical psychologist training positions and have worked to ensure psychiatrists are available to underserved communities in Manitoba, so people can get the support they need, when they need it.

We also recognize the power of community mental health services. We've invested millions of dollars into early intervention programs, community initiatives and mental health promotion projects. Our government is glad to support e-mental health initiatives like Strongest Families Institute and CBT with mindfulness to increase mental health services availability across Manitoba.

We also recognize the effects of mental illness on Indigenous and youth-young people in this province. Our team is embarking on engagements for a province-wide suicide prevention strategy, with a focus on Indigenous and 2SLGBT2Q+ youth.

I strongly encourage Manitobans to seek supports and to connect with friends and families who may be struggling. I want to acknowledge the mental health workers who are dedicated to empowering others through their care. Know that you have a partner in our provincial government. We will continue to support you in your pivotal role in your—in the health care system, so that you can continue doing what you do best: helping Manitobans. We appreciate you, we uplift you and we thank you for the incredible care that you provide each and every day.

To all the Manitobans: Remember to treat mental health as you do physical health. Take time to keep healthy as you seek help when you need it. The world mental health—this World Mental Health Day, let us be reminded of the things that make us feel whole.

Our team will continue to promote a culture of compassion, understanding and acceptance, so that all Manitobans can feel and be their absolute best, at home, at work and in their communities.

Today, I hope Manitobans reflect and take time for their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Miigwech.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, it is my pleasure to respond to the ministerial statement. Today, October 10, marks World Mental Health Day, first established in 1992 by the World Federation for Mental Health.

It is a day that promotes mental health awareness and provides an opportunity for thankful—or sorry—thoughtful discussion on what more can be done to make mental health care accessible worldwide. The official theme for this year's campaign and initiatives is: It's time to make—to prioritize mental health in the workplace.

The objective of the campaign is to engage on a global scale with employees, employers, organizations and stakeholders to promote mental well-being at work, specifically advocating to prioritize, protect and promote mental health in the workplace. We know that more needs to be done to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and promote awareness and conversation. This includes making workplace an environment that supports open dialogue around mental health well-being.

The unfortunate reality is that one in five Canadians experience mental health problems or illnesses every year. I want to stress to all that are listening that it is okay not to be okay, and it's okay to ask for help and seek support.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my colleague, the member for Dawson Trail (MLA Lagassé). He has bravely shared his personal story here in the Legislative Chamber and uses his experience in mental health to bring—or, bring forward Bill 217, The Men's Mental Health Awareness Week Act.

His bill highlights the importance of raising awareness of men's mental health and promotes the policies—understanding of how—the public's understanding of how mental health conditions may present differently in men while reducing the stigma that unfortunately often prevents men from seeking help.

We all have a role to play in reducing the stigma and engaging in conversations that raises awareness and provides support to all those that may be struggling.

I want to thank the front-line staff and volunteers that work in mental health for all that you do for all of us and our loved ones.

Let us use today as a reminder to reach out to our family, friends, neighbours and colleagues to check in

so that together we can promote mental health and wellness across our great province.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Before we move on to members' statements—sorry. My mistake, sorry.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm seeking leave to also respond to this minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? [*Agreed*]

MLA Lamoureux: Today we mark Mental Health Day, and this year's theme is mental health at work, something we definitely need to be discussing here at the Legislature.

Honourable Speaker, work and our everyday efforts can certainly take its toll on our mental health. So in accordance with this year's theme, I point out that we need to always consider the following in our day-to-day interactions: (1) everyone has a role to play; (2) there is always a way to be respectful; (3) it's never one-size-fits-all; and (4) my favourite: Think about the basics. And what I mean by this is we need to take care of ourselves. Get good sleep, nourishment, drink water, get fresh air and remain active.

Taking action to support mental health and well-being is possible if we remain aware of our needs and supportive of each other. And we have some great resources right here in Manitoba to help us out along the way.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward today's statement.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Now before we move on to members' statements, I'd like to introduce some guests.

Seated in the public gallery from Collège Béliveau 30 grade 11 and 12 students under the direction of Ian Waters. The group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Southdale (MLA Cable).

We welcome you here today.

We also have several other guests in the public gallery. I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Waves of Hope, a breast cancer survivor dragon boat team from Westman and Parkland Manitoba: Jody Parsonage, Michelle Gerrard, Cindy Monson, Gloria Paziuk, Yvonne Smith, Dianne Michaluk, Annette Beatty, Evelyn Clegg, Lisa Oliver,

who are the guests of the honourable member for Agassiz (Ms. Byram).

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

Further, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us from Pembina Counselling Centre in Morden, Manitoba, Chris Derksen, Paul Penner, Danita Janzen, Kathy Froese, Steve Kauenhofen, Don Martens, Larry and Patricia Schroeder, who are the guests of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert).

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

* (13:50)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Murray Watson

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Murray Watson, a cherished member of the Lagimodière community and a gifted woodcarver.

Murray's humble beginnings began in the North End of Winnipeg on Airlies Street in a wartime home. He was the youngest of three siblings and the son of a Métis Hong Kong veteran. From early on, Murray's vibrant creative spirit was evident.

He enrolled in the advertising art program in Red River College, which laid the foundation for his artistic career. His talents went beyond woodcarving and included snow sculptures for Festival du Voyageur. He is best known for his intricate bird carvings and his beloved wood spirit sculptures in the Bois-des-Esprits forest. To this day, Murray brings a sense of wonder and beauty to all who walk the trails. There are dozens of carvings along the Seine River, and you can see a totally different series of carvings depending on which way you walk down the trails.

Murray was deeply connected to nature, particularly through his support of Save Our Seine, a group that is committed to protecting and restoring the Seine River and its surrounding ecosystem. Murray's love for the environment is on display through his carvings of the many beautiful animals that live in our corner of Winnipeg. His support for conservation efforts, like Save Our Seine, is a reminder of his commitment to preserving Manitoba's natural landscape.

He was more than just an artist. He was a kind person who brought happiness and laughter to those

around him. Murray remained humble throughout his life and was well known for his sense of humour. He loved spending time with his sisters Barb and Janis, his mother Joan and his many cherished friends. Joining us today are Barb, Joan and brother-in-law Gerhard.

Murray sadly passed away in the fall of 2023 after a battle with cancer. His legacy lives on in the forest carvings and in the hearts of all who knew him. He is deeply missed, but his spirit will forever remain part of Bois-des-Esprits, Lagimodière and Manitoba.

I ask that my guests' names be entered into Hansard, and I request leave for a moment of silence for Mr. Watson.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Dennis DePape, Gerhard Strom, Barbara Watson, Joan Watson

The Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence?
[Agreed]

A moment of silence was observed.

N49 Cruise for Mental Health Awareness

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, today is international mental health day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about mental health issues and promoting mental health well-being around the world.

This past month, I had the incredible opportunity to participate and drive my Jeep in the N-46—sorry—N49 cruise, an event aimed to support our local Pembina Counselling Centre.

The N49 cruise brought in over 90 vehicles and over 140 participants in support of mental health efforts in Morden-Winkler and the surrounding communities.

The fundraiser included a cruise through beautiful southern Manitoba and also a car show, dinner and movie at the—one of the last remaining drive-in theatres in Morden.

With the help of the Ferrari Club, Porsche Club and independent car enthusiasts, the N49 cruise was able to shine a light on importance of community and connection, especially when going through mental health struggles.

Raising awareness about mental health issues reduces—reduce stigma and encouraging individuals to seek help when needed is the goal of the event. It was a day to remind everyone that they are not alone.

The Pembina Counselling Centre plays a crucial role in the community, providing essential mental health services to those in need. Their work encompasses a wide range of support, including counselling, therapy and workshops aimed at empowering individuals to manage their mental health challenges.

By participating in the N49 cruise, we highlighted the importance of this centre and the resources it offers.

In recent years, the mental health landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation in my constituency. With annual appointments going from 2,200 in 2022 to over 5,000 in 2023, it's clear that the need for mental health supports has never been greater.

As we navigate this complex reality, it's essential to create support systems for those struggling with mental health issues.

I want to recognize and thank the staff at Pembina Counselling Centre, along with their board and volunteers, who are here in the gallery, for the work that they are doing in—sorry—in reminding those facing mental health issues that they are not alone.

Thank you.

Hindu Society of Manitoba

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Speaker, today I am joined by my close friends from the local Hindu community, many of whom are Fort Richmond constituents and key players from the Hindu Society of Manitoba. I am delighted to be able to acknowledge them today and to wish them a wonderful start to the Diwali season.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba is a non-profit dedicated to promoting Hinduism while embracing inclusivity and working with the community to provide third spaces for both younger and older generations.

Diwali is one of the main events that the Hindu Society of Manitoba has hosted successfully every year for over 40 years. Known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali originates from Hindu mythology, where people lit lanterns for Lord Rama to light the way for him after he defeated the demon king during the new moon. Diwali is a joyous holiday that celebrates the victory of light over darkness and of good over evil. This year, it falls on the first of November.

As a woman of colour who came to Canada alone to pursue higher education, I know the importance of finding and maintaining community. It is imperative

that we preserve and celebrate diverse cultures and promote understanding between communities.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba's Diwali celebrations bring communities together from all over the province every year to appreciate the beliefs and practices of Hinduism, and to make sure that everyone feels welcome and respected.

While I am here, I would also like to acknowledge the Bandi Chhor Divas, which will be celebrated very closely with Diwali. Bandi Chhor Divas is the Sikh celebration commemorating the release day of the sixth guru of Sikhs, guru Har Gobind, and 52 Hindu kings.

I welcome my fellow colleagues to join this year's Diwali at the RBC Convention Centre on October 19.

Happy Diwali. Shubh Deepawali [*Have an auspicious Diwali*] and Bandi Chhor Divas. Please join me in honouring the representatives of the Hindu Society of Manitoba and my guests from Fort Richmond up in the gallery, whose names I would like entered into Hansard.

Anjali Aggarwal, Bharti Bharti, Manoj Chaudhari, Jitendra Dhruve, Davinder Gandhi, Charulata Gupta, Satish Kumar, Vijay Punj, Varinder Rakhra, Prem Sanggar, Deepak Sharma, Kirit Thakrar, Reena Waliya

Waves of Hope Dragon Boat Team

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Today, I rise to highlight the incredible impact of the Waves of Hope dragon boat team.

