



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	Ind.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
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, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
ROBBINS, Colleen	Spruce Woods	PC
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 16, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 232—The Autism Strategy Act

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, I move that Bill 232, The Autism Strategy Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, I am honoured to introduce Bill 232, The Autism Strategy Act.

Bill 232 is a long-term co-ordinated strategy to provide the ongoing supports and services needed, including timely access to screening and diagnosis of ASD; supports and services for autistic children and early learning and child-care facilities and at all levels of their education; supports and services for autistic adults, including supports in relation to employment and housing; supports and services for families and caregivers of autistic persons; research on ASD; and comprehensive data collection and statistical analysis respecting autistic persons.

The strategy must work interdepartmentally and ensure measures apply across Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, 2026. As Minister of Agriculture, I'm very pleased to announce the week of March 15 to 21, 2026, as Canadian Agricultural Safety Week.

Agriculture is a leading—an industry in our province. It contributes a lot to our economy and it provides good-paying jobs. It also is very important that we protect our workers and our families in this industry.

For over two decades, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association has promoted the importance of safety on Canadian farms. Healthy farmers, farm families, farm workers and safe farm communities are the reason our sector continues to succeed.

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association provides many valuable resources to support safe and sustainable agriculture. This work is funded in part by the Canadian and Manitoba governments.

An ongoing investment of \$1.5 million over 2024 to 2029 promotes a safe and healthy farm operations in Manitoba.

Here in Manitoba, we partner with the Keystone Agricultural Producers FarmSafe program and I thank them for their important work that they do.

I know that we will all participate how important it is to keep our farms a safe place to live, work and play all year round.

This year and every year, I encourage all Manitobans to support this ongoing work and our ongoing commitment to farm safety.

Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I rise today to recognize Canadian agriculture safety week and to highlight the importance of farm safety in Manitoba and across Canada.

Agriculture is central to Manitoba's economy and deeply rooted in our provincial identity. Our farmers produce the food that feeds families here at home and around the world. Their work supports local communities, drives our export economy and contributes significantly to the prosperity of our province.

Beyond the economic impact, agriculture represents a way of life on tradition, resilience and hard work. Canadian agriculture safety week plays an important role in raising awareness about safety on farms and encouraging farmers, farm families, farm workers and rural communities to make safety a priority every day of the year.

Farming is one of the most demanding and potentially dangerous occupations. Long hours, heavy machinery, livestock, unpredictable weather and the constant pressure of seasonal work all contribute to the risk farmers manage every day.

This year's safety week also highlights important areas such as machinery safety, emergency preparedness, road and rail safety, livestock safety and the role of women in agriculture. Each of these areas remind us that farm safety is a shared responsibility and requires ongoing attention.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

The Speaker: Is there leave for the member to finish his statement?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Speaker: I heard a no. Leave has been denied.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Jimmy Mangat and Naman Mangat

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize Jimmy Mangat and Naman Mangat, owners of Axle Auto Parts and Math4me academy, respectively, that embody resilience, vision and community spirit.

Jimmy's journey began in India where he studied automotive engineering before coming to Canada in 2003. After years in the trucking industry, a life-changing accident forced him to rethink his path.

In 2019, he opened Axle Auto Parts, a bold step that faced immediate challenges when the pandemic struck.

Yet, through determination and hard work, Jimmy built a thriving enterprise that now employs 25 people across two Manitoba locations and has provided opportunities to more than 200 individuals. Axle Auto Parts serves diverse communities in Winnipeg and neighbouring towns, proving that perseverance can turn setbacks into success.

* (13:40)

An internationally educated educator, Naman faced barriers finding work in her field, but her passion for education led her to Math4me, a tutoring franchise supporting students from grades 1 to 12.

Starting with just 10 students in 2016, Naman grew Math4me into three Winnipeg locations, helping thousands of learners excel academically. Recognized with multiple awards, including the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, Naman exemplifies how dedication and vision can transform lives.

In addition to business leadership, Jimmy likes to support community cultural events, and Naman is an example of women leadership in Winnipeg organizing music and theatre events for our community. This first-generation immigrant couple's contributions strengthen my constituents in Burrows and inspire newcomers and immigrants to dream big.

I invite my colleagues to join me in applauding their achievements and commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive Manitoba.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to recognizing the next member to speak, there's some guests in the gallery that have to leave before we'll be done member statements.

We have seated in the public gallery from École Communautaire [*phonetic*] Saint-Georges 10 grade 6, 7 and 8 students under the direction of Sylvie Labossière, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

And we welcome you here today.

And further, we have seated in the public gallery from Fairholme School 17 students under the direction of Evelyn Maendel, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza).

And we welcome you here today.

Ducks Unlimited Canada Day

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Tomorrow, March 17, Manitobans will recognize Ducks Unlimited Canada Day, established through bill 244, The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act, which received royal assent in 2023.

And today we're joined by a number of great folks from this great organization who showcased Ducks Unlimited Canada in the Rotunda today.

Ducks Unlimited Canada was founded in Manitoba in 1938 by conservationists and hunters who were deeply concerned about the decline in waterfowl populations caused by the loss of habitat. What began as a shared commitment to protect wetlands has grown into one of the most respected conservation organizations in the country.

Manitoba has always been central to that story. The organization established its first organizations in Winnipeg and quickly began restoring vital wetland habitats. Over the decades, Ducks Unlimited Canada became a leader in conservation across Manitoba, protecting wetlands and grasslands, safeguarding critical waterfowl breeding grounds and promoting sustainable land stewardship throughout the province.

Since 1933, its national headquarters has been located at—or 1993, its national headquarters has been located at Oak Hammock Marsh, a place that has become a symbol of environmental stewardship, research and education in Manitoba.

Ducks Unlimited Canada also worked closely with farmers, researchers, landowners and Indigenous communities to support sustainable land use while incorporating traditional knowledge into conservation efforts.

As the member who introduced this legislation, it's an honour to recognize the incredible impact Ducks Unlimited Canada has had on protecting wetlands, conserving wildlife habitat and preserving Manitoba's natural heritage for generations to come.

I ask my colleagues to join us in this great organization and their employees.

Thank you.

Paul Thomas

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to recognize long-time River Heights resident Paul Thomas, whose lifetime of scholarship, mentorship

and public service has profoundly shaped Manitoba's democratic institutions and public administration.

For more than five decades, Paul has been one of Manitoba's most trusted and respected voices on politics and governance. As a scholar, he built a distinguished career focused on public administration, legislative institutions and accountability. His work is widely cited, and his advice is sought by governments of different political stripes, reflecting his deep commitment to evidence-based analysis and non-partisan public service.

Paul is also an authoritative presence in Manitoba's public discourse. His regular columns and interviews have helped Manitobans understand complex political issues with clarity, balance and historical perspective. And his calm, principled analysis have made him a cornerstone of democratic debate in our province.

Paul has made an enduring contribution to public service education. In partnership with Dr. Robert Adie, he helped establish the master of public administration program, which has trained generations of dedicated public servants.

Further, he designed and served as the first academic director of the Manitoba Legislative Intern Program, providing young graduates with first-hand experience in this building.

Paul and his wife Roberta raised three children in the River Heights neighborhood, where they have lived for the past 59 years. We are indeed lucky to have had them as neighbors.

Honourable Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Paul Thomas for a lifetime dedicated to strengthening public service, democratic understanding and civic life in Manitoba.

We are all—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

Ellie Taylor

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Today I rise to recognize a truly remarkable member of the Neepawa community, Ms. Ellie Taylor, and I would like to welcome her and her guests here to the gallery today.

Ellie is a retired registered nurse who dedicated more than 50 years to caring for others. She served patients and families with compassion, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to their well-being. That lifetime of service speaks volumes about her character and it continues to guide the way she contributes to her community today.

Since returning home to Neepawa in 2022, Ellie has become one of the community's most joyful and dedicated volunteers. Whether she's lending a hand at local events, supporting community initiatives or simply offering encouragement to those around her, Ellie brings warmth and positivity everywhere she goes.

Anyone who knows Ellie knows that she is rarely without a smile, and often with a happy dance. Her joy is infectious. She has a remarkable ability to brighten a room the moment she walks in, reminding all of us the power of kindness, humour and human connection.

Ellie makes a tremendous impact through fitness. Not only does she stay active by attending regular spin classes, she teaches fitness to seniors in the community. Her leadership and encouragement helps older adults stay healthy, confident and socially connected. Her classes are more than exercise; they're a source of friendship, laughter and belonging.

Ellie is living proof that giving back has no age limit. Her generosity, enthusiasm and sincere compassion for people help make Neepawa a better place for everyone.

I want to sincerely thank Ellie for her lifelong commitment to helping others and for the many ways she contributes to support, encourage and uplift those around her and in the community she proudly calls home.

Thank you, Ms. Ellie.

And I ask that her guests—her name and her guests' names be entered into Hansard after the private member's statement.

Ellie Taylor, Roberta Coulter, Bernice Konica, Dani Martin, Shelley Martin, Kathie Neufeld, Adelia Wiens, Werner Wiens.

Thompson Mine Complex Investment

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Honourable Speaker, for generations, the city of Thompson has been built on the strength of its miners and the promise of the nickel beneath our feet. Mining is not simply an industry in Thompson; it is part of who we are and it supports families, local businesses and communities across northern Manitoba.

* (13:50)

In recent months, however, many residents in Thompson have felt a deep sense of uncertainty. When the—when Vale began reviewing the future of its operations and the possibility of selling the Thompson

Mine Complex, people understandably worried about what this could mean for jobs and the future of our city.

Thompson has lived through these moments before, but today, I am pleased to share some encouraging news.

A new consortium, including Exiro Minerals, Orion Resource Partners and the Canada Growth Fund, have reached an agreement with Vale to acquire and invest in the Thompson Mine Complex. Together these partners are committing up to \$280 million to strengthen operations and support long-term-future nickel mining in Thompson.

This investment represents the confidence in the people of Thompson and the skill of our workforce, the potential of the nickel—the Thompson Nickel Belt.