Founded in 1999, this team consists of 22 dedicated teammates who paddle together in a boat approximately 45 feet long. This vibrant and supportive community has become a beacon of hope and resilience for many women who have faced the daunting challenge of breast cancer.

Dragon boating requires teamwork, strength and endurance, and it has proven to be more than just a physical activity. It is a powerful symbol of recovery and solidarity. Survivors come together not just to paddle, but to share their stories, celebrate their victories, and support each other through tough times. This 'camaderie' provides emotional strength and a renewed sense of purpose.

I am 'particular'—particularly proud to recognize Michelle Gerrard, a constituent from Agassiz, who is with us in the gallery today with several members of her team. Michelle was diagnosed with breast cancer

in 2003 at the age of 34, while her daughter Emma was only four years old.

Fortunately, she discovered the lump early, and her surgeon acted quickly to remove it. She had to undergo a second surgery, as the first did not remove all of the cancer. Her journey through breast cancer and her active participation in dragon boating serve as an inspiration to all of us.

In 2005, Michelle was invited to try out for the dragon boat team and has been a part of it ever since. Michelle and her teammates remind us that life after breast cancer can be vibrant and fulfilling. They challenge the stigma and fear associated with the disease, showing that survivors can lead active, joyful lives. Their message is clear: breast cancer does not define them; their courage and resilience does.

* (14:00)

In closing, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dragon boat community for their unwavering support and dedication to breast cancer survivors.

Yom Kippur

MLA Mike Moroz (River Heights): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge that tomorrow at sundown marks the beginning of Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. This sacred day will be observed by many of my friends and neighbours in my constituency of River Heights, as well as by the wider Jewish community across our province.

Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, concludes the Ten Days of Repentance, which began last week with Rosh Hashanah. For those who observe the day in a more traditional manner, Yom Kippur serves as a time for deep reflection on personal shortcomings over the past year, on seeking forgiveness and on committing one's self to improvement in the year ahead.

Others, Honourable Speaker, may use this time to reflect on their personal journey, assessing both successes and challenges and considering how their lives and the well-being of their communities might be improved if we all committed ourselves to becoming a little more compassionate with each passing year.

Honourable Speaker, the act of self-reflection and the courage to seek forgiveness from others are not only essential for personal growth, but also fundamental to the strength and cohesion of our communities. These are values that transcend faith and background

and are ones that might benefit all of us to contemplate.

While Yom Kippur is known as the Day of Atonement, it is also considered one of the most joyous holidays on the Jewish calendar, as it offers a profound sense of hope and renewal for the coming year. After a challenging year for many in our province, the hope for a brighter future resonates deeply with all of us.

Honourable Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in extending heartfelt wishes to the Jewish community in Manitoba for a safe, happy and prosperous new year.

Thank you, shalom and may peace embrace us all in the year ahead.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Premier of Manitoba Leadership Concerns

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'd like to welcome Pembina counselling services and also the Waves of Hope dragon boat team for joining us here in the gallery and watch what happens on a daily basis down here.

Honourable Speaker, the Premier ducked out during debate about his dysfunction. He has dodged media questions about his behaviour. He continues to dodge the Estimates process. He stands accused of bullying and now physically assaulting a fellow MLA. But when the Premier is called to account, he refuses to answer the bell. This is not leadership and it's unbecoming of a Premier.

Can the Premier explain to this House, even after the 2018 NDP harrasment report, why does toxicity and dysfunction remain in the NDP team?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Like to take this opportunity on behalf of the people of Manitoba to thank our guests today. It's truly amazing to hear about people in southern Manitoba stepping up for one another. And even just to hear a bit of the story of inspiration from that dragon boat team is very, very touching.

I also want to say, even though I missed the students in the gallery, I used to go to Collège Béliveau. And so shout out to you folks. Nice to see some folks from my alma mater here today.

You know, it's a interesting line of inquiry. The member opposite stands up, says a bunch of nasty

things and then wonders why there's toxicity in the Chamber. He should perhaps look in the mirror.

What I can say to the people of Manitoba: We've staffed up health care, 873 more people working in the province on the front lines; we cut the gas tax to save you money; and we got good news to come when it comes to education. We're working hard for you each and every day.

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

Mr. Ewasko: I'll put my credibility and character up against the Premier's each and every day, Honourable Speaker.

Over the last few days, Honourable Speaker, our opposition PC team are asking—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —very important questions on behalf of Manitobans.

These NDP ministers are dodging the questions. Why? Is it because you're not familiar with your portfolios, or is it because you're part of the NDP team that are covering up the Premier's abusive, toxic and dysfunctional behaviour? Or is it both, Honourable Speaker?

So, to the Premier: Which is it? Will he stand in his place today, apologize for forcing his members to defend him even though—even if they have to stray from the truth or misrepresent the facts, Honourable Speaker?

Mr. Kinew: They can keep attacking me; I'm going to keep focused on you, the good people of Manitoba.

I can point to every single member of the 'cabinet' and talk about how they're repairing the mess left behind by the PCs. Our Minister of Health is adding front-line nurses, 300 more in the province already this year, after years of cuts and closures under the PCs.

To their right, you have the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), who's cleaning up a record deficit handed to us by Heather Stefanson.

And then, of course, we have Mr. Crown-Lands himself, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), who's frozen Crown land lease rates to put money back in the pockets of hard-working producers.

But that's not all. When I look to my left, we have a wonderful Attorney General (Mr. Wiebe), who is taking concrete action to make communities safer. And to his left, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine),

who delivered a historic apology for tremendous betrayals that occurred—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Just before I recognize the Leader of the Official Opposition to ask his next question, I would remind people that language is important and suggesting that people are straying from the truth is dangerously close to being unparliamentary, so I'd caution the member to be more careful.

Mr. Ewasko: Always thanks, Honourable Speaker, for that advice.

Honourable Speaker, no new schools, no paramedics, no PCHs. He's assaulting MLAs, cutting highways, cutting parks, defunding rural police, leading a toxic, abusive, dysfunctional environment.

Will he stand in his place today and apologize for his—not only his behaviour, but also misleading you, Manitobans?

Mr. Kinew: So, again, I want to point out to the people of Manitoba what happened in this Chamber yesterday. For only the second time in the history of this great province, the PCs ran out of questions in question period. The only other time that happened was a week ago, when they also ran out of questions.

Things are so good in the Manitoba NDP administration era that they have absolutely no questions to ask. They merely stand up, time after time, either take personal shots or to say: You know what, these great things that you're already doing, please do more of that sooner.

So we'll take that advice. We'll keep working forward for you. We have net new paramedics in the province today after they cut 87. We have a school food program that's feeding hungry children province-wide, everywhere in this great province.

And, most of all, we're doing the sacred work of fixing our health care after years of PC cuts.

Winnipeg School Division In-Service Day Inquiry into Use of Anti-Semitic Language

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Honourable Speaker, it's come to light that at a Winnipeg School Division in-service day with over 5,000 educators in attendance, a slogan was used that has been described by the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg as an anti-Semitic slogan that is used to justify violence against Jews and the State of Israel's right to exist.

Can the Minister of Education outline what steps they have taken to ensure that something like this never happens again?

* (14:10)

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I want to begin by saying that, as I stated on October 7, Monday of this week, our government stands with Manitoba's Jewish community. We know that this has been a very difficult year, and what that means is that we are there to support the community. Of course, we're there to have their back when difficult and very troubling things, like this statement, are shared publicly, and we do condemn it unequivocally.

At the same time, we have created a very strong link and open line of communication with leadership in the Jewish community, such that, just a short time after this incident occurred, we were already in conversation and working towards a shared resolution to this. Again, what took place ought to be condemned, and it is unfortunate.

The superintendent of that school division has apologized and is taking steps to address the situation, and we're going to keep working with Manitoba's Jewish community to ensure that we combat anti-Semitism—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a secondary question.

Mr. Jackson: I appreciate the Premier's condemnation of this occurring. He mentioned that he was working with the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg leadership on resolutions, I believe was the word he just used to this situation.

Can he outline what that is?

Mr. Kinew: In our Throne Speech last year, we committed to working with Manitoba's Jewish community to make the work of combatting anti-Semitism in this province concrete. So for the first time in the province's history, we have moved to make education about the Holocaust mandatory in the K-to-12 school system.

We followed that up—of course, we followed that up by ensuring that there's experts brought in to help us guide this curricular process. Now, what took place yesterday is a reminder that this work needs continued focus in order to be successful.

There are things in the curriculum which we have already taken steps to address. The work now turns to

ensuring that school administration, school divisions ensure that they hearing the direction that we're all taking together here. *[interjection]*

I'll point out the Leader of the Opposition is heckling. You can recognize his voice. It is completely inappropriate on a subject like anti-Semitism—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Jackson: I thank the Premier for that response. Not a clear answer on what the exact resolution is that he discussed with the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg yesterday and whether or not his government has implemented that.

We've seen that this government has appointed an oversight panel for other school divisions that have concerns with what's—they have concerns with what's going on at that level.

Will they do something similar here with the Winnipeg School Division now that this has—instance has come to light?

Mr. Kinew: When we're talking about anti-Semitism, we're talking about what is called the oldest form of hatred. And it is very important that we all stand together united against hate.

I'm very proud to be part of a team that condemns not only anti-Semitism, but also Islamophobia. Stands firm against racism, including dog-whistle-veiled forms of racism, and stands united against transphobia and hatred targeted against the LGBTQ community.

On this side of the House, we stand for one Manitoba, united. Everyone working together towards a future of freedom, equality and opportunity. We are working with Manitoba's Jewish community to ensure that our schools are safe places for you to send your kids to. And we are going to continue to work to ensure that every Manitoban can be proud of who they are in this great land.

Provincial Deficit Request to Eliminate by 2026

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, the NDP are planning years of deficits: \$2 billion in their first fiscal year, \$800 million in their second fiscal, \$10 billion of new borrowing and a \$700-million special warrant. This Minister of Finance is not even trying to return to balance.

So I ask the minister again: Will he commit today to eliminating the NDP's \$2-billion deficit by 2026?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I appreciate this very important question. And as we've said in this House before, Manitobans have a right to expect that their government will behave in a fiscally responsible manner. Unfortunately, that's what they had for seven and a half years under the previous government.

They don't have to take my word for it. What they can do is look at the report that was developed by MNP, which, again, is an independent accounting firm, that found that they engaged in practices that constituted high budgetary risk. They had put in a huge number—hundreds of millions of dollars of big spending promises that weren't budgeted for.

Their history of budgeting is chaos, cuts and car rentals. Ours is making sure we invest in things that matter to Manitobans.

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

Mrs. Stone: A \$373-million surplus, that's what this NDP government was left with.

The government is receiving more in federal transfers and over \$800 million more in equalization. Fed transfers are up, interest rates are coming down. The minister should have no problem returning to balance by 2026, as S&P Global has said this was possible.

Will he commit, yes or no, to balancing the books by the 2026 Public Accounts?

MLA Sala: Again, Manitobans know that under the last government for seven and a half years, they didn't have a government that was focused on fiscal responsibility. And we saw that when the Public Accounts was released only a couple weeks ago.

As we said in this House, that was a report card on their financial performance, and that was a really bad showing, Honourable Speaker. Again, Fs up and down—transparency, accountability, basic budgeting skills—Fs, all up and down that report card. That's the record that they left for Manitobans.

What's our record? Good fiscal management. We're committed to our balanced budget on our balance year, and we're going to keep delivering on the priorities that Manitobans sent us here to deliver on, which is health care and improving affordability.

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

Mrs. Stone: That's a really interesting response by this Minister of Finance, because emails released through a FIPPA show the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) chief of staff, Mark Rosner, and Cabinet press communications, Ryan Stelter, twisting the deficit amount in the past year's financial reports. Quote: The new budget deficit figure is moved up. Quote: Deficit for this year is now \$1.6 billion. Nailed it, folks.

This NDP has not only blatantly fabricated the numbers for Manitoba, but they are in fact celebrating it.

Will this Premier stand up and apologize for his blatant disrespect to Manitoba taxpayers?

MLA Sala: One of the things that we know Manitobans care about is transparency, and one of the things we saw under the former government was the opposite.

What we know and what that MNP report spoke to was the fact that the previous government tried to put in hundreds of millions of dollars of new announcements, but not reflect that in their quarterly update before the election. Why did they do that? Maybe because they were trying to hopefully fool Manitobans into believing that they had a real fiscal plan before the election, all with the goal of getting themselves re-elected.

We're acting in a transparent manner. We're accountable to Manitobans. We're delivering on their priorities. And not only are we delivering on good fiscal management, we're doing that in balance with the things we need to do, which is investing in health care, investing in affordability, investing in education. That's what Manitobans are getting from our NDP government.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask the honourable member for Midland (Mrs. Stone) to kindly table the document she was quoting.

Early Screening for Breast Cancer Act Request to Call to Standing Committee

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I want to thank the House for the unanimous support of Bill 221, which passed second reading this morning. This was a major win for women in Manitoba.

And as a direct result of the debate on Bill 221 earlier today and the months of advocacy from thousands of breast cancer survivors and experts across the province, the NDP have agreed to lower the breast cancer screening age to 40 by 2026.

* (14:20)

So on behalf of Manitoba women who've been advocating for this change, some of whom join us in the gallery today, will the NDP bring Bill 221 to committee tonight for swift action on breast cancer screening in Manitoba?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Our government is proud that from day one of our administration, we have been listening to the voices of Manitoba women. We have been working with experts across this province. We have been focused on not only repairing the damage done to women's health care Manitoba due to the cuts of the previous government but building our health-care system for women's health even stronger, even better, so that women can get improved access to care.

I was so proud to stand earlier today and announce to Manitobans that we are lowering the breast screening age to 40 by 2026.

And I want to thank all the advocates and the experts we've been working for from very, very early on in our administration to get that work done. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Before I recognize the honourable member for Roblin, I need to make sure the record shows that the honourable member for Midland did table the document that she was requested to.

The honourable member for Midland.

An Honourable Member: Roblin.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Roblin, sorry.

Mrs. Cook: There is no reason to wait. There is plenty of time before the end of session to move this bill through to committee stage and ensure that it receives royal assent.

This bill adds accountability to the process by requiring the minister to report on progress and the number of mammograms performed each year. If they are in fact doing the work to lower the breast cancer screening age, then this additional transparency and accountability to Manitoba women should be no problem at all.

Will the NDP follow through on the commitments they made this morning and bring this bill to committee tonight?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, several weeks ago now, I was really proud to stand and to share with Manitobans that we are lowering the breast screening age to 45 here in Manitoba by 2025. This work has been going on for many, many months. That includes not only lowering it to 45 but, as we said today, lowering the breast screening age to 40.

But there's a lot of work that goes into making that happen. Not only does it mean restoring the cuts the previous government made to women's health care in terms of mobile breast cancer screening, but it also means staffing up mammographers—technologists in this health-care system who deliver this care to patients, something the previous government refused to even acknowledge.

I'm proud to say that of the 873 net new health-care workers, there are technologists, mammographers in that grouping, net new on the front lines, who're going to deliver this care to Manitobans. Much more work to do, but much more good news we're going to share.

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

Mrs. Cook: Honourable Speaker, I don't understand the reluctance. Bill 221 does two things: it lowers the breast cancer screening age to age 40 by the end of 2026, and it adds transparency and accountability for Manitobans. The NDP have already committed to part 1. Is it the transparency and accountability they take an issue with?

Advocates want to see this bill passed sooner rather than later.

I'll ask one more time: Will the NDP commit to sending this bill to committee tonight—committee is already scheduled; it's easy to do—yes or no?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I have to say, I'm pretty confused by the member's tone. I really don't understand it. This is a great day in Manitoba for women in this province who finally have a government that is listening to their voices and working with experts to make sure they have better access to care.

I want to be really clear. Not only are we lowering the breast screening age, not only is our government going to take and has been taking real steps to improve training capacity, hiring capacity, appointment capacity, services across the province—there is much, much more work than what's outlined even in that legislation that our government has done, is doing and will continue to do.

Our government is committed to doing what the previous government failed to do: listen to women, make sure that they know that not only their health care matters, but they have a government that stands with them and will fight—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Green Valley School Cancellation of Expansion

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): In 2021, our PC government committed to funding the expansion of Green Valley School in the town of Grunthal. With all permits approved and construction set to begin this summer, the growing community has been hammered by the news that the cancellation of this school expansion is going to be done by this NDP government just as students return back to school.

Can the minister responsible for Education tell the residents of Grunthal if the cancellation of this much needed expansion was an oversight and will be reinstated?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Our government is making historic investments in the public education system, and that's after years of cuts and underfunding by the previous Pallister and Heather Stefan [*phonetic*] governments. Thankfully Manitobans finally have elected a government that's really putting into action the statement that Every Child Matters.

But, Honourable Speaker, we're going to do that in a responsible way, in a transparent way, in a way that charts a path to balance. And we look forward to sharing more of our plans with Manitobans in the weeks and years and months to come.

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

Mr. Narth: This isn't a political issue. This is an issue about the students and teachers in Green Valley School, where I've had the opportunity to tour the school and see first-hand the desperate need for space.

This small-town school was so crowded that three mobile classrooms were added. With measures being taken to make room for the planned expansion, these three portable classrooms have been removed, leaving the school in an urgent need for the expansion to begin. This urgent need is impossible to recognize from Broadway.

Will the minister commit to touring Green Valley School in Grunthal to see just how desperate the need for space is for both the students and the teachers?

MLA Schmidt: While I have been in this acting role for about four days now, I absolutely look forward to meeting with educators and communities across our province to see what their needs are. Manitobans have elected a listening government, a government that cares and a government that's prepared to act.

And, Honourable Speaker, while we recognize the importance of capital investments and the bricks-and-mortar parts of schools, we also, on this side of the House, understand about what's happening inside the classroom also matters. And that's why I'm so proud to share with Manitobans that our government in this first year have already hired over 630 new educators that have added to our system.

We have also brought forward a historic universally accessible school nutrition program that will ensure that no child—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: I'm glad to hear the minister recognized the importance of classrooms because here, the students aren't in classrooms.

They've needed to make use of every bit of space for classrooms. This includes using the library, resource room, music room, gymnasium, basement, as well as having students walk around town to access class space. Students are walking across the town of Grunthal to access class space.

Under this government, there is less and less appeal for students to attend overcrowded schools in our growing rural communities.

What is the minister's plan to end hallway education currently being delivered under this NDP government?

MLA Schmidt: Honourable Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this previous PC government left Manitobans with a \$2-billion deficit.

In the Department of Education, just like departments across government, they had no plan. They had plans written on a back of a napkin, without budgets, leading Manitobans in a real deficit, not just in this Department of Education, but in departments across government.

They've—Manitobans have elected a government that has a plan. We have elected a government that understands the need of Manitobans.

They are so out of touch, Honourable Speaker, that they think school nutrition was a bad idea. They think that feeding kids has unintended consequences. The consequences of feeding kids and putting kids into classrooms is that we are going to see more kids educated in—

The Speaker: The time has expired.

* (14:30)

Surgical and Diagnostic Wait Times Constituent Concern

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I table for the House a letter from Dale Van Damme, whose father had faced a catastrophic series of failures in our health-care system. Despite having a triple bypass and a valve replacement and staying in the hospital for over three weeks this summer, a diagnosis of endocarditis was missed.

As a result, his father suffered a mini-stroke. He's currently in the Brandon Regional Health Centre waiting for an additional echocardiogram. That test was cancelled Tuesday at the Brandon hospital, leaving Dale's father stuck in the facility and without his much-needed diagnosis for another week.

How can the Minister of Health justify these appalling failures in patient care?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): You know, first I want to extend the invitation to have a conversation with this family who's been affected, to better understand their situation. We want all Manitobans, no matter where they live, to have access to the quality care that meets their needs in their communities.