For residents of northern Manitoba, this announcement renews a sense of hope that we have longed for for Thompson. And it means that the mine that has sustained our city for decades will continue operating and supporting the livelihoods of hundreds of workers and businesses that depend on them.

Thompson has always been a resilient town, and with this new partnership, we have reason to believe that the next chapter of our mining story is just beginning.

Ekosi, Honourable Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba's Washington Trade Representative Inquiry Into Number of Trade Deals Made

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): In Manitoba, under this NDP government, the cost of living has increased to historic levels. Food inflation is the second highest in the entire country in Manitoba under this NDP government, and they increased your education property taxes by \$450 million. Manitobans are making sacrifices every time they go grocery shopping.

It's times like this that Manitobans look to their government for help, for support, for a plan. And what is this NDP government's plan? Absolutely nothing.

To the west of us in Saskatchewan, Premier Moe has signed billions of dollars in trade deals to boost his economy. In Manitoba, absolutely nothing. But this Premier (Mr. Kinew) has done one thing: he hired his friend, a CBC journalist, and paying him \$528,000 as a trade representative.

Can the Premier stand up today and point to one deal this trade—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Acting Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, Richard Maidan [*phonetic*] has been doing the important work of making the case for thousands of jobs here in Manitoba, protecting our interests and doing that important work for us in Washington.

The members opposite—under their tenure, what occurred, Honourable Speaker? They cut the Washington trade office. They did nothing to prepare Manitoba for this situation. We're investing in making sure that Manitoba's voice is present in Washington instead of thanking Trump, like the members opposite did.

We're going to fight for Manitoba jobs, and Manitobans can count on us to do that every single day.

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

Mr. Khan: It's shameful that the Premier (Mr. Kinew) won't even stand up and defend his friend who he hired personally. He's paying his friend \$528,000 to be a trade representative to bring in money into the province in Manitoba, and nothing has come in under Richard Madan—maybe the Minister of Finance should learn how to say his name properly.

What is the return on investment when Manitobans are paying \$528,000? That's more than the Prime Minister of Canada is making. That's more than the Premier, the mayor and an MLA salary combined. Richard Madan is making more than them, and he's making 10 times the amount of money the average Manitoban is making. I bet you those 10 Manitobans are working harder and doing more to this province than the Premier's friend, Richard Madan, as the trade representative.

So I'll ask again, maybe the Minister of Finance wants to take another shot at it. Can he point to one deal that the trade representative has got done to make Manitoba better?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, Manitoba has what the world needs and what America needs right now. We've got agriculture, we've got energy, we've got critical minerals, we've got an incredible manufacturing sector. And we need to make sure that our voice is present at the tables where decisions are being made in Washington.

We know the members opposite don't care about that. We know they cut the Washington trade office. We know they thanked Donald Trump. But we know

that this is an important investment in protecting our provincial economy.

You know, when it comes to the amount of money that we're compensating this individual for the important work they're doing, I'd like to ask the Leader of the Opposition to reflect on the fact that he received \$500,000 from the PCs for his lemonade stand—\$500,000. Perhaps he should look and answer some questions about that.

We're making important investments, protecting provincial jobs, and again, we're going to do that work proudly—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: You can take all the personal shots you want at me, the Minister of Finance and everyone on that side. They want to go low—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —we'll go high.

Manitoba has everything that the world wants. We know that. Maybe someone should tell the trade representative in Washington, DC, that—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —Manitoba has everything, that he should be working to move out, to sell, to grow our province. And yet, he hasn't done one trade deal. So maybe the Minister of Finance should check his talking points and get to work for Manitobans.

Richard Madan has no trade experience. He's never brokered one deal, and he doesn't have one memorandum of understanding to grow Manitoba's economy.

So will the Premier finally stand up and defend his friend, the CBC journalist, for why he's paying him \$528,000 when Manitobans are struggling to pay their bills, when Manitobans are visiting food banks, when Manitobans are looking to this government? Why are they not stepping up to help Manitobans?

MLA Sala: Manitobans want a government that will stand up and fight for their jobs. That's what this team is doing.

Your Honourable Speaker, we're proud of the work that Richard Madan is doing in Washington. And we're proud of the fact that we're investing in that Washington trade office, when the members opposite cut that, because they don't seem to think that's

important. I know that they think—they'd rather thank Donald Trump.

We're making progress on Trump-proofing our economy. For example, we passed bill 47, The Fair Trade in Canada Act, to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers. We've got provincial MOUs signed with the governments now of Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, British Columbia.

We've got new deals at the Arctic Gateway Group. We're making the investments in the trade-supporting infrastructure to continue to grow our provincial economy. Members opposite left Manitobans with a giant mess, a \$2-billion deficit. Again—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Order, please.

If I could get the clock stopped.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: We have some guests in the gallery that are leaving before the next series of questions gets asked and answered, so I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce, in the public gallery, John Dvorak and Pamela Thompson. They're guests of the honourable member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt).

We welcome you here today.

* * *

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

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

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Minister of Finance can stand up and yell all he wants. At the end of the day, this trade representative has no experience, he's not signed one deal and he's not brought one dollar into the Province of Manitoba.

The fact is the Premier (Mr. Kinew), and I'll quote him—he says: We need someone who is a little bit Trumpy. Mr. Madan is the right guy to operate in Trump 2.0 environment. End quote.

Maybe the Minister of Finance needs to get his facts straight once again and check why the Premier has such a love fest with Donald Trump. The Premier pats himself on the back for saving you one and a half cents a litre of gas—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan:—and then all they want to do is yell when I want to ask questions.

Premier wants to save you two cents on a litre—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan:—of milk, Honourable Speaker. That is his combined savings of \$1.74 under this NDP government.

On our side of the House, we proposed a resolution to save you \$3,000 a year by increasing your basic personal tax exemption.

Will the Premier stand up and vote in favour of that today?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, as we've come to expect in Manitoba, it's another reckless and poorly thought-through proposal from the PCs when it comes to saving Manitobans money.

We know that their newest proposal here will ensure that the wealthiest among Manitobans get the biggest benefit. That's not what Manitobans are looking for right now, and what they want to see is targeted relief in reducing their costs.

For years, the members opposite did not take action to reduce costs for Manitobans. They raised costs on renters. They found new and creative ways of jacking up hydroelectricity rates. This team is doing the work of finding targeted relief.

We're reducing your education property taxes. We've reduced your gas costs. We've reduced your hydro costs. We're reducing your costs of child care. Up and down, this team is ensuring that we lower costs. They made life more expensive—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: If you want reckless, look no farther than this Minister of Finance. He has driven this province \$4 billion into debt in just two years under this NDP government—\$4 billion, Manitoba. Think about that.

* (14:00)

When you can't pay your bills—*[interjection]*—Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) wants to heckle me right now when I'm talking about families not being able to pay their bills to put food on the table. They want to yell at me. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: We want to stand up and work for Manitobans. They want to deny Manitobans the basics.

And yet, here, we have a bill put forward to the House that will help middle-wage working class, resolution forward—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —that will help Manitobans keep more—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Khan: The fact that the entire NDP government wants to heckle at me when I'm introducing a resolution, talking about a resolution that will help Manitobans keep \$3,000 in their pockets, and then the—and this Minister of Families wants to heckle me—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Will the Minister of Finance stand up today and say why he's not supporting this common sense resolution to help Manitobans?

MLA Sala: Again, Honourable Speaker, reckless and poorly thought through. And we know that when they went out to the media last week, they didn't happen to mention the costs associated with the proposal.

Well, I'll help them with the math. It's about a billion-dollar price tag. We know that the vast majority of that is going to the wealthiest in Manitoba, should it go through.

So, of course, we know what this means. It means more of the same of what Manitobans saw for years under the members opposite. It means more cuts to health care. It means more cuts to education.

Or it means another giant deficit like the \$2-billion deficit they left us when they left government. They left a massive hole for Manitobans to climb out of.

Fortunately, Manitobans sent this team to government with the best premier in the whole country, and we're going to keep doing that important work of ensuring fiscal sustainability while we invest in health—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Let's get some facts straight here, since the Minister of Finance wants to make stuff up.

This resolution that we're proposing will be the basic personal tax exemption from \$15,000 to \$30,000, which means Manitobans—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —will not pay any provincial tax on the first \$30,000 they're earning. Thirty thousand dollars is what we're talking about. He wants to stand up and talk about millionaires.

Well, if you want to talk about millionaires, look no farther than his friend Richard Madan, who this Premier (Mr. Kinew) is paying \$528,000 to bring in zero dollars into Manitoba. Or that the fact that the Premier is going to spend millions of dollars on a study to tell you that grocery prices are more expensive today than they've ever been.

If members really cared about costs of living and affordability on that side, the member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt), the member for McPhillips (MLA Devgan), Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko), Waverley (MLA Pankratz), Transcona (MLA Corbett), St. James (MLA Sala), Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham), they would all stand up and vote in favour of this resolution.

So I ask those members: Why do they not care about their constituents? Why do they not care about their constituents earning \$3,000 more a year? Or are they just afraid of—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, I think it's—it'd be fun to share some of the commentary we saw in the media over the weekend on the PC proposal.

So here's something we heard from Tom Brodbeck in the Winnipeg Free Press: The PCs essentially followed the same playbook the last time they were in government. Quote: beyond reckless. Quote: a huge blow to the provincial treasury. Quote: They have no idea what it would cost or how they would pay for it.

This is where the PC Party is in Manitoba right now: desperate, throwing whatever they can in whatever hope to get one more person to want to sign up with their team.

We know that they have no idea what the implications of this proposal are when it comes to deficit impacts or further cuts. All we know is that they're in a state of desperation. We're seeing within their team people flee for the hills because of the chaos that's been created—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Business Investment in Manitoba Regulatory and Permitting Environment

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, what is a fact is that we just came back from a weekend of speaking to Manitobans. And along with those Manitobans are businesses that are saying it's increasingly getting harder to do business and invest in this province. And it's because of the slow permitting process, growing regulatory burdens and government indecision that has now chased millions of dollars of potential investment away from Manitoba.