Cardiac medicine in Manitoba—we're making a lot of investments in this area. We used to have a Cardiac Centre of Excellence at St. Boniface Hospital, as one example, that was dismantled under the previous administration, and there are impacts that we're seeing across the system as a result.

We take all health care very seriously, but cardiac medicine requires a particular focus, and we're working with our experts to build that capacity back up and better in our province. And I look forward to hopefully connecting with that family to hear their concerns directly.

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

Mr. Balcaen: The situation described in Mr. Van Damme's letter is indicative of the NDP government's broader failure to recruit, retain and train staff in our health-care system. Patients are suffering and even dying as a result of misdiagnoses and delays, while the NDP government is busy holding press conferences to congratulate themselves on a PC bill.

The diagnosis tests and surgical state–slates are being cancelled. Clearly, the NDP's health plan is not working, and is not as advertised.

When will this minister take responsibility for these failures and reduce wait times for surgical and diagnostic procedures here in Manitoba?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, it's a priority for our government to make sure that health care in our province, no matter where you live, is stronger. We know under the previous PC administration, Heather Stefanson made cuts to health care, including cutting the rural retention and recruitment fund for doctors in rural Manitoba.

The previous PC government cut the very fund that recruits and retains doctors in Brandon. Our government restored that fund. Our government stood up a recruitment retention office that is actively recruiting doctors to Brandon, and I'm happy to report that we've seen success with this initiative. And we're going to keep working very hard to make sure that we hear fewer and fewer of these concerns being brought forward.

Our government is taking a different approach. We're building health care better in this province—

The Speaker: Time has expired.

The honourable member for Brandon West, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Balcaen: Mr. Van Damme's father is now facing an unacceptable wait for a critical echocardiogram because of a cancelled diagnosis at the Brandon hospital. He will now have to wait longer, potentially at risk for further health complications, to even receive treatment for his condition.

This 'kes'–test could have been administered Tuesday morning, if not for the dysfunction and disorganization of this NDP government. They have no plan for health-care workers and no plan for patients waiting in pain.

How many more patients will have to suffer in pain due to this NDP's incompetence in our health-care system?

MLA Asagwara: As I stated, our government is making real progress on hiring more net new health-care workers to the front lines, including over 100 new physicians on the front lines of our health-care system.

You know, I, again, I look forward to speaking with this gentleman and his family directly myself. Our office has been working very hard and been in contact with him to make sure that his needs are met. I'm happy to report that he did, in fact, have his test done yesterday at 10 a.m.

That being said, we recognize there's more work that our government needs to do, so I encourage that member and others, if you're a Manitoban who's having some challenges, bring them directly to our team. We're going to help you. We're going to work with you, as we're working with all members across the health-care system to make your health care as best—as best as it can possibly be here in Manitoba.

Green Valley School Cancellation of Expansion

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): According to recent media, Green Valley high school in Grunthal is in dire need of an expansion.

It was announced back in 2021 that the high school was approved for a larger gymnasium as well as three much-needed classrooms. But this government recently announced that this expansion has been cancelled, and as a result, the school subsequently lost three portable classrooms that had already been removed to make room for the new projects.

Given the lack of space and the need for additional space to facilitate student learning, why did this government cancel the expansion?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Thank you to the member for the question.

Again, you know, as mentioned in an answer I gave previously, the previous government left Manitobans with a \$2-billion deficit. The previous government pretended like they had a plan for school capital, they announced a bunch of projects; they weren't budgeted for.

Luckily, Manitobans have a new government, a transparent, responsible government, that has submitted

a capital plan in Budget 2024 that we are really proud of: \$125 million, five new schools, and I will get to what those new schools are in my next answer.

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

Overcrowding in Manitoba Schools New Construction Needed

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): In addition to Green Valley high school, the previous government made a commitment to build nine additional schools in Manitoba as part of the Manitoba Schools Project. These schools are critical because of overcrowding, the need for portables and our continuously growing population. We need more spots for students, not less.

Does this government agree that we currently do not have the infrastructure needed to accommodate all the students in Manitoba?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): As I mentioned in my previous answer, I will remind the member that, yes, there were announcements that were made. They were not—*[interjection]* Yes. It is absolutely irresponsible for a government to make announcements that they have not properly budgeted for.

Thank goodness that Manitobans have a government now that is responsible, that is transparent, that has a Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) that is producing a real budget with real numbers in it, and this government will build real schools.

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

New School for Tyndall Park Construction Commitment Request

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): These schools were more than just announcements. Just over a year ago, there were plans to build a brand-new school in Tyndall Park. I had many conversations about this school with the former government. I even saw the plans. And we discussed setting a date for shovels to be in the ground.

Unfortunately, after the last election, this NDP government cut the new school for Tyndall Park along with eight other schools, despite the fact that it is desperately needed as we have hundreds if not thousands of new students enrolling every year and more to be expected with this government's recent education legislation.

Will this government reconsider and commit to build the promised school in Tyndall Park?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Honourable Speaker, I commend the member opposite for trying to meet with the previous government to discuss their plans. I welcome her to make a meeting with my office anytime; we can discuss plans.

But, Honourable Speaker, their plans failed. Manitobans voted one year ago to elect a new government that has real plans. And I'd like to share some of our plans for this upcoming budget.

We have our spending: \$53 million on major additions and renovations, including Maryland Park School in Brandon; nine and a half million dollars for HVAC replacements; four and a half million for roofing projects; two and a half million for accessibility projects. And, again, five new schools to come, Honourable Speaker.

* (14:40)

We are proud on this side of the House. We stand with educators, we stand with students and we stand with Manitobans.

Physician Recruitment Government Update

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): For years under the Stefanson PCs, Manitoba experienced an increasingly worse doctors shortage. In their last year of government, it was reported that 43 per cent of doctors were planning on leaving their practice.

On top of that, the PC government fired front-line health-care workers and cut services that Manitobans depend on. Honourable Speaker, Manitobans need access to primary care, which was hampered by the PC doctor shortage.

Can the Minister of Health tell us what they are doing to fix the doctor shortage left behind by the Stefanson PCs?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank my colleague from Seine River for that question, and happy birthday to her.

Today, Doctors Manitoba released a report that says we are closing the gap on Manitoba's doctor shortage and I'm happy to table that report. We have increased the number of physicians per capita by 2 per cent. We have hired 50 more net-new doctors than the PCs ever did—133 in total. That is a record.

We have closed the shortage gap by almost 100 doctors and more than 50 per cent fewer doctors are thinking of leaving than under the previous PCs.

It's clear, Honourable Speaker: Doctors want to work in Manitoba and doctors want to stay in Manitoba. And under our NDP government, we welcome all of them with open arms to our health-care team.

Expansion of Narcan Use Across Manitoba Request for Government to Support Resolution

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): All families, individuals and businesses should have access to Narcan nasal spray in all Manitoba communities. Manitobans should have access to Narcan to help save their loved ones' lives.

That is why I brought forward my resolution this morning: for this Legislature to support taking action to expand access, training and supply of Narcan nasal spray to pharmacies across this province, and include coverage in the take-home Naloxone Distribution Program.

I ask the minister and the government benches to commit to supporting my resolution the next time this comes up for debate and bring it to vote.

Will this minister commit to passing this resolution?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I want to thank that member for bringing forward that resolution and for standing up and talking about harm reduction.

It's so important that Manitobans have a government that talks about harm reduction—that works with partners across the health-care system on the front lines of our communities to do the work of saving Manitobans' lives.

Our government is proud to do that work alongside those on the front lines who deliver essential health care, primary health care, each and every day. I'm proud to say and to reassure that member that we've taken very real steps to increase access to nasal naloxone—to Narcan.

We've made sure that folks in our communities who are coming into contact with those struggling with addictions have those resources. And we're working with our professionals each and every day to make sure that we're doing the hard work of addressing mental health addictions and providing supports for Manitobans who need it, all across our province.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Breast Screening

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Debbie Bilous, Brigitte Schneider, Jacquie Metelski and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Desarae Angus, Pamela Davis, Steve Molloy and many Manitobans.

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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

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

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

* (14:50)

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancer—cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional 'technologists' into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer

screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

Honourable Speaker, this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before I recognize the next member to give a member's statement, I would like to acknowledge students in the public gallery—well, they're not students, I don't think, but we have seated in the public gallery 80 staff from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Welcome.

Breast Screening

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Kellie Popeil, Patti Woodcock, Cecile Natu [*phonetic*] and many, many more fine Manitobans, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, CCS, is now urging all provincial and territories—provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast cancer screening to 40.

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of

expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

* (15:00)

This petition has been signed by Rod Balkwill, Linda Balkwill, Susan McMillan, and many, many other fine Manitobans.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intention—announced the expanding

screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Keara Sanko, Melanie [*phonetic*] Patendale and Melissa Laurie and many others—fine Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

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

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

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces

in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work

of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by John Zinger, Vanessa Tynedal, Evan Tynedal and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

* (15:10)

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

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

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

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

(3) After non-'melanona' skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day. Early detection—

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced with the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists to—into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lowering—lowering the breast screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Chelsea Pierce, Megan Morant and Lindsay Westmore and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have 44 per cent

lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care systems.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age, and

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by David Soder, Lorraine Forestal and Lain [*phonetic*] Scott and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

* (15:20)

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker—Honourable Deputy Speaker, sorry. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Due to the evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, or CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

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

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses

and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

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

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

* (15:30)

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses

and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists in their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Wendy Cook, Roy Cook, Debbie Reuther and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Turtle Mountain): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I petition the legislator of Manitoba on the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is three—30,500 diagnoses

and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screen age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists in the public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

The Speaker in the Chair

And, (7) the lowering of breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce the long-term costs to health-care system—to our health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by people—by members of—Sam Kamaracks [*phonetic*], Shanna Petrie and Calvin Zatylyny [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

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

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

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

and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

* (15:40)

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Kendra Rinn, Tyson Barbeau, Tim Williams and many, many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses

and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Lori Noonan-Robinson, Dale Noonan, Lois Graham and many, many more Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you please call Bill 37 to resume debate on Bill 37? And if Bill 37 passes second reading, would you please call bill 32 for second reading debate?

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will—
[interjection]

MLA Fontaine: Oh, I apologize. I thought I said 38. I apologize, Honourable Speaker. After Bill 37, Bill 38.

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now resume debate on second reading of Bill 37, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, and if we finish that—pass second reading, then we will resume second reading on Bill 38, An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments).

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 37—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

The Speaker: So now resuming debate on second reading of Bill 37.

The debate stands in the name of the honourable member for Agassiz, who has 18 minutes remaining.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I'm happy to get back here again today and put a few more words on the record regarding Bill 37 and speak again about the labour that they have—the labour legislation that the NDP have put in the back of BITSA.

This is not a budget item, this is not a financial item; this is labour legislation that they have taken and jammed in the back, and this is legislation that's going to affect communities and industry and employees. Some of these changes will hurt business-labour relations by putting an end to secret-ballot voting for union certification. This will allow employees to be pressured and intimidated to vote a certain way in the workplace.

The right to make a choice privately is a key element to our democracy in this country. This must continue to extend—you know, to—such votes in the workplace. I've spoken to many workers who describe coercion and intimidation tactics that would be used to influence their votes when making these types of decisions. There are experiences and viewpoints that will not be heard without BITSA going to committee. So having these jammed in the back does not give proper public consultation and input.

Another labour change in BITSA is the union would need only 50 per cent of the employees to sign a card to gain certification. This means the other 50 per cent who do not sign may be denied democratic rights, and groups of employees could become unionized without the true backing of most of these workers.

These changes bring significant and harmful effects to our province and its economy. I spoke to one of my local businesses in Agassiz. The owner had reached out to share his concerns regarding this, and what it

meant to him was this might impede his ability to continue operations in Manitoba. And he said, you know, if he's got to choose to leave Manitoba, that leaves—takes away jobs and business and economic growth from our province here.

You know, having these changes contained in BITSA make it impossible for employers to use replacement staff work—during work stoppages, another little piece of legislation that's gone in there. Especially for services that are deemed essential, replacement workers are crucial. Stakeholders have pointed out that if these kinds of employers cannot maintain their operations with replacement staffing, it can and does become dangerous for some who need their services. And we saw an alarming situation at Ten Ten Sinclair, when residents were left stranded and uncertain about their care during a work stoppage.

* (15:50)

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans need the presentation of public viewpoints and thorough debate to determine whether the NDP's intent with this legislation is simply to please their big union boss friends. They also need assurances that labour changes within BITSA will not jeopardize Manitobans' health and well-being. As it stands now, Manitobans are getting neither.

They need to know that this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this NDP government are changing legislation in secrecy, and we heard this from the member of Fort Garry. And the absence of meaningful consultation raises significant concerns, having this crafted behind closed doors and in secrecy without the valuable insights and perspectives of the public. It leads to policies that are out of touch.

And it'd be interesting to know who they consulted in this case; I'm kind of willing to bet it was just the NDP's union friends. All workers need to feel their concerns are acknowledged and valued. And I feel that this legislation tells a very different story. Who is it really going to serve? Is it just their union bosses who elected this government?

And, again, the lack of open discussion and consultation raises questions about accountability and whose interests they have prioritized: those of 'indual'—individual workers, or of just the unions.

And again, Honourable Speaker, Manitobans need to be heard on these labour bills. Stakeholders, employers, business owners, Chamber of Commerce and industries, they're all being blocked and not being heard on these labour issues. Again, hearing feedback

from these Manitobans can—that contribute to our great working industries and it's important that the government considers their input and incorporates it into—takes that feedback and incorporates it into the legislative process. That's all part of fair and collaborative approach to making legislative changes.

And it gives us, you know, kind of levels the playing field and gives us fair and equitable input to labour policies. And unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, I feel that Manitobans, with this BITSA bill, they are not going to have the opportunity to present on these labour issues and bring their concerns forward. And Manitobans are being ignored on this labour legislation.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Today, I stand before you to discuss Bill 37, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act, or better known as BISTA [*phonetic*]. A bill that, as the name suggests, is supposed to implement the government's fiscal policies.

However, as we peel back the layers and layers of this legislation, we find that it is not merely about financial planning, tax adjustments or economic policies. Embedded within Bill 37 are non-financial provisions that have far-reaching implications for how our government operates, how Manitobans engage with democratic processes and how we, as a Province, move forward.

This bill is particularly troubling because it attempts to pass significant non-financial legislative changes under the guise of budgetary implementation. By imbedding these provisions in the budget bill, the government is trying to push through measures that warrant far more scrutiny and public debate than they are receiving.

These are non-financial elements hidden within a bill primarily focused on fiscal matters, represents a troubling trend of using omnibus bills to force through changes that impact governance, public accountability and the rights of Manitobans, all of which this government campaigned on: openness, transparency and accountability. All of which are being destroyed by placing them inside of an omnibus bill.

Today, I want to focus on the non-financial provisions within Bill 37 that raise serious concerns about transparency, democratic integrity and public accountability. Let me be clear: this is not how governance should operate and it is a disservice to many, many Manitobans.

Presently, if we focused on the financial portion of this bill, we wouldn't have to be here looking at a government that has introduced a near \$2-billion deficit to Manitobans.

After this PC government left a \$370-million surplus, this government has gone out on a spending spree to ensure that they have inflated this debt to over—to \$2 billion this year, and the first quarter of the next fiscal year is projected to be near \$800 million.

That is not financial responsibility, Honourable Speaker. That is squandering taxpayer dollars.

Another troubling aspect of Bill 37 is the way it curtails public consultation processes on important public policy changes. There are provisions in this bill that give the government the power to limit or bypass public consultation requirements in certain circumstances, particularly in the context of regulatory changes.

Public consultation is the cornerstone of democratic governance. It is how we as a government hear from the people of Manitoba, the citizens whose lives are directly affected by the policies that we enact. By reducing the need for public consultation, the government is limiting the ability of Manitobans to have their voice heard on critical issues.

Again, this is particularly concerning in areas that have—affect environmental regulations, health policies and local governance. When the government reduces consultation requirements, it opens the door to policy changes that may not reflect the will of the people. It creates a situation where decisions are made behind closed doors without the input of those most affected.

By embedding these changes into Bill 37, the government is attempting to diminish public engagement and reduce accountabilities—all areas that this government ran on in the last election. This is not just a technical adjustment; it's an attack on the very idea that citizens should have a say in how they are governed.

Honourable Speaker, I could go on for hours on the issues of BISTA [*phonetic*], the fiscal mismanagement of this NDP government—but I would like to conclude with the following statements:

Honourable members, Bill 37 is more than just a budget implementation tool. It contains significant non-financial provisions that undermine the democratic process, weaken public oversight, reduce transparency and curtail the rights of Manitobans to participate in their own governance.

By embedding these changes in a budget bill, the government is attempting to push through measures that would otherwise face significant public opposition, scrutiny and accountability.

* (16:00)

This is not how we should govern. Democracy requires open debate, public consultation and commitment to transparency. Bill 37 in its current form undermines all of these principles.

I urge my colleagues to carefully consider the non-financial provisions hidden within this bill and to reject any attempt to bypass the democratic process. We owe it to the people of Manitoba to ensure that their government operates with integrity, transparency and accountability. Bill 37 fails on all of these counts.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 37, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act, otherwise known as BITSA, like my other colleagues have already stated and spoke to.

There's some important parts to this BITSA bill that I want to be able to speak to and warn Manitobans to the risks of passing a bill like this. This is an omnibus bill that includes many things that do not include financial implications to the province of Manitoba. It's concerning that the government that we have is turning back the clock to a time, a dark time in Manitoba's history, when we had Greg Selinger as a premier of this province, and the promises that we heard in his early years of leadership for our province and then the effects of those promises being broken.

The increased taxes; the demise of our Crown corporations; the state of affairs financially that that direction and leadership had—has put our province; and the recovery, the years and now decades of recovery that that's going to take. Unfortunately, one year in to a new administration, a similar administration though, of an NDP government, we see BITSA introducing major tax changes. We heard that before, right, under previous NDP governments, that we wouldn't see increases in taxes similarly to the gas tax, which we saw this government cut temporarily, enticing us that there may be tax cuts by an NDP government.

But Manitobans won't be as quickly fooled that this is a reality. If we look at this bill, we'll quickly see that they have written it into—written that into legislation, allowing them to increase not only gas tax back to the 14 cents, but allow them, without any control,

to further increase those taxations. So it also allows for further increase to taxes.

So I know that Manitobans are smart. They're not buying the NDP promises of cut taxes. Increased spending and cut taxes usually don't go together, unless you're willing to grow the economy. But if you're hindering the growth of the economy, as many points in this BITSA bill do, we're only further increasing taxes to create those revenues.

So BITSA introduces major tax changes that result—that have results for homeowners, negative results for homeowners, farmers, property owners and renters paying more in taxes than they would have under the previous PC government, and even more than they have paid under the Greg Selinger government, for education property taxes and school taxes.

This is something that's very important to my constituency. It's important to rural Manitoba. It should be important to the city of Winnipeg and the residents of the entire province of Manitoba, and that is education property taxes and school taxes, handcuffing the school divisions, and forcing them to be the bearer of the unfortunate burden on people's pocketbooks across the province.

The government has chosen to introduce many non-budgetary items related to unions, seniors and election financing. By introducing these non-budgetary measures in BITSA, they are doing a disgrace to the democratic process, giving short-sighted promises to accountability, transparency, and poorly serving seniors and all Manitobans in this bill.

Like I say, this bill is undemocratic. It reduces the transparency and accountability. And if we look back at the track record of previous NDP governments, this is par for the course: Reducing transparency and accountability.

And as we pass legislation like this, it further gives the ability of this government to not be transparent and accountable to Manitobans but instead, after some people may have seen an enjoyment in a gas tax holiday, they will soon feel the burden of increased gas taxes without the accountability of the government to answer to when that's going to happen, how it's going to happen and by how much it's going to happen.

Raising taxes. Raising taxes for all Manitobans but primarily, in this bill, we see an increase in income tax for the skilled labourers of our province. Those are people like the plumbers, electricians, our doctors. These are people that are going to bear the brunt of

increased school taxes and all the other tax implications that come with the hidden tax increases.