At a time when our economy is stagnating, why is this government making Manitoba less of an attractive place to invest, build and create new jobs?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, we're very happy as a government to continue to support our business community to grow. In fact, we've—happy to renounce that the CFIB recently announced that Manitoba has the highest level of long-term small-business optimism in all of Canada.

And that's due to the hard work of our team to break down barriers, to make sure that we're putting businesses' ability to grow and invest at first priority. And so we'll continue to do the work to invest in businesses, support their growth here in Manitoba and make sure that more Manitobans have opportunities for good work—good-paying work—right here at home in Manitoba.

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

Economic Growth Strategy Government Spending Concerns

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, like us, I'd suggest this minister and this government, on their weekends, get out and actually talk to Manitobans, because we see first-hand that Manitoba's economy is barely growing.

While other provinces are seeing strong economic growth, Manitoba's GDP, the facts are—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Narth: —grew by just 1.1 per cent. This, as the government spending has grown by more than 5 per cent. More government spending without economic growth is not a plan for prosperity.

Honourable Speaker, can the minister explain why this government believes that growing the size of

government five times faster than the economy is a strategy for economic growth?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, I want to make sure that Manitobans are aware that we have the business—the highest level of optimism for businesses right here in Manitoba. That's an important point because of the actions of our government.

Second, Honourable Speaker, I want to make sure that Manitobans know that we are delivering on investments, including a \$1.3-billion gold mine that's being developed right here in northern Manitoba. That's real delivering on real investments.

And furthermore, Honourable Speaker, I want to make sure members opposite know that Manitoba actually ranked first in private-sector employment in all of 2025. That makes sure that more Manitobans have the ability to work right here in our good province. That's delivering on action and that's what our government does and will continue to do each and every day.

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

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

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): A 1.1 per cent growth in our GDP sure doesn't show that type of growth and confidence, as well as all the businesses that are telling us each and every day that they can no longer survive in Manitoba.

But, Honourable Speaker, one of the best ways to grow the economy is to leave more money in the pockets of the people that actually drive the economy, and that's the Manitoba families and the workers. Our proposal is to raise the basic personal income tax exemption to \$30,000 and that would allow Manitobans to keep more of their money in their pocket, and that money can help grow our economy.

My question, Honourable Speaker, is how could this government possibly be against that?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, we know for years—years under the former failed government, under the PC leadership, that businesses suffered. We know that they jacked up prices and cut programming for Manitobans. We also know they left Manitobans with a \$2-billion deficit.

And what did we get to show for it? An economy that didn't work, that didn't work for Manitobans. Instead, we now have the ability to actually work with Manitoba businesses, invest in our economy and deliver on the success that we're seeing, where we rank No. 1 in private employment.

We've added 27,000 jobs into our economy, highest in the country in terms of business growth 'optimism.' We are doing the work that they never could. They never understood how to do it—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —and we'll do it every day to make sure we deliver on our commitment to grow our economy, make sure more Manitobans have opportunities to work and deliver on a brighter and better Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Economic Growth Concerns Manitoba's Tax Competitiveness

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): So, our neighbouring provinces are prospering; Manitoba is falling further and further behind. The NDP have frozen the basic personal amount and tax brackets, forcing Manitoba families to pay more. Saskatchewan families are getting an increase to their BPA, over \$20,000 this year. The tax rates are lower, the tax brackets are higher, so Saskatchewan families are saving more at the end of the day.

This is why we propose to increase the basic personal amount to \$30,000, leading Canada in income tax competitiveness.

While this Premier (Mr. Kinew) called struggling single moms and low-income workers millionaires, does this minister stand behind his boss that his constituents in St. James are millionaires too, who don't need that \$3,000 at the end of the year?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, the question for the members opposite is what programs will be cut, which health-care facility will be slashed, which education budget is going to be cut, or will you create another giant deficit hole for Manitobans to clean up?

* (14:10)

That's their record. We know that they have no idea about the impacts of this proposal. It's about a billion-dollar cost; they don't want to account for that. We know it's going to hurt Manitobans.

Their record is cuts across government. We can expect more or another \$2-billion deficit hole, which they left Manitobans on the way out the door. They've got a terrible record when it comes to fiscal management.

On this team, we're going to ensure continued fiscal sustainability while we make life more affordable.

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

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, on our side of the House, we actually know how to grow the economy and attract private-sector investment. Investment follows certainty and a competitive tax structure. As Saskatchewan continues to grow and attract capital investment—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —and economic growth, the NDP have a stagnant economy of just 1.1 per cent growth, the worst in Canada. Saskatchewan and Alberta are attracting new—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —investment and highly skilled professionals while this NDP government is taxing them away.

Will this minister admit that the NDP's high-tax economic model is leaving Manitoba in a worse position and less competitive, driving dependency on Saskatchewan and Alberta equalization handouts?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, that member clearly wasn't paying close attention, but the former government sent our economy into the toilet. That's their record. They need to take a close look at what happened over the seven and a half years that they were in government.

What's happening under this team? Almost 30,000 new jobs created in Manitoba since we've taken government—30,000 jobs driven, no doubt, by the leadership of this minister, our Premier, a \$3.7-billion capital plan. We're moving Churchill forward, investments in trade-supporting infrastructure, like CentrePort and the rail line. We continue to lean into things like critical minerals, which we know Manitoba has what the world wants.

They didn't do the work for years. They didn't do any work. This team is finally doing the work of ensuring we have a strong economy—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mrs. Stone: The facts are clear, and Manitobans are paying much higher taxes under this NDP government. In fact, under the consumer price index, under the NDP, property taxes have skyrocketed, increased 19 and a half per cent since just last year, the highest in Canada and more than double BC's 8.5 per cent increase. Saskatchewan and Alberta increased by 5 per cent, and Ontario 5 and a half. Yet Manitoba saw an increase of 19.5 per cent in property taxes.

While Saskatchewan and Alberta are competing for 'gowth,' why is this minister taxing it?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, we're lowering taxes for Manitobans and we're doing that in a way that's actually sustainable, not like the proposal we're seeing from the members opposite.

We reduced personal income taxes for Manitobans when we raised the basic personal exemption; we changed brackets. We got rid of the fuel tax for an entire year and we brought in a permanent 10 per cent cut, something the members opposite weren't willing to do—take any kind of action on fuel costs.

We froze hydro rates for an entire year and, of course, we're reducing education property taxes, first with a \$1,500 credit, then \$1,600.

What did the members opposite do? They sent cheques to billionaires, cheques to folks on Bay Street. We're changing that, and we're actually getting to work for Manitobans.

Manitoba Jobs Agreement Contracts for Unionized Workers

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I'd like to apologize to this House and the Minister of Labour.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: The—I've previously said in this House that 80 per cent of Manitoba's construction workers are non-unionized. It turns out this is inaccurate. According to Statistics Canada, 88 per cent of the 60,000 Manitobans who work in the construction sector are non-union—88 per cent.

So why is this government giving 100 per cent of the work to only 12 per cent of Manitobans?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I want to thank the member for the question.

Honourable Speaker, we are listening to Manitobans and we are also listening to Manitoba workers as well. It was really good news last week at the West St. Paul Meadowlands school at the groundbreaking ceremony. We are building those schools with MJA.

Honourable Speaker, we will always put Manitoba workers first. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Sandhu: It doesn't matter what the member wants. He wants to bring the workforce from out of province. We will never do that, Honourable Speaker.

We will make sure we have a workforce that is capable of working our—here in Manitoba.

Thank you.

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

Impact on Construction Industry Capacity

Mr. Guenter: It's exactly the opposite of what the minister just said. Clearly he hasn't read the recent Winnipeg Free Press op-ed that the—Manitoba's construction industry leaders wrote, in which they said, and I quote: If local shop contractors are discouraged from bidding, provincial capacity shrinks. Over time, this may force labour to be imported from outside Manitoba.

Why is this NDP government shutting out opportunities for Manitoba workers with this terrible Manitoba jobs agreement?

MLA Sandhu: As I said in the very previous response, we will always listen to Manitobans, and we will listen to Manitoba workers, Honourable Speaker. We will put Manitoba workers first all the time—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Sandhu: —where they will have working conditions, good wages and benefits and working conditions.

This is why the member opposite doesn't want to have those working—like working conditions where they are feeling safe at the work site.

And, Honourable Speaker, doesn't matter what they want. They want to bring those workforces from out of province. These MJAs—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Sandhu: —are open to work—or unionized shops and open-work shops as well.

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

Annual Construction Fees

Mr. Guenter: Honourable Speaker, the industry leaders go on to say in their op-ed that, quote: All employers must pay 85 cents per hour worked to the Manitoba Building Trades Council, an unprecedented charge in Manitoba construction. On a typical school project, this payment alone can exceed \$250,000 with no measurable benefit to taxpayers.

Honourable Speaker, follow the money. It's clear that the Manitoba jobs agreement—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —is a massive, sneaky backroom deal designed to reward this NDP government's political friends—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —and those same political friends are running NDP-friendly ads right now.

Taxpayers deserve to know: How much will this NDP government be collecting in construction fees annually?

MLA Sandhu: Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I want to also thank the member from Radisson. We are also opening up a new school in Radisson with a bigger capacity, 800 capacity there. Not only we are listening to the local MLA, we are looking—no, listening to the leadership from the school division.

And also in Waverley. I want to thank the MLA for the—Waverley as well. Honourable Speaker, we are making that school also bigger with 800 capacity as well. We are listening to the leadership from the school division.

We will put Manitoba jobs first.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Education System Chronic Absenteeism

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): This minister stands up and he puts on the record the fact that he's only actually listening to 12 per cent of Manitobans, Honourable Speaker. He should stand up and apologize.

But today, I'm asking the Education Minister: The fact that we have 15,000 students across Manitoba skipping school on a day-to-day basis, severe chronic absenteeism, and the only way that we and Manitobans

are aware of this is because of—her former legislative assistant brought this forward.

What else is this Education Minister hiding, Honourable Speaker?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): It gives me—I'm glad to get up and discuss the issue of absenteeism in Manitoba, which is a very important issue and one which our government and our department is working on very closely.

But the member opposite from Lac du Bonnet stands up and questions the ethics of this government. The member from Lac du Bonnet sat at the Cabinet table when \$500,000 was gifted to the member to Fort Whyte so that he could run for his seat, Honourable Speaker.

So the member from Lac du Bonnet, I have some questions for him. *[interjection]*

* (14:20)

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt: The member from Lac du Bonnet was also at the Cabinet table when the Ethics Commissioner's report revealed the conspiracies and corruptions that were going on in his caucus, Honourable Speaker.

So I ask the member from—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: It's interesting that the minister—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, it's interesting that the minister stands up and refuses to talk about absenteeism. The fact is that in 2023, we, the PC government, issued a new policy directive, an action plan, to school divisions to tackle absenteeism.

It's obviously that—it's obvious that this Education Minister is out of her element, Honourable Speaker. What is she hiding—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —that it took the Legislative Assembly, the former—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —NDP alleged assistant, the MLA for Fort Garry—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

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

MLA Schmidt: Forgive me, I don't think there was a question in there. It's just—as usual, it's just the regular sort of negative, you know, the sky is falling, really sort of a divisive, negative rhetoric that comes from the other side.

So, since there wasn't a question from the member from Lac du Bonnet, I want to address the question from the member from Borderland who wanted to bring up the question of the money that our government is spending on ads to bolster Manitoba jobs agreement.

Since he brought up the question of money, taxpayer money—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt:—spent on ads, why don't we talk about the stand firm ads from the last election, Honourable Speaker? Why don't we talk about the ads—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt:—that attacked trans youth in the last election?

The truth of the matter is nothing—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: It's a fact, Honourable Speaker, that our government's new policy directive and the action plan to tackle absenteeism back in 2023 was—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko:—definitely seeking and getting approval from various stakeholders within the province.

Matter of fact, Kent Dueck said that this policy directive back in 2023 will make a difference in the future of children and youth. It's unfortunate that today, the Minister for Education doesn't—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott) needs to come to order.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for that because I've been constantly interrupted rudely for days now since the member got her—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko:—promotion from this side of the Chamber, Honourable Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Stop the clock, please.

I would now ask everyone to come to order. Both sides are getting way too loud.

Mr. Ewasko: Severe—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: The fact of the matter is, when it comes to improving attendance here in Manitoba, it is this government and it's this team under the leadership of the late, great—the finest Education minister that this province has ever seen, that this government has taken the single largest action that any government ever in Manitoba has ever taken to improve absenteeism in this province, and that is our universal school nutrition program.

And I table for the House, Honourable Speaker, a quote from the Winnipeg School Division superintendent: Attendance is improving. We've seen that through children staying at school over lunch and having stamina for the rest of the day and the afternoon.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Whistle-Blower Protection Legislation Impact on Cases Currently Under Consideration

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, whistle-blowers are often the last line of defence against wrongdoing in government and public institutions. The change that Bill 14 brings is welcome because, for years, workers who spoke out risked retaliation while being forced to prove that actions such as demotions, discipline or dismissals were directly tied to their disclosures, often creating dissatisfaction, silence and fear.

After years of pressure and multiple whistle-blower controversies, the government is now proposing legislation that would shift the burden of proof onto employers.

Can the government share how this legislation will impact people who are currently in the process of their own cases?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Well, I appreciate the important question, and we know that this legislation was reviewed in 2024 and that the Ombudsman made a number of really important recommendations on how we could strengthen that.

We've brought forward, I think, some changes that respond to those recommendations. They're focused on ensuring that individuals who come forward with

accusations of wrongdoing are protected, that there's a fair and transparent process in place and that it ensures the best possible outcome, which is that the information that needs to be brought forward can be brought forward through those changes that we've brought in.

We know that we want those Manitobans that have wrongdoing that they want to report, that they should be protected, and we feel that this takes the important steps to start responding to those concerns.

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

Protection for Private-Sector Workers

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, the government claims its bill strengthens whistle-blower protections, and while it's good it applies to the public sector, there's a major accountability gap.

According to Pamela Forward, president of the Whistleblowing Canada Research Society, workers in the private sector who may want to come forward when they witness serious misconduct or corruption remain largely without protection. I table this article published in the Winnipeg Free Press today.

If this government is serious about transparency, how will they address this gap in Manitoba where the public and private sector often overlap, and protect private-sector workers as well?

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the important question from the member, and I think that it's clear we are making progress in responding to some of these concerns.

Again, the legislation was reviewed, the Ombudsman brought forward some recommendations, and we're moving forward on a number of those recommendations to ensure that those individuals that report wrongdoing are able to access a fair and transparent process that creates the best outcome for all.

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

Reasonable Belief Recommendation

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, experts reviewing Manitoba's whistle-blower law recommended replacing the requirement that complaints be made in good faith with a standard of reasonable belief. They warned the current wording focuses on a whistle-blower's motivation rather than the facts of the wrongdoing itself. Further, the Manitoba Ombudsman has supported this recommendation to strengthen protections and encourage disclosures.

If the minister truly wants people to come forward, why is he choosing not to take a key recommendation endorsed by the Manitoba Ombudsman that would make whistle-blower protections stronger and clearer?

MLA Sala: Again, I appreciate the question, Honourable Speaker, and I think we are moving forward and we're showing that this government cares about ensuring that whistle-blowers are protected as they bring information forward.

We know that this is in response to an important review that was done in 2024. Our government is focused on ensuring we start moving forward and responding to some of those gaps that were identified.

We think that the recommendations brought forward and our action is going to start to close some of those gaps, and we're going to make sure that whistle-blowers in Manitoba receive more protection when they bring their concerns forward.

Canada's Juno Awards Winnipeg Hosts in 2027

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): Honourable Speaker, do you hear that? That's the sweet, sweet sound of Manitoba once again showing the country that we care about our culture, our artists and our communities.

Can the minister of sport, culture and heritage please tell the House about the exciting news announced last week and what that means for Manitoba's tourism sector?

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I want to thank the member for that question because this is very good news for Manitoba.

Our government was proud to announce that Manitoba will be hosting next year's Juno Awards right here in Winnipeg. This is one of the biggest events in Canada, and it will bring visitors, national attention and real economic activity to our province.

Manitoba has always punched above our weight when it comes to music. Hosting the Junos will showcase our talent and highlight the vibrant arts community we have in our province.

We are so proud to support Manitoban artists and proud to welcome all Canadians to celebrate music right here in Winnipeg.

Education System Chronic Absenteeism

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Chronic absenteeism across Manitoba schools continue to rise, and teachers are sounding the alarm that kids are falling further behind. This government talks a lot about outcomes, but attendance is the most basic foundation of learning.

* (14:30)

Can the minister explain why, after so many years of the NDP promises about improving education, more and more Manitoba students are simply not showing up to class?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): We couldn't agree more that the best place for students to be every single day is in the classroom, with trusted adults contributing to their learning and their emotional, their physical and their educational growth.

That's why one of the first things we did when forming government under the direction of this Premier and the late, great Nello Altomare, we introduced—again, I would argue—I think it's actually inarguable—the single largest measure that any government anywhere, across any time, has ever done to address attendance and absenteeism here in the province, which is a universal nutrition program.

That program was so influential, Honourable Speaker, that the federal government followed suit and has now started a federal school nutrition program thanks to the leadership of Nello Altomare. We're going to continue—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Byram: Students aren't showing up to the classroom right across Manitoba, and schools are reporting record levels of chronic absenteeism and very little direction from this government on how to address it.

Why has this government failed to deliver a clear, province-wide plan to get Manitoba students back into the classroom and learning?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, we've got an amazing Education Minister who's done a remarkable job investing in schools right across this great province.

You know, the members opposite didn't really do much for education. They set us back many years with

their de facto cuts, and then, when it came time to campaign for an election, they wanted to promise a bunch of new schools, but they didn't even build them large enough.

That's why I'm very, very—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —proud that our Education Minister has seen fit to make sure that the next two schools that we build are going to be so much larger, because more kids are showing up for class these days. More kids are stepping up to be able to learn. More kids are taking advantage of the universal nutrition program. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: And so I want to say bravo to our Minister of Education. In fact, the school food program has proven so successful, we might even start a caucus food program for the PCs so their MLAs stop leaving.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I can't hear; I haven't been recognized yet.

An Honourable Member: He just recognized you.

Mr. Khan: I still can't hear him.

The Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Khan: Now I can hear you. Thank you.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Khan: I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new regional—to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would remind all members that we have ASL interpreters that need to be able to hear what's being said, so I'd ask members to be quiet, and I would also ask members to speak in a normal speaking voice.

Mr. Khan: I thought I was. I guess not.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport

patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Jerry Marof [*phonetic*], Darren Stanley and Cathy Conwell [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

* (14:40)

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

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

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

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Honourable Speaker—honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Daphne Steeden, Tammy Roberts, Amanda Joel and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Terry Simpson, Brian Jack [*phonetic*], Janice Bouchard and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on to the next petition, I would just like to draw all honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have a public tour group who are here to watch a few minutes of proceedings as part of their tour of the Assembly.

On behalf of all members, I'd like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

New Neepawa Health Centre

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

* (14:50)

(2) The new hospital is being built east of Neepawa, on the north side of Yellowhead Highway, PTH 16. It will be nearly double the size of the existing hospital and will better serve patients from this broader, western Manitoba geographic area.

(3) CT 'scander'—scanners are standard equipment that combine X-ray images from several angles to create detailed, three-dimensional models of structures inside the body. They perform critical diagnostic procedures that support the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of injuries and diseases, and the new equipment will be able to complete these important scans faster and with sharper and clearer images.

(4) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive a CT scan is currently seven weeks, and there are over 14,000 patients on the wait-list to receive the diagnostic imaging procedure.

(5) The new CT scanner will reduce wait times as it would decrease the need for patients to travel long distances, sometimes involving overnight stays, to access the care they need.

(6) The new scanner will reduce pressure on emergency response services, who would no longer have to transport these patients, opening up appointments in other communities and allowing more people to get the care they need sooner.

(7) A CT scanner in the Neepawa Health Centre will enable further treatment and diagnosis to take place in community, reducing wait times for patients in surrounding areas and reducing the burden of travel to other facilities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of a CT scanner machine in the Neepawa Health Centre in Neepawa, Manitoba.