The NDP—the undemocratic NDP—are raising taxes and ramming through this omnibus bill full of new and untested measures. Like I say, the NDP are raising taxes to those who are working to build our province. Those are the middle class. This bill increases taxation to those people by \$148 million in the new education property taxes and the potential higher fuel taxes.

Property taxes, like I say, are something that not only are sensitive to those in rural Manitoba but those across the entire province, and something that—it's the hard-working Manitobans who are homeowners, property owners, farmers, business owners should not bear the brunt of those taxes.

Our previous PC government had made strides in eliminating those taxes, increasing investment in our province, and increasing the growth of our economy to raise the tax dollars without unfairly burdening the middle class.

Something that many of my colleagues did not bring up, but I would like to, is eliminating commissions for collecting and remitting tax. This directly affects the smallest of business owners in our province. And I'm passionate about protecting small business, promoting small business and the importance that those individuals and their businesses have on the growth and prosperity of our province.

* (16:10)

This is something that may be overseen by many Manitobans and not important, but some of those smallest businesses that are out there working hard as the collection agencies for the Province of Manitoba, creating services, providing goods to sell, to grow our economy, collect the provincial sales tax.

Many of those businesses are owner operated, a small or non-existent staff. These are people that are looking at growing and prospering their communities and the province as a whole, and they're collecting the provincial sales tax. These are people that usually don't have any professional accounting background, and they're tasked with remitting those sales taxes in a complex system.

Previously, if they were under a certain threshold, there would be a commission. It was basically recognizing small-business owners for contributing to our province. It was an insignificant amount of money, but something to show small-business owners that the

Province is behind them, and support them in collecting the money that makes our economy go around.

This government doesn't care about the small-business owner, and I feel that eliminating the commission is one of the strongest kicks to our small-business owners in Manitoba by telling them: we no longer want to see you grow and flourish and prosper, but we'll put an additional burden on you operating your business.

There's so many more things that I'd like to go through in this BITSA bill, but I'd like to give other colleagues the opportunity to share their concern, and I'd like to highlight that my concern is the hidden agenda of this bill, the hidden potential for increased taxation and additional burden to the middle class and small-business owners of Manitoba.

Thank you.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritcho): Today we are debating Bill 37, which I would term the storm clouds bill. It is a bill that lays out a lot of concerns that Manitobans should have.

In fact, if we go back and look at a little bit of a history, in '22-23, there was more than a quarter-billion-dollar surplus that was left behind by the Conservative government to the incoming government.

It showed fiscal prudence. We had come out of COVID, a time that was tough for everybody in the world. There were difficult decisions that were made, and economies struggled. I would suggest that, even to this day, we are seeing failure in retail and in restaurants because of what happened during COVID. So there was a quarter billion dollar—more than a quarter-billion-dollar surplus left behind by the Conservative government.

Now, we had a NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his socialist government that came in, that were, by and large, confused, and I can only imagine that the newly minted Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) went into the NDP Premier's office and he said: you're not going to believe this, but there's a more than a quarter-billion-dollar surplus that the Conservatives left behind.

And you can just imagine how confusing that was for these NDP because for them, success is actually failure. So if you don't have a deficit every year, that would be viewed as a failure. And we, as Conservatives, view a surplus as a success.

So I mean, there was a little philosophical difference there, because the NDP would—could never

conceivably understand that leaving a surplus is a good thing. You have to spend every penny and then some. And that has been proven out by the '23-24 budget that has just been closed upon where we see over a \$2-billion deficit.

So Bill 37 is looking already at these massive deficits, and I point out to the House that that's more than a 2-and-a-quarter-billion-dollar turnaround in finances. That is epic. That is inconceivable in a non-pandemic, non-war kind of a situation, that under normal circumstances, when you had a more than quarter-billion-dollar surplus, to then go to a \$2-billion deficit shows that there are—whether it's institutional or whether it's other expenditures, that are absolutely under—absolutely out of control with this socialist government. And they are showing Conservatives this is how you run a budget: you never have a surplus; rather, you have massive deficit.

I would suggest that even a—even for this NDP socialist government, a \$2-billion deficit is epic. Because what we're going to see, and you see that in Bill 37, the storm clouds bill. You are going to see either huge increases to the debt and, keeping in mind, deficit is sort of the charge card bill; debt is the mortgage. So we're going to either see deficits increasing the way we see now, with \$2-billion deficit. That gets added onto the mortgage and then we start paying interest on that. We're either going to see debt increasing in this province or—and perhaps I should say, and/or we're going to see tax increases.

Now, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), he was around during the dark days of Selinger. And if you can remember that the first election after he be—got re-elected as premier—he got the leadership and then ran and got elected—in which he ran and said, no new taxes.

And the Minister of Agriculture was one of the big wheels of that government at that time, and they realized that they were in trouble financially, just like Bill 37 already is showing us the danger that's coming.

So what they did is they, first of all, in the first budget, after they got re-elected, is they broadened the PST and included, for instance, haircuts, lawyers preparing a will, accounting services and on and on. So they, first of all, they broadened the PST. During that campaign, Hugh McFadyen, the Conservative leader, in that debate said to then-premier Selinger: You are going to raise the PST. And what did that NDP premier say during that debate? He said, read my lips, no new taxes.

So first budget, they broadened all of the taxes and increased taxes on a lot of things. The second budget that came out was the PST increase. And I remember sitting in this Legislature, and you know, we were shocked that the NDP would raise the PST after their premier—and by—the minister of Justice, who was the puppeteer and one of the master manipulators of that NDP government, he was the main man in the NDP government. He was one of them that ensured that the PST was brought into this province under the NDP. He is one of the fathers of that PST increase.

But the thing is, is that if we were shocked on the opposition benches, the government benches were stunned because they were never told that the Greg Selinger, the minister of Justice, the now-Minister of Agriculture, that were all behind this big PST increase, that the rank and file backbenchers had no clue that this was coming. And then we saw that afterwards. We saw the rebels leave and then saw all the fighting, which there still seems to be a lot of today—a little bit of a hangover.

But Bill 37 is exactly warning us of what's going to come. We are either going to have massive debt, which we know we're going to have. You can't run a \$2-billion deficit after you had a quarter-billion-dollar surplus. You can't have that and not raise the debt because that goes from the charge card onto the debt.

You're also going to have to have tax increases. And Bill 37 already warns us of the tax increases that are going to come. Not just debt increase, but we're also going to have huge, huge tax increases. It's going to come. And you know what? You can go through the benches right now and you'll hear that statement: Read my lips: No new taxes. And you know what? Manitobans are going to say, We've heard that before, and it wasn't true from Greg Selinger; it's not going to be true from this group.

Read Bill 37. It starts to set up this province for massive debt increases and then tax increases.

* (16:20)

You can't have a spend-happy NDP government which got a quarter-billion-dollar surplus.

And I can remember, when the NDP first got in, they were confused. Why would you leave a surplus? Spend it. Why wouldn't you have spent it? Well, they've shown us what they can do. They can turn around a more-than-quarter-billion-dollar surplus and turn that into a \$2-billion deficit. And now, now will come the time when our debt will increase and so will taxes.

And that's why I would refer to this bill as a storm clouds bill, because it warns us of the storm clouds of massive debt increases and big tax increases. They are coming, and Manitobans should be aware of it.

Thank you.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): It's hard to follow up on my colleagues that are here today, but I have a different set of eyes looking at what happens here. I don't have the institutional knowledge that a lot of my colleagues have, but I have a realistic approach on what a government should do.

And I mentioned here in this House in previous conversations that we had when we're talking about small business, at over 40 years of being involved in small business. And I keep working towards making sure things are better for my employees, for the company, that we expand, that the people have better work environment.

And all the things that happen in our lives are controlled by the bills that are created in this Legislature: our access to health care, the amount of money we take home at the end of the day, the transportation that we have for our communities, the routes that we take, the bridges that we're on, are all affected by legislation here in this building.

And as a newly elected MLA a year ago, I had a great opportunity to attend what we nicknamed MLA school. And it gave us an opportunity to sit together with all the new MLAs that are coming from all the constituencies across the province, to sit back and say: We'd like to find out a little bit more on what we need to do so we can hit the ground running.

And, fortunately for us, the staff, the true heroes of democracy in this institution, put together a training program for us that taught us the fundamentals of everything. We had people coming in here from the Clerk's office, telling us the importance of how things happen and how bills are created. If you don't understand the relevance of that, you shouldn't be in this Chamber.

If you look forward to find the information that is going forward, or as you're—talk about the importance of the bills and how they are created in relation to what happens here, there is a direct correlation when we sit down and they say this is how a bill is presented.

The bill first comes as an idea and it's presented on the floor for the first reading. And there's debate back and forth on the first reading. And, hopefully, if the bill has enough legs or have enough support, it'll

go for a second reading. And there's fulsome debate hopefully happening on that second reading of the bill. And from there, there's typically an opportunity for that bill to get voted to go to committee.

And here's where things really get important, because when it goes to committee we have the opportunity for all the stakeholders in the province who feel that they may be impacted on these bills to come forward and present at committee. And as an early Legislature member, I took a look at my role coming in here.

Garth Brooks says: If you don't say it—*[interjection]*

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

I would ask the member to try and drag his comments somewhere close to being about the BITSA bill that we're supposed to be debating.

Mr. Perchotte: The comment was: Don't say it if you don't mean it. So the BITSA bill takes away the opportunity for everybody to come forward. So as a government they stand and say, we got your back, we want to protect your rights, but they don't mean it. Okay? So don't say it if you don't mean it.

So this legislation that is put forward takes away the opportunity for every single member in our province who wants to be heard on these hidden bills that are stuffed into BITSA, becomes a very undemocratic process.

I understand the BITSA bill is to move legislation forward in regards to the implementation of the finances to make sure that we can govern as a province, and I have no issue with that.

But when the government fails to demonstrate that they have ability to govern, when they fail to reach the targets and introduce bills, and then they say, because of that, we're going to take the rights of Manitobans away. We're going to take every single person's right away, and we're going to stick this in the bill.