This petition is signed by Darren McKinnon, Lorilee McKinnon, Kevin Wheelans and many, many other Manitobans.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

In 2022, the Phoenix School expansion and renovation project was approved to proceed to the design phase. The project included, among other amenities, a new gymnasium, two new classrooms, a multi-purpose room and room for 74 child-care spaces.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Lori Cameron, Nadine Bernardin, Candice Johnson and many, many other Manitobans.

Funding Crime Cost Mitigation for Small Business

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Small businesses are vital in supporting their local economy and the provincial government has a responsibility to act and support them.

(2) The recent increase in 'vigilyantism'—vigilanteism shows that Manitobans do not trust this provincial government to fulfill its responsibility.

(3) More than half—54 per cent—of small businesses in Manitoba are impacted by crime. Property damage, theft, littering and public intoxication are some of the crimes that affect most businesses, according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. There has been a 44 per cent increase in shoplifting incidents over the last year.

(4) In order to combat this rise of crime, small businesses try, unaided, to implement various out-of-pocket security measures and safety training for their staff and they face increasing costs when they incur property damage or theft.

(5) Vandalism, break-ins and other senseless acts cannot be accepted as a cost of doing business for businesses throughout Manitoba, and the provincial government must do more to erase the burdens small businesses are carrying with its catch-and-release justice system.

(6) Failing to support small businesses is failing the Manitoba economy, failing Manitoba families and failing Manitobans' dreams.

(7) The security rebate program in place for homeowners and small businesses does not cover the real costs impacting businesses, such as vandalism, property damage and repairs.

We urge the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support Manitoba small businesses through specific funding to reimburse the expenses and insurance deductibles that they incur as a result of crime.

Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Jason Combe, Tara Fawcett, Debasish Mukherjee and many, many more fine Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Before I move on to the next petition, I just remind all honourable members that addressing me in this Chair would be honourable Deputy Speaker. If members are having issues remembering that, I'd encourage them to write it down.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

* (15:00)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Margaret Clark, Peter Harrison, Ainslee Lockhart and many other fine Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them with much-needed relief.

And this has been signed by Mary Reimer, Lisa Penner, Ann Wolfe and many, many, many, many Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll also remind members that they got two manys at the end of their petition and three names.

* (15:10)

Funding for Outlet Channels Project

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

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

(1) Since 1958, the Province of Manitoba has known about the potential increase in Lake Manitoba water levels due to the operation of the Portage Diversion and the necessary of increasing outflows from Lake Manitoba at these times.

(2) The Province of Manitoba commissioned studies into the control of Lake Manitoba water levels in 1958, 1973, 1978 and 2003, in addition to studies conducted after the devastating 2011 Lake Manitoba flood. In all of these studies, the residents surrounding Lake Manitoba made it known that they were not pleased with the way Lake Manitoba levels were being managed.

(3) The level of Lake Manitoba is regulated between one hundred—or, sorry, 810.5 and 812.5 feet above sea level. One—in 13 of at least 18 years, lake levels have exceeded this range.

(4) In 2011, Lake Manitoba levels reached 817 feet above sea level. On May 31, 2011, record-high water levels combined with northwest winds gust to nearly 100 kilometres an hour caused levels to approach 820 feet above sea level, which resulted in unprecedented flooding and widespread damage to areas around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. Previously, lakefront properties found themselves three kilometres offshore.

In 2011, over 7,100 people were evacuated due to Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin flooding, including over 4,000 First Nations residents. Many people did not return to their homes until years later.

(6) Flooding on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin is well—is a well-known and documented occurrence. It has, for generations, cost Manitobans billions of dollars in compensation, lawsuits, lost agricultural productivity, lost economic activity and flood recovery projects, all of which has taken an incredible—in calculable social and emotional toll on its victims.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse its decision to cut the funding for the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin outlet channels project and to immediately take steps to expedite its completion.

This petition, honourable Deputy Speaker, was signed by Ruchika Jain, Khustalby Meker [*phonetic*] and Brien [*phonetic*] Patel and many, many other Manitobans.

911 Services in Rural Manitoba

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

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

(1) Reliable access to emergency services, including 911, is a fundamental public safety necessity and can mean the difference between life and death.

(2) On March 23, 2025, a resident in the rural municipality of Fisher tragically passed away after a family and friends were unable to reach 911, despite making numerous attempts, due to an internal 911 routing malfunction at a major cellular provider.

(3) During the emergency, loved ones attempted to provide CPR while frantically trying to connect with emergency medical services, EMS, ultimately only reaching help by contacting a local RCMP officer directly.

(4) The March 2025 tragedy is not an isolated incident, as there have been other reported—reports of failed 911 cellular calls in neighbouring rural municipalities.

(5) In April of 2024, the provincial government indicated that it was undertaking a review of 911 services, with a final report expected in the following months.

In August of 2024, following another 911 service failure, a provincial representative repeated the same assurances previously made, but as of March 2025, no report has been released.

(7) Rural Manitobans continue to face challenges accessing emergency services due to unreliable cell service and gaps in the ability of some providers to connect to emergency telecommunications infrastructure, particularly in regions like the Interlake.

(8) The 911 dispatch centre servicing rural and northern Manitoba, located in Brandon, was not made aware of the March 2025 service interruption, raising concerns about the lack of real-time monitoring and co-ordination between telecommunications providers and emergency response systems.

(9) Local officials, including representatives from the RM of Fisher, have previously raised concerns with the Province and the RCMP regarding the reliability of 911 services in rural areas, calling for immediate action.

(10) The public has a right to expect that 911 service will be accessible during an emergency, regardless of location or mobile service provider.

(11) The province—the provincial government must ensure that emergency communication systems are adequately staffed and resourced, particularly for rural and northern regions.

(12) Access to 911 must not be compromised by infrastructure failures or private service providers.

(13) Timely and transparent communication between telecommunications companies and emergency service providers is essential to protect public safety.

(14) Effective government oversight and accountability are necessary to ensure public confidence in emergency response systems.

(15) Failure to invest in resilient, province-wide emergency response systems and telecommunications infrastructure puts rural lives at risk and undermines the public trust in essential services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to investigate the 911 network failures that contributed to the March 2025 tragedy in the Interlake region and to publicize those findings.

(2) To urge the provincial government to work with municipalities, telecommunications providers and first responders to strengthen 911 reliability and ensure uninterrupted access to emergency services for all Manitobans, especially those living in rural and northern communities.

This petition was signed by Kelly Meruca [*phonetic*]-Marykuca, Phil Lappage, Aaron Janzen and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

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

(1) In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

(2) Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

(3) Agriculture and the agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture producers. In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agricultural

producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

(7) The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and local state-stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

(8) Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the cost of putting food onto the table for Manitoba consumers.

This petition has been signed by Trevor Barnes, Rhonda Cameron, Allen Robertson and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Provincial Road 210

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

* (15:20)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by William Guderian, Daren McGuirk, Randy [*phonetic*] McCall and many, many other Manitobans.

Education Property Taxes

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation; they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Sandra Hosenacle, Ryan Wardell, Clint Allen and many more Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 34, PTH 34, is a two-lane provincial primary highway that runs from the US border where it meets with the ND 20 to the PTH 16 at the town of Gladstone.

(2) PTH 34 runs north-south in the south-central region of the province. It is the main highway for the towns of Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Holland, serving as a main corridor for semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school bus routes.

(3) A new bridge is currently being constructed over the Assiniboine River at PTH 34, north of Holland, in the RM of Victoria. The bridge serves as an important north-south link over the Assiniboine River between the Trans-Canada Highway and the PTH 2.

(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks considering farmers often need to use the highway to transport heavy equipment.

(5) Construction of a new bridge in accordance current design codes and the RTAC standard, located on PTH 34 crossing the Assiniboine River, will support trade and commerce and improve public safety in the area, and also accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to address the conditions of Provincial Trunk Highway 34, making the necessary upgrades to RTAC standard and to resurface the road once the new bridge has been completed.

This petition has been signed by Jeremy Penner, Darcy Buhler, Edward Heppner and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

* (15:30)

The Speaker in the Chair

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

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

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

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Earlier, I asked people to speak in a normal speaking tone so that the ASL interpreters could hear and keep up, so I would again ask the member to do that.

Mr. Schuler: This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is been signed by Katrin Keen Marty, Vanessa Mattice, Rob Maxwell and many other Manitobans.

Education Property Taxes

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

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

(1) The provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by the arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residences.

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This is signed by Kathleen Grourier [*phonetic*], Justin Lavick [*phonetic*], Corina Gonzalez and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, these are the reasons for the petition:

Upgrading Provincial Trunk Highway 45 will accelerate economic development as it will enhance connectivity, facilitate efficient transportation and promote economic growth in the region.

(2) Economic development will be further enhanced as improved road infrastructure attracts business, encourages investment and creates job opportunities.

(3) Roads meeting the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, RTAC, standards improve safety and efficiency, as they can handle heavier loads, reducing the number of trips required for goods transportation.

(4) Safer roads further benefit both commuters and commercial vehicles, minimizing accidents and damage.

(5) Upgrading to RTAC standards ensures resilience to challenges caused by climate change, such as thawing and flooding, which negatively impact road conditions.

(6) Efficient transportation networks contribute to Manitoba's economic competitiveness, as upgraded roads support interprovincial and international goods movement, benefiting both trade and commerce.

* (15:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to take the necessary steps to upgrade Provincial Trunk Highway 45 from Russell to Provincial Trunk Highway 10 to meet RTAC standards.

This petition has been signed by Kale Mazur, Sandra Leclerc, Duane Zimmer and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the

continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

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

Thank you.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

Orders of the day—grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Honourable Speaker, can you please call the start of second reading of Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act; followed by the start of second reading of Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act, awareness—access awareness week.

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now proceed to second reading of Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act; followed by second reading debate on Bill 5, the accessibility for Manitobans amendment act and the commemoration of days, weeks and months act—amendment act, access awareness week.

So now we will proceed to Bill 23.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 23—The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training (MLA Cable), that Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training, that Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

MLA Fontaine: The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth has been operating under The Advocate for Children and Youth Act since March 2018. However, a provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has existed in Manitoba since 1993. Until 2018, the mandate of the advocate was held within The Child and Family Services Act. This limited the advocate's scope of work to services within only child, family services.

The 2018 changes expanded and strengthened the advocate's mandate. The scope now includes child welfare, adoptions, disabilities, youth mental health, youth addictions, youth justice and victim support services, which includes domestic violence and sexual exploitation.

Over the years, the advocate's office has seen remarkable changes in child welfare in this province, all the while upholding its responsibility to advocate for and provide support and advice to Manitoba children, youth and their families.

The advocate is once again on the cusp of remarkable changes to its work and mandate as our government pursues legislative measures to support Indigenous Child and Family Services jurisdiction as First Nations and Métis assert jurisdiction over child welfare.

This new context and expanded scope and activities of the advocate's office based on 2018 legislation were subject of the 2024 all-party legislative review of the act. The proposed amendments in Bill 23 arise from those 2024 hearings and subsequent consultations with the advocate's office. I'm pleased to say the advocate has been involved in the drafting and supports these amendments, and we appreciate her work and the work of all of her staff at her office to allow us to bring forward these amendments.

There are five key amendments. The first updates the preamble of the act to recognize children and youth of all gender identities, including two-spirit, transgender and non-binary, deserve services respecting their identity and dignity and supporting them in living fully and authentically.

We know trans and two-spirit peoples of all ages are facing increased hate, bias and hostility, but for youth, who are often the most vulnerable, it is absolutely necessary to support and advocate for them to live as their authentic selves and to live safely.

Our NDP government stands firm in support of 2SLGBTQI+ Manitobans and is against any form of discrimination or intimidation that puts the health and happiness of 2SLGBTQI+ youth at risk. Ensuring these

youth have the Advocate for Children and Youth is—in their corner is why this amendment is so important to myself as minister, to our government and to all Manitobans.

The second update is also to the preamble, amending it to reference the United Nations 'convention'—Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Together these amendments are significant steps forward in affirming the rights of vulnerable, often marginalized groups.

* (15:50)

The bill also amends the act to allow the advocate to enter into agreements with entities providing designated services. This may be for a host of purposes where the advocate and her office can make contributions to help children in our province better their lives.

At a recent legislative committee where all parties had the opportunity to meet with the advocate and her staff to discuss their last annual report, we heard the advocate, Sherry Gott, talk about the work that her office is doing internally to ensure they are supportive and available to any agency in Manitoba working in collaboration with them and listening to their needs.

At the time, the advocate talked about the development of an MOU, and this amendment will help support both that work and other areas where the advocate may want to enter into collaborative agreements. MACY has the opportunity to do two things with Indigenous governing bodies: develop MOUs, as the advocate mentioned, and share information jointly.

If there is an investigation, they can collaborate with the First Nation or Métis government with jurisdiction to ensure there are no information gaps between nations and the Province. They can also enter into agreements to review provincial services. While MACY does not have the legislative framework to review any Indigenous laws and services, as that would be outside their scope as a provincial body, they can enter into agreements with any IGBs to review the provincial services they access.

I know MACY plans to continue their important work advocating for children, reaching out through public education campaigns, including possibly around these legislative amendments, and providing ongoing support in this time of transformation in the child welfare system.

Currently, the advocate may raise awareness and understanding of the United Nations convention on

the rights of child. Another amendment in this bill would allow the advocate to also advocate for the convention's principles while carrying out responsibilities under the act.

And, finally, Bill 23 provides for ongoing regular seven-year legislative review of the act. These reviews of the act are not just procedural. All parties in the Legislature participate in these reviews in conjunction with the advocate to ensure children's voices, needs and experiences are given top priority in the laws of this province.

Recommendations stemming from the reviews inform how and where government can do more and do better. In this light, the amendments to The Advocate for Children and Youth Act respond to the legislative recommendations from the 2024 review of the act. A working group made up of staff and leadership from Indigenous reconciliation, Families and advocate's office worked for many months to develop a trusting and open process which has resulted in the first set of amendments.

Further work in this group is expected to produce more recommendations for policy and legislative changes to benefit Manitoba youth. Led by their example, we all share the responsibility of protecting and holding sacred the children and youth who are the future of our promise—province.

As Minister of Families, it is my responsibility to help all Manitobans access the services and supports they need to thrive. This is critical in fostering safe and healthy families and communities across our province. As minister responsible for The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, I want to take this opportunity to say *miigwech* to the advocate for her analysis, reports and recommendations in respect of the protection of children and youth and her office's work to lift up their voices.

I also want to say *miigwech* to each and every one of her staff including her Elders and advocates that are on—a part of her team who do incredible and important work.

I urge all members to support Bill 23 as we move closer to building a better world for Manitoba children.

Miigwech.

Questions

The Speaker: 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 critic or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): And I do want to take a moment just to recognize the work from the MACY office and the staff, and Sherry and her team for the work that they do to support the children and youth in our province.

My question to the minister is what criteria will be used to determine which entities the advocate can enter into agreements with, and how will the government ensure that these entities are held to high standards of service delivery?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): Again, as I said in my opening comments here, I think it's important to realize that the advocate can enter into agreements with folks to look at provincial services. So I think that it's really important that the House recognizes that what we're talking about is the ability to look at provincial services. It does not include, as I stated, Indigenous law or services, which proceed and have—or are over Manitoba law and Canada law.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I also want to just affirm that the MACY office does amazing work and they take such a big responsibility for children and youth in our province, and I really appreciate that, the work that they do.

And we know that we all want our kids and our children to be protected, and that's what we're here for and this is very important to me as well.

Can the minister explain what specific types of agreements the child and youth advocate will now be able to enter into under this new amendment?

MLA Fontaine: Again, as I just said in my debate that I brought forward, MACY has the opportunity to do two things with Indigenous governing bodies: they can develop MOUs with the nation, as the advocate has already mentioned several times in committee, and share information jointly; and then they can enter into agreements to review, again, provincial services.

Again, MACY does not have the legislative framework to review Indigenous laws and services. It is strictly provincial services because MACY is a provincial body.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I think I understand what the minister is trying to say, but I'm wondering if she could please explain why this authority to enter into agreements is being added now and what gap it is intended to address.

MLA Fontaine: I appreciate that question. As I've said many times in the Chamber and outside the Chamber, we are at a very important moment historically here in Manitoba and across Canada as nations here in Manitoba and across Canada begin down the path of reasserting jurisdiction of child welfare. And so we want to be able to support—you know, should nations want to enter into agreements with MACY, but that there is an understanding that those agreements would only look at provincial services.

So these amendments are about also supporting the path to jurisdiction and the potential relationships that are going to be established between MACY and particular nations.

Ms. Byram: Can the minister share with us here in the Chamber what mechanisms will be in place to ensure that the seven-year review of the act is thorough, transparent and includes input from children, youth and the advocacy groups?

* (16:00)

MLA Fontaine: Well, the member for Agassiz has been a part of some of those processes in respect of a seven-year review, so those will still exist. We've got a working group between MACY and the government. There are opportunities at standing committee.

We did have a standing committee where many folks from the community came to present on some of the concerns that they have in respect of child welfare. I don't think that some of the conversations were particularly about the legislation, but there's always opportunities to ensure that the public have opportunities to contribute to any legislative changes or frameworks to the act itself, just like the member had participated in as well at standing committee.

Mrs. Hiebert: Are there examples of other provinces where similar agreements have improved oversight over children?

MLA Fontaine: Yes, that's actually a good question. I—right now, if you look across Canada, different provinces and territories are at different levels in respect of pursuing jurisdiction, of asserting jurisdiction, and

there's actually only a couple of agreements across the country.

So I'm not sure, for instance, what they're doing in BC and Alberta in respect of their child advocate and what role that child advocate will play in any Indigenous law or services. What I can tell you is that, across the country, this is new, as nations are pursuing this path. And I'm sure that these conversations will continue for many, many years to ensure that nations are working—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cook: Can the minister detail what, if any, resources will be provided to the advocate as they enter into these new partnerships and to support their responsibilities?

MLA Fontaine: Again, Bill 23 is about providing that legislative framework so that MACY can—if they are asked to enter into any agreements, that they have the legislative framework in which to do so. It's important that we have a legislative in—framework here in Manitoba. Almost all of the bills that I've introduced in respect of any changes to, like, Child and Family Services Act—or the authorities act have all been in advance of ensuring that we're doing what we need to do for nations to assert jurisdiction.

So this is really about ensuring that MACY has the legislative framework to enter into any agreements, should they be asked.

Ms. Byram: Can the minister share with us why the government has chosen a seven-year review period for this act and if that timeline is sufficient to address urgent issues that may be affecting children and youth in Manitoba?

MLA Fontaine: Seven years review is an—is a good time frame in which to ensure that we're looking at the legislation and anything that needs to be changed, keeping in mind that it takes a couple of—you know, a year or so to do all of those processes as well; then you've got legislative changes, everything that needs to go to legal counsel. So we feel that the seven years is a good time frame to have a review.

But what I will also share is that we have an open relationship with MACY that, should there be anything urgent or of—concerning, our department, myself, works with MACY to hear those concerns regularly. And, should we need to amend the act even before a review, we have the ability to do that every, you know, spring or fall—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Hiebert: What resources are going to be provide—oh, sorry, that was the question I was just asked.

What happens if the government agency refuses or is not able to work or enter into an agreement with the advocate? Is there something in place or other resources available if that should happen?

MLA Fontaine: Yes, sorry, I'm not sure what the member means in respect of government agencies, so I don't know if the member wants to clarify on that. Because what I can say already is that that legislative framework already exists right now, because the advocate has the ability to look at any provincial services right now.

So I'm not sure if that's what the member was trying to get to, because they can already review any government services that exist right now.

Mrs. Cook: If I could be so bold as to attempt to clarify for my colleague.

I think what she's asking is: What happens if the advocate wants to enter into an agreement with an entity and that entity doesn't want to work with the advocate? What is the—what recourse is available? What happens in that situation?