Regardless if it would have been a good piece of legislation or a bad piece of legislation, they don't have the right to take away the voices of the people of the province that they were elected to protect. Every single person who voted expected whatever side you are on to protect your rights, to make sure that you have an opportunity to voice your concerns against the bills that are presented.

But we have here, we have a government saying we're just going to do what we want. And we know that we've had people in our lives that you talk to, and

you're trying to tell them something, and you go, hey, are you listening? And they go, yes, I'm listening. And you ask them to repeat back what you've said, and they don't have a clue.

That's how this government is listening. They're not paying attention. They're not hearing. The people that are coming through are sitting there and going, what is going on in this BITSA bill? It's a way to ram through legislation without any input from anybody.

Regardless of what is happening elsewhere, we have to make sure we protect the rights of everybody in this province. What is next? I am afraid to see what's going to happen year after year after year with a government trying to ram through more legislation.

We see that they're not prepared to govern. They are sitting there still acting like they're in opposition. They're asking the opposition questions in question period so they can't get their bills through. They can't do it on a democratic fashion, they can't do it in a legitimate time frame, they're out doing different things on media and fanfare instead of working for the people of Manitoba who sent them here.

All people ask is for their rights not to be trampled on, and this government continues to trample on those rights. They have now spent an enormous amount of time in creating a bill that doesn't represent what BITSA is about. They put in nine separate bills, lumped in, to stick it to the Manitoban people that they don't deserve to have rights.

I tell them, every Manitoban has a right to be heard on the bills. They have a right to stand forward and to make sure that they count.

So on this side of the House, we will stand up every time for the infractions of that NDP government.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other speakers on the bill?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: Question before the House is second reading of Bill 37, the budget implementation and tax structures amendment act.

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.

* (16:30)

An Honourable Member: No.

The Speaker: I heard a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Grant Jackson (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, please, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been called. Call in the members.

The question before the House is passage of—at second reading of Bill 37, the budget implementation and tax structures amendment act, 2024—tax statutes amendment act, 2024.

Division

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

Ayes

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

Nays

Balcaen, Bereza, Byram, Cook, Ewasko, Goertzen, Guenter, Hiebert, Jackson, Johnson, Khan, King, Lamoureux, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Pivniuk, Schuler, Stone, Wharton, Wowchuk.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Tim Abbott): Ayes 30, Nays 21.

The Speaker: The motion is accordingly passed.

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SECOND READINGS

Bill 38—An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments)

The Speaker: As previously agreed, we will now resume debate on second reading—we will start debate on second reading of Bill 38, An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments).

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, that Bill 38, An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

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

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith), that Bill 38, An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill and the message has been tabled.

MLA Fontaine: Today is a very important day in respect of Bill 38.

* (16:40)

Ensuring the freedom, safety, security and well-being of children and youth across Manitoba is a sacred and collective responsibility. Families and communities are essential in this, and children succeed best with ongoing connections to their families, communities, cultures, languages and traditions.

As part of our sacred and collective responsibility, this government is committed to collaboration with Indigenous governments and communities to transfer jurisdiction over Child and Family Services back to the nations, communities and families where it rightfully belongs.

Bill 38 amends The Child and Family Services Act, The Child and Family Services Authorities Act and The Vital Statistics Act as part of our continued commitment to restoring jurisdiction where it rightfully belongs.

This bill makes changes to provincial law to support Indigenous nations on their path of assuming CFS

jurisdiction and advances my priority as Minister of Families to return the care of children and youth back to their families, communities and nations.

It also affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to exercise jurisdiction in relation to Child and Family Services in alignment with federal CFS laws passed in 2019. The bill responds to recommendations from Indigenous leaders and our CFS partner authorities and agencies.

We have seen great support for these amendments from Indigenous nations across Manitoba, including those who have already signed on to a shared relationship declaration for First Nations child welfare.

I want to say a profound miigwech to everyone who provided guidance as we continue this sacred decolonizing work, including Acting Grand Chief Kennedy, Grand Chief Settee, Grand Chief Daniels and all of their staff that also sit at our technicians' table.

I also want to acknowledge the wisdom and guidance of the late Grand Chief Cathy Merrick, as well as the tremendous loss in her passing. As I've shared in this House before, I've known Grand Chief Cathy Merrick for at least 23 years, and she has always been a staunch supporter and fighter to have our children returned back home where they rightfully belong. And so today, I honour her.

Bill 38 introduces a preamble to The Child and Family Services Act that acknowledges the historical harms, including intergenerational trauma caused to Indigenous peoples by colonial policies and practices. This preamble affirms concrete and constructive action is necessary for reconciliation and restoring the sacred bond between Indigenous children, families and communities.

It also affirms the government's commitment to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the CFS system by prioritizing preventative care to support families over other, more disruptive services or interventions. Pardon me.

Provisions being added to the legislation expand the duties of the director of Child and Family Services, CFS authorities and mandated agencies. This will assist and support the transition of Child and Family Services related to Indigenous children and families to Indigenous service providers. It also includes the sharing of information with Indigenous governing bodies and Indigenous service providers to support this transition.

The definition of a critical incident under provincial CFS law has been clarified for a young adult 18 years of age but under 21 years of age to apply only if they received services from a CFS agency within one year before a serious injury or death.

Changes to reporting for an Indigenous child who might need protection have also been made. So a person can report the matter directly to an Indigenous service provider under an Indigenous CFS law and not to a provincial agency.

In addition, a CFS agency that receives information a child might be in need of protection may refer the matter for investigation to an applicable Indigenous service provider or investigate the matter in collaboration with that provider.

Under these amendments, both judges and associate judges will be able to extend an order of temporary guardianship. Furthermore, this order has been expanded to include an Indigenous service provider as the appointed guardian. Amendments under the CFS family services authorities acts—ministerial powers will be expanded to allow the minister to make regulations designating a provincially—a provincial CFS agency to provide joint intake and emergency services when an Indigenous governing body begins exercising jurisdiction over Child and Family Services through an Indigenous law.

The minister's responsibilities will also expand to include supporting Indigenous governing bodies in exercising jurisdiction over the delivery of CFS services. Changes to The Vital Statistics Act will allow the director of Vital Statistics to provide a certificate of birth and certificate of birth registration search to an Indigenous service provider, providing services under an Indigenous law.

And lastly, and certainly of significance to all Indigenous peoples, this bill recognizes incredibly important strides Manitoba and Canada and the Manitoba Métis Federation are making in negotiations on a trilateral co-ordination agreement to transition Child and Family Services under their own CFS law.

I want to take a quick moment to acknowledge President David Chartrand of the MMF and his whole team that have worked so incredibly hard to get to a point where we here in Manitoba, and myself as minister responsible and MMF are ready to sign an agreement to transfer the jurisdiction of child welfare to MMF. It's been an incredible path and they have worked so incredibly hard, and I honour them for that work today.

In anticipation of this agreement, the bill will repeal the Métis CFS agency, the Michif CFS agency and creates provisions to allow for a smooth conclusion of affairs and administration of the Métis authority as part of the transition to their own Indigenous CFS law.

As many folks know, on January 31, 2023, Peguis First Nation became the first Indigenous government in Manitoba to bring their own CFS law into force and to commence delivery services to their citizens both on and off reserve. The signing of this co-ordination agreement represented another meaningful step in the ongoing of reconciliation—in the ongoing process of reconciliation and the restoration of Indigenous CFS jurisdiction, a key priority for our government.

As the Minister of Families, my department and I meet regularly with First Nations and their teams that are on the front lines of establishing Indigenous law and preparing the infrastructure for jurisdiction, and at this moment I'd like to acknowledge all of those First Nations leaderships and their teams that we and our department have been working incredibly close with. And just to say that I am so incredibly proud of the progress and the work and the heart medicine that has gone into each of those First Nations in their pursuit of jurisdiction. I lift you up and acknowledge you today.

On May 13, 2024, myself and our team, along with the Premier (Mr. Kinew), hosted a round table with First Nations rights holders and signed a declaration of understanding in the path to restoring jurisdiction of child welfare. It was something that's never been done in the history of Manitoba, and I'm so proud that our government was able to sit as partners and in a respectful way with leadership across the province, in our attempt to assure leadership that this is our No. 1 priority.

* (16:50)

The proposed amendments that support the transition to Indigenous CFS laws and ongoing co-ordination between provincial child-welfare systems and services delivered under Indigenous CFS laws were shared at that round table. And the changes outlined in this bill are part of a collaborative journey between our government and First Nations, Inuit and Métis across our province.

We have received recommendations from Indigenous leaders and our CFS partner authorities and agencies. We have also worked closely with technical staff from Southern Chiefs Organization, MKO and AMC to

inform those amendments. First Nations grand chiefs and the president of the Manitoba Métis Federation have also provided invaluable guidance through the Manitoba CFS leadership council of which I chair.

I want to say miigwech to everyone who provided guidance as we continue this sacred work. We expect to make more changes as we listen to and learn from Indigenous peoples, communities and nations about how to support the continued restoration of Indigenous jurisdiction of Child and Family Services in Manitoba.

I also just want to share in these last couple of minutes: today's bill, again, is another historical moment for Manitoba. It is further propelling Manitoba in the pursuit of jurisdiction for First Nations. It is quintessentially decolonizing work, and I'm proud to be a part of a government with, as we have said many times, the most Indigenous representation across the country and certainly in this Chamber.

And that's why it's so important to elect folks that are representative of the communities that we are meant to work for. Because when you elect the folks that represent the very communities that we work for, you are able to do that transformative work, and today Bill 38 is one example of that transformative work.

And, finally, I just want to say a profound miigwech to my incredible team at Families. I work with some extraordinary individuals in my political staff at the DM level, at the ADM level and certainly at the jurisdiction transition office that we have. I want to just say to my team how much I value you. I see the work that you do each and every day, and I am so honoured and proud to work with you and do this decolonizing work together. So, miigwech for your incredibly hard and difficult work.

Miigwech.

The Speaker: Before we proceed to the question period, we just have a couple of items.

MLA Fontaine: Can you please canvass the House for leave not to see the clock until the question has been put on second reading of Bill 38, as well as the consideration of a leave request dealing with House business?