MLA Fontaine: Yes, and if we're talking about IGBs—if that's the entity that members are talking about—again, as I've said a couple of times, the Indigenous governing body would have to reach out to MACY to look at whether or not they wanted to engage in any type of review, like so through an MOU.

And even if they did that, again, the only ability that MACY has is to look at provincial services that maybe the IGB is accessing. It cannot look at the Indigenous laws and it also can't review Indigenous services. It is strictly provincial services because MACY is a provincial body.

Ms. Byram: We know that there is potential gaps in services in northern communities affecting children and youth with disabilities.

I'm just wondering if there's something that the minister can share with us here in working with MACY. Is there something in place or a 'mechanism' in place where they can work together to fill some of those gaps in northern communities?

MLA Fontaine: I can assure the member that our department and myself and MACY look at supporting and rectifying any potential gaps that may exist within the system on a daily basis as those arise.

But these amendments in respect to Bill 23 also make reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and also the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, so that is that they can advocate for the principles of that, as well, which I think was really important for us to put into the preamble to ensure that we are also adhering to—or at least on the path of—principles at the international level that have been fought for for so long by people all across the globe.

The Speaker: No more questions?

Debate

The Speaker: Then the floor is open for debate.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I rise here today in this Chamber to speak to Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act. This legislation proposes amendments to the advocate and children for youth act.

I do want to start off by saying I probably speak to every member in this House that any legislation affecting vulnerable children and youth can't be treated as routine. It's not just another piece of legislation on the agenda. These decisions that we make here in this Chamber have very real consequences for children across our province. Children depend on adults. Children depend on systems and governments to protect their health and their rights when they can't protect themselves.

We can all agree that every child deserves safety, every child deserves stability and every child deserves a system that works when they need it most. And that's why any legislation related to the Advocate for Children and Youth must be approached with seriousness and a commitment to putting children first, Honourable Speaker.

The office of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, also known as MACY here, plays an essential role in Manitoba, that of which we've identified. The advocate exists to ensure that children and youth who interact with government systems, particularly those who are most vulnerable, have someone in their corner.

* (16:10)

The advocate gives a voice to those who too often go unheard: the children in care; the youth that are navigating through a justice system; the youth that are struggling with mental health issues, challenges; the young people who find themselves trying to navigate

complex and, quite often, very overwhelming government systems.

MACY's office plays another critical role: shining a light on systemic failures. When things go wrong in government systems, the advocate has the responsibility to investigate, to report and to make recommendations so that tragedies, like we've seen in the last number of years, don't repeat themselves here in our province.

And the work of MACY matters. And so do the stories of those where the system has failed them, stories that have reminded us of the consequences when those systems fail. When a child falls through the cracks, it's not simply a policy failure, it is a failure that affects our families, our communities and the future of our province. That's why it's important that we have accountability and transparency in child-serving systems.

When the Progressive Conservative government was in office, we recognized the importance of strengthening oversight and ensuring that the advocate's office had the authority and the independence necessary to do its work. Oversight bodies must be independent and they must have the three—freedom to challenge government decisions when necessary. They must be able to investigate the failures and report their findings without interference. And the advocate's office exists precisely for that reason, to ensure that when problems arise, they're not hidden or ignored. The work being done by the advocate's office is significant.

And I do, again, want to just shout-out to Sherry at the MACY office, and, again, her team for her role in advocating for these children. I know the stories that come forward are not easy and I believe that it can bear some weight on all of us when we hear what happens to some of our youth in the system and those that reach out. So a shout-out to those that work in that office and the team that surrounds them and supports them and provides them resources. I want to say thank you.

I do just want to touch on some of the stats that the advocate's office has put out in the last report. Some of these are very devastating. In total, 955 children and youth and young adults received direct advocacy through the advocate's office. These are, of course, very complex cases and requires ongoing support.

The office opened 448 ongoing cases in the last year where long-term support or complex intervention was required. And, again, these numbers represent an

ongoing trend and concerns with these vulnerable children who are coming forward and representing issues in a challenging system and navigating through very challenging circumstances.

The advocate's office also plays an essential role in the serious incidences involving children and youth. In the past year, the office completed 86 comprehensive child death reviews—86 children and young people whose lives ended too soon; 86 families who experienced unimaginable loss.

And the purpose of these reviews is not only to document tragedy, it is to understand what happened, to examine how government systems interacted, to see what perhaps failed and identify improvements and make those recommendations so that these individuals—these young people can have better outcomes.

In addition to those reviews, the office—the advocate's office also completed 95 serious injury reviews in the past year. And those examined incidents where children experienced severe harm, often involving, again, complex factors: violence, exploitation, substance abuse and, of course, there's mental health challenges that many of our young vulnerable people are faced with every day.

Many of the youth involved in these cases face overlapping risk factors. Approximately 69 per cent experience victimization, such as abuse or neglect; 60 per cent have struggled with substance misuse; and 55 per cent had documented mental health concerns. And these numbers highlight the reality that the child—that child-welfare issues do not exist in isolation; they intersect with poverty, trauma, addiction, housing insecurity and access to mental health supports.

Another stat that deserves careful attention is the overrepresentation of Indigenous children within the systems of the advocate reviews. Approximately 83 per cent of the cases involved Indigenous children and youth. Additionally, 80 per cent of the child death reviews and 88 per cent of the serious injury reviews involved Indigenous children and youth—or youth. And that in itself represents challenges, generation of challenges that should be addressed thoughtfully and respectfully through collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations.

And through this youth engagement initiatives, the office reached 3,007 youth through workshops and presentations over the past year. These initiatives aim to help young people understand their rights, empower them to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Public education is important component of the advocate's work. Through digital campaigns and

community outreach, the office reached over 600,000 individuals through its awareness efforts. And I think that's important for all of us here in Manitoba to know that this office exists and getting that awareness out there is very important.

They work—the MACY office works with families who are experiencing crisis. They investigate the most tragic situations that we've already touched on and they do this with a goal of improving the systems for future generations.

As we recognize the positive work happening within these systems, we also must acknowledge the concerns that families raise across the province. As the advocate's office works to provide assistance to children, youth and families, there are still many families seeking help and sharing their concerns regarding the system. Some families have expressed frustration when their concerns fall outside the advocate's legislated mandate. Others have struggled to understand how to navigate the process or where to turn when their situations do not meet the criteria for formal advocacy. It's important issues and they deserve consideration.

Families that are seeking help are often doing so in a time of crisis. They're looking for guidance and they're looking for some help to navigate these very complex systems. And when they feel they can't access the systems they need, it creates frustration, uncertainty and it raises questions about how the government's systems communicate with the public. And, again, it brings an awareness for the opportunities to strengthen collaboration between service providers and better supports for the families.

When government introduces amendments to legislation that governs the advocate's office, Manitobans deserve clarity, transparency and accountability. They deserve to understand how the amendments will improve outcomes for the system but also for the children. They deserve to know whether the proposed changes will strengthen oversight, improve transparency and enhance the ability of the advocate to work effectively. Collaboration can be valuable when it leads to better co-ordination and improved services.

* (16:20)

And, again, I just want to say every one of us here in this Legislature has a role to play in ensuring that Manitobans' system serves Manitobans—and especially that of our vulnerable population, the children and youth. And I believe all of us in this Chamber want to see the children of today succeed for their tomorrow.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: No further debate?

And is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 5—The Accessibility for Manitobans
Amendment Act and The Commemoration of
Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act
(Access Awareness Week)**

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Accessibility): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable minister of sport, culture, heritage—no—the honourable Minister of Justice, that Bill 5, the accessibility for Manitobans amendment act and the commemoration of days, weeks and months act, access awareness week, 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: When The Accessibility for Manitobans Act passed in 2013, one of its most unique and forward-thinking features was its built-in requirement for routine independent reviews. These reviews of the act are rooted in consultation with people disabled by barriers, ensuring the act continues to evolve in response to lived experience.

We cannot talk about accessibility without centring peoples with disabilities. Our government is committed to ensuring the voices and experiences of people with disabilities are included in legislation, policies and programs that support them, and these amendments are part of that commitment. Recom-

mendations stemming from the reviews inform how and where government can do more and do better.

The first review of the act resulted in a small change in 2018 when the size of the Accessibility Advisory Council was changed. The amendments to The Accessibility for Manitobans Act in Bill 5 respond to the legislative recommendations from the second review of the act in 2023, among other changes, making this the first time a significant number of amendments are being put forward for The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

The 2023 review itself included considerable input from the disability community and affected organizations. Development of this bill also involved consultation in the summer of 2025, in November and December of 2025 and as recently as January of this year.

I say miigwech to the Accessibility Advisory Council, Barrier-Free Manitoba, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Manitoba School Boards Associations, ASPIRE: the Manitoba government's employee network. We listened to you and we appreciated your thoughtful feedback. I hope you recognize your input in what is included in this bill and forthcoming regulation changes.

As recommended by the review, the bill will extend the timeline for public-sector bodies to update their accessibility plans from every two years to every four years. This reduces administrative burden and better aligns with election cycles: changes received very positively by rural Manitobans, including the assembly for Manitoba municipalities.

With municipal and school division elections coming up in 2026, the bill will introduce a planned and deadline-driven transition toward the full implementation of four-year accessibility plans by 2032.

To reduce confusion, instead of having staggered due dates, after 2032 all accessibility plans and updates will have one deadline. To better support oversight, the bill will also introduce a new 30-day deadline for submitting accessibility plans to government.

The bill will also make it a requirement for public-sector bodies to describe how they have consulted with persons disabled by barriers when developing their plans. This is about transparency and centering people with disabilities in this legislation and the work it supports. It is about ensuring accessibility planning is done with community, not for the community. It is another way we are ensuring people disabled by barriers have a voice in the

development of accessibility plans meant to remove those same barriers.

The 2023 review recommended measures to streamline public consultations and avoid, and I quote, consultation fatigue, feedback often shared with our department from members of the disability community. In response, the bill begins a move towards a 10-year required independent review of the act and standards.

The act will be reviewed again after five years in 2028, but will then move to reviews every 10 years. The standards will be reviewed once more on the five-year schedule, and thereafter also moves to reviews every 10 years.

Once through this transition period, the 10-year reviews will allow us to have a full implementation period and provide more time to measure the effectiveness of legislative changes prior to the next review. It will also allow multiple standards to be reviewed at the same time, reducing duplication and the same, again, consultation fatigue mentioned earlier.

We respect the time and thoughtful impact towards these reviews by people disabled by barriers and those people in organizations who support them. We know the demands for consultation and input can be exhausting, especially if you are asked to continuously repeat your story or share your experiences over and over again. Your time and energy is valuable and we want to be respectful, deliberate and focused when consulting.

We remain committed to continuous improvement. We will have the flexibility to conduct independent reviews within the 10-year period and we'll still be empowered to amend the act between reviews. The proposed timeline is modelled after review requirements in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Canada, which have 10-year timeframes for subsequent reviews after the initial review, but provides sufficient transition time for Manitobans to be comfortable with the new review timelines.

We are also strengthening representation with Bill 5 requiring at least half of the Accessibility Advisory Council to be made up of persons disabled by barriers. Further, under the proposed bill, we will ensure the council reflects the diversity of Manitoba, including Indigenous Manitobans.

* (16:30)

Another important change we are enshrining in legislation: funds collected through the administrative

penalties for non-compliance the—of the accessibility for Manitoba's act—will be directed exclusively for accessibility initiatives such as public education and awareness campaigns. While penalties remain a last resort when every other avenue is exhausted to support compliance, this ensures every dollar collected through these penalties go back into building a more inclusive province.

It can be easy not to identify barriers to full participation until those issues affect you or the people you care about. Accessibility can be easily overlooked, which places the burden unfairly on the person with the disability to name and address the barrier. Additional funds for public education and awareness campaigns will move that labour to public spaces, with a stronger focus on prevention.

One of the core truths Manitoba Access Awareness Week reinforces each year is that accessibility affects everyone. Nearly every Manitoban either has a disability, will acquire one in their lifetime or is connected to someone who does. This is why in addition to amending The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, this bill also amends The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act to formally recognize Manitoba Access Awareness Week. This sends a clear message accessibility and inclusion are not optional; they are foundation to who—foundational to who we are as a province.

Bill 5 is part of a larger government-wide strategy to implement the independent review recommendations and advance accessibility in every space and system. As Minister responsible for Accessibility, I am inspired by the leadership of disability rights advocates and resource organizations across Manitoba—so many that I've had the opportunity to spend time with and visit and to hear directly from. Their work is rooted in a vision of a province where accessibility is woven into the fabric of our communities. Led by their example, we all share the responsibility of removing barriers and building an inclusive society.

Accessibility is a journey taken together. Together we can create a Manitoba where everyone belongs and where Manitobans with disabilities can truly thrive. I urge all honourable members to support this bill.

Miigwech.

Questions

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

The floor is now open for questions.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I want to ask the minister: How will the government ensure that municipalities, including northern and rural communities, will have the resources needed to implement accessibility standards effectively?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Accessibility): Yes, in respect of these amendments, we met with municipalities' leaders and talked with them, and they support the amendments that we're making here.

And, also, as the member for Agassiz would know, we also have the Manitoba accessibility endowment fund, of which municipalities and organizations across Manitoba, including in the North and in rural areas, can apply for.

Just this past year, we gave out almost \$1,000,000 in up-to-\$50,000 grants to so many different municipalities and organizations to ensure helping them with their compliance and with their accessibility plans.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, can the minister clarify how the government will track and enforce compliance with accessibility plans across all public-sector bodies?

MLA Fontaine: Our Manitoba Accessibility Office works very closely with folks across Manitoba to help them on their accessibility plans, and they do an incredible amount of work in educating folks, like what accessibility means.

We also have a pretty robust website as well in Manitoba that routinely is updated, and so much information is on our website that I really would encourage, you know, members in the House, but obviously the public to go on there. But our accessibility team, our compliance team is always ready to go and meet with and educate and talk with and help folks on their accessibility plans.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I'll ask the minister what steps will be taken to make sure the Accessibility Advisory Council truly reflects the lived experiences of Manitobans with barriers.

MLA Fontaine: Yes. When I was appointed as minister responsible, one of the first things that we did was we looked at the composition of the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council, and members will know that it was reduced under their time from 12 to nine. And now this will bring it back up to 12.

It was really important that the Accessibility Advisory Council is reflective of Manitobans, so we do have folks with disabilities and we also have folks from different cultural backgrounds on that council. And that is something that we are always looking at as those spots come up on the council.

And I just want to shout out the Accessibility Advisory Council who are made up of phenomenal people—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Ms. Byram: I would like to ask the minister: How will the government ensure that the Accessibility Advisory Council reflects the experience of those in rural and remote communities?

MLA Fontaine: Yes, and as I just said for the other question, of course that was certainly some of the contemplation when we looked at the composition. And there are members from rural and northern areas, including members from AMM, that sit on the council as well. It is a council that is reflective of Manitoba but, as I said, as we get more spots that come up, we're going to ensure that we are truly inclusive and reflective of all Manitobans geographically and culturally.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, what measures are in place to ensure that the public-sector accessibility plans are actionable rather than just a bureaucratic requirement?

MLA Fontaine: I'm not quite sure what the member is asking. I don't know if the member wants to ask that again. I'm not quite sure what he's trying to get at.

Accessibility plans are done, you know, in consultation with folks in their areas and the folks that they do work with, so I'm not quite sure what he means in respect of a bureaucratic process.

Our office is there to work with folks, but those accessibility plans are done with people with disabilities in those particular communities and in those particular areas. And I would submit to the member that that's not a bureaucratic process at all but rather a consultative and community process.

Mr. King: I'll ask the minister: How will the government hold departments and municipalities accountable if plans are submitted late or fail to implement their meaningful changes?

MLA Fontaine: Yes. As I said in my notes and in some questions, our compliance secretariat does a really, really good job. These are phenomenal individuals that are really dedicated to their roles in working

with and educating and ensuring that they're providing that support for people to have their accessibility plans.

So I don't want folks to think that this is punitive. Really, this is about all of us collectively working together to ensure that Manitobans that are disabled by barriers have those accessibility plans in the spaces that they need. We really do work with community and organizations and the disability community.

The Speaker: Time has expired.

* (16:40)

Ms. Byram: Can the minister share with us here what steps will be taken to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing communities are fully respected and included in the implementation of this legislation.

MLA Fontaine: Yes, I think that the member knows that there's been a lot of work in the last little bit, in the last year and a half, including our Sign Languages Recognition Act, to ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing Manitobans are included in government.

Of course, we know as well that we've got ASL interpretation now. I, as the minister responsible—since I became the minister responsible—always have ASL interpretation at every single event or announcement that we have. In fact, we have a big conference next week—I think, yes—on the 25th and 26th. We have our ASL interpretation for those full two days. For every single event that we put on, we have ASL interpretation, and we have a close working relationship with those organizations, deaf and hard of hearing organizations, and including folks that sit on my Matriarch Circle and, of course, on the advisory accessibility council.

MLA Bereza: Under section 31(1), the government has required that any administrative penalties collected are to be used towards public education and accessibility awareness. Will there be training for MLAs to prevent insensitive behaviour towards people with barriers?

MLA Fontaine: I feel like that was two questions because one is about the penalties that will go—that we will ensure go to public awareness and campaigns, and then one is in respect of training for MLAs.

I would encourage folks opposite that if they were interested in training, our office is more than willing to provide them with some names that we've done training, as I'm sure members opposite know that our team did some training just a little while ago.

And then in respect of public awareness and campaigns, we think it's really important to support and shift that labour away from folks—Manitobans with disabilities, that are often called upon to do all of that kind of unpaid labour—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

No further questions?

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Thank you, Honourable Speaker. It gives me pleasure here today to rise and speak to Bill 5, the act to amend The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and commemoration days, weeks and months act.

This legislation proposes several changes to the framework that guides how accessibility is implemented across our province. As members of this House, we all share the same common goal: to ensure that Manitobans who face barriers can participate fully in their communities, their workplaces and in their public life.

Accessibility is not an abstract concept. It affects whether someone can enter a building. It affects access to public information, how we take the transit or participate in community events, even in emergency situations. For Manitobans living with disabilities, these are not theoretical concerns; they are everyday realities. Our responsibility as legislators is to make sure our laws respond to those realities in a practical and effective way.

Bill 5 amends the existing Accessibility for Manitobans Act in several ways: by establishing clear timelines for reviewing accessibility standards; it strengthens the composition of the Accessibility Advisory Council; changes reporting requirements for the public-sector accessibility plan; it dedicates funds from the administrative penalties toward awareness initiatives and establishes an accessibility awareness week.

The Progressive Conservatives, when we were in government, we recognized the importance of ensuring that accessibility standards are reviewed regularly so that they remain current and relevant. We all know that communities change, technology evolves and our policies must keep up with the pace of all those developments.

One amendment is—requires accessibility standards to be reviewed within five years of their established—of being established and again within five years of the

first review and at least once every ten years thereafter. That is an important step toward ensuring standards are not simply written and forgotten. It continues—it provides a continuous review allowing us to identify gaps, maybe improve and implement on some of the recommendations. And it can make sure that accessibility policies actually deliver real results.

Another important element of the bill is the requirement that the advisory council be representative of Manitoba and composed predominantly of individuals who experience barriers themselves. That is a principle we should all agree on. People who live with accessibility challenges every day bring invaluable insight to the table. Their lived experience helps give—helps ensure policies are grounded in reality other than theory. And I've heard from individuals in—across the province, you know, how challenging it can be to access services, to access facilities, sporting arenas, even office space when some of these plans aren't implemented.

However, there are some areas in this bill that raises some questions and, I would say, deserve some careful consideration. One change in Bill 5 is the reporting requirements for accessibility plans prepared by public sectors. Currently, these plans must be prepared every two years, and under the proposed amendments, beginning in 2032, they would only need to be prepared for every four years.

Honourable Speaker, it is important to understand why this change matters, and particularly for municipalities across the province, local governments play a significant role in implementing these changes and complying with accessibility standards. We