The Speaker: Is there leave to not see the clock until the question has been put on second reading of Bill 38 as well as the consideration of a leave request dealing with House business?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Now we will proceed to the question period.

Questions

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

The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Thank you to the Minister of Families for bringing this forward. I'm very happy to speak on this and ask questions about this today, so thank you very much.

One of the questions I would like to ask would be if there would be any education stream for any of the Indigenous agencies to educate those working with families and children, as this is a new thing that we're doing and we just want to make sure that they're prepared.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): Miigwech to the member for the question; it's actually a really, really good question and it's a lot of the discussion that we're having with First Nations.

And so a really good example is Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation is actually looking at curriculum development for their new—and again, I don't want to use the same language—but the folks that are going to be working in their system, that they would get the education, a decolonizing lens, on how to do child welfare.

And so there are First Nations across Manitoba that are starting to look at that, so it is a great question.

The Speaker: I have to re-recognize you, my mic wasn't on.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

Mrs. Hiebert: Can the minister provide an update on the status agreements that are currently under way, and which First Nations those are?

MLA Fontaine: So our Indigenous Jurisdiction Transition Office is working with a variety of different First Nations, but there are—we have about five that are potentially in the queue, that have moved along more in respect of maybe being ready for jurisdiction and entering into a co-ordination agreement.

It's really important to recognize as well that when we talk about these co-ordination agreements, it's not only Manitoba. Another key partner is Canada, and so while we are at the table and working with different First Nations that are moving along their jurisdiction path—and that is my No. 1 priority—we also have to make sure that Canada is at the table.

Mrs. Hiebert: With the Peguis transition complete, has there been any valuable learnings that have informed the co-ordination agreement with other Nations?

MLA Fontaine: Yes, another great question. And again, you know, one of the things that, when we are having these meetings that I share with leadership and even our team, is that—and folks that I've actually met with, my counterparts across the country—is that all of this is new for everybody, for every government: First Nation, Canada or provincial.

And so, Peguis was a really good example for Manitoba in how successful transferring jurisdiction is. They have phenomenal records in respect of—since in the last two years—in respect of children coming into care, not coming into care, returning children back to their families; it really is a good example of the importance of jurisdiction and the healing that will come from jurisdictions at restoring Indigenous families and really making whole Indigenous children.

Mrs. Hiebert: Just quick question, during MACY we just learned about some concerns and I'm just wondering if there's a reporting system or safeguards of some kind for children to ensure that they are getting help when they're needed in urgent situations?

MLA Fontaine: Yes. First Nations, as they develop their Indigenous laws, are embedding those pieces into their Indigenous law.

But let me just say this, and I want to make sure that everybody explicitly understand this: our people have always taken care of our children. For thousands and thousands and thousands of years, our people have taken care of our children. We know how to take care of our children.

And in fact, it is only a consequence of colonization that has seen the utter devastation of our families and our communities, and that have torn children away from their families. Our people know how to take care of our children, and that is our No. 1 priority as Indigenous people. And I, as the minister, support our First Nations to be able to restore that jurisdiction over our own—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Hiebert: Thank you for that information.

* (17:00)

As a mom and as somebody who has child—even if my children were having any struggles or anything, and I wasn't able to be there to help them, is there just somebody that—or is there processes in place if a child does need help and there's nobody currently right where they are to help them?

Is there some—like, is there any kind of a help line or even somebody that's, like, designated in the agency that they're placed in to help them? Because there's a safeguard that way. Still wondering.

MLA Fontaine: Yes, I appreciate the question. And again, let me just reiterate this: for thousands and thousands and thousands of years, Indigenous peoples and families and communities and nations had a system that took care of their children, that took care of their youth, that took care of their women, that took care of their warriors and that took care of their elders.

That system was utterly destroyed because of colonization. And it is intrinsic in the way that Indigenous people are. We take care of our people. We take care of our relatives. And so that system is embedded in Indigenous law.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): During MACY committee, numerous foster parents, including the NDP member from The Pas, brought up numerous concerns about the lack of presence that the Manitoba advocate will have as this transition takes place; in addition, failing to have a federal advocate. What will happen to children that will fall through the cracks?

So I just ask the minister how she can ensure that children won't fall through the cracks, failing the presence of either our provincial Manitoba advocate and a federal advocate for children.

MLA Fontaine: It's clear the member for Midland doesn't understand and can't wrap her head around the concept of jurisdiction and restoring jurisdiction.

What the member for Midland is asking me to do as the minister, once we've entered into a co-ordination agreement and an Indigenous nation has jurisdiction over their Child and Family Services, what the member's asking me to do is oversee that, continually, as a colonial structure, still oversee that. And so it's the equivalent of asking me as the Minister of Families to have oversight of the United States government and their CFS system.

First Nations are autonomous, self-governing governments. They are able to take care of their children and don't need me or our colonial system to oversee their Indigenous law.

The Speaker: There are no more questions?

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I just want to thank the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) for letting me speak today. I really appreciate that. This is something that we support, and this is something that's important to all of us and to me especially, having been a foster mom and just really loving the kids that have been in our care and just to make sure that they're, you know, able to be where they need to be, with their families. So I appreciate the chance to speak a bit today.

I would like to speak about an act—to rise today to speak about Bill 38, An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments).

This legislation holds great significance not only for Indigenous families across Manitoba but also for everyone committed to the values of truth and reconciliation. It represents a crucial step forward in ensuring that Indigenous children and families are treated with dignity, respect and care and that the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children are prioritized above all else.

Bill 38 continues the important work initiated by the federal bill C-92 which affirms the inherent right of Indigenous peoples to exercise jurisdiction over Child and Family Services.

This is not just a piece of legislation. It's a commitment to supporting Indigenous communities in reuniting children with their families and ensuring that children grow up connected to their culture and their families.

Bill 38 aims to restore the authority of Indigenous communities to take care of their children in ways that honour their cultural practices and traditions. But as we move forward, we must also carefully and thoughtfully always ensure that the safety of children come first and that no child falls through the cracks.

By restoring this jurisdiction, Indigenous communities can ensure that decisions about their children are made within the context of their cultural values and traditions. It means that, where possible, children will remain with their families and when it is—when

that's not possible, they will be placed in environments where their culture and familial ties are preserved.

Bill 38 supports the idea that children do best when they are raised in environments where they feel a sense of belonging and identity, values that are rooted in their cultural and their traditions.

Bill 38 represents truth and reconciliation in action. Reconciliation is about building relationships of trust and respect with Indigenous peoples. It's about listening to their voices, recognizing their inherent rights and working together to create solutions that are in best interests of the children and their families.

We must commit to supporting Indigenous communities as they assume responsibility for Child and Family Services, and ensure that they have the resources, support and capacity they need to succeed. Reconciliation requires more than just words; it requires sustained action and genuine partnership.

While Bill 38 seeks to empower Indigenous communities and reunite children with their families. We must never lose sight of the crucial fact: the safety of children must always come first.

This bill is about ensuring that Indigenous children grow up in environments that are safe, loving and supportive, which is all of our goals, which we always want for all children. In our commitment to reuniting families, we must also ensure that we are placing children—we are not placing children in harm's way. Children must never fall through the cracks of our system and that requires careful planning and oversight by Indigenous agencies.

As we move forward with Bill 38, we must establish clear standards and safeguards to ensure that children are protected. We must ensure that children in care are placed in environments that are not only culturally appropriate but also safe and stable.

We must also support families before they reach the breaking point. We must provide families with the resources, services and support they need to care for their children, whether that's access to mental health services, housing supports or substance abuse treatments. By investing in prevention, we can help keep families together and prevent children from entering the child welfare system in the first place.

There have been concerns from the children's advocate and youth and it's important to acknowledge that there are concerns, particularly from the advocate. These are concerns centred around ensuring that, as we transfer jurisdiction and reduce the number of

children in care, we do not compromise safety and well-being of those children in the system.

The former PC government engaged in consultations with Indigenous communities to ensure that Bill 38 supports self-determination of Indigenous peoples in caring for their children. This is a critical step towards reconciliation and addressing the historic wrongs that have disproportionately affected Indigenous families.

We must also ensure that Indigenous-led child welfare bodies have the resources that they need to exercise their jurisdiction effectively. This means ongoing funding, capacity building and support of—for community-based services that are culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of the Indigenous families.

By empowering Indigenous communities to exercise jurisdiction over Child and Family Services by providing families with supports they need to grow to—need to succeed, we can create a system where children grow up safe, loving and culturally connected to—connected environments. Must include—to engage child welfare advocates, Indigenous leaders and families themselves to ensure that implementation of this bill is successful and we remain accountable to the children and families we serve.

I am happy to say that we, as a government, have very—been very involved in putting this forward in the past, and I want to thank past Families minister, Rochelle Squires, for getting this going when she was in Cabinet. And we—I am excited to see that our now Families Minister is continuing that good work of bringing families together and working with agencies to continually empower communities to have their children.

* (17:10)

I'm happy to support this bill and look forward to seeing and hearing the success stories of children being reunited with families and growing up in their cultural and where they're—where they need to be. And I look forward to the reunification and thriving children of our province.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Anyone—

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Speaker: Anyone else wishing to rise in debate?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Speaker: All right. *[interjection]*

Order, please. Order, please.

The question before the House is the Bill 38, An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Other Amendments)—*[interjection]*—second reading.

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

I declare the motion carried.

* * *

The Speaker: And just for everyone's information, we're going to pause for a couple of minutes. We're not recessing—just so that we have a chance to consult with the two House leaders on the next step. So bear with us.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): In consultation with the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), just a 10-minute recess, please.

The Speaker: A 10-minute—

An Honourable Member: With a one-minute—sorry. With a one-minute bell.

The Speaker: A 10-minute recess has been requested by the Opposition House Leader with a one-minute bell to call people back.

Is it the will of the House to—is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

A 10-minute recess will now start.

The House recessed at 5:12 p.m.

The House resumed at 5:23 p.m.

The Speaker: The one-minute warning to resume the House has concluded. We are now back in session.

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

The Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being actually past 5 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 o' clock on Tuesday—10 o' clock a.m. on Tuesday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 10, 2024

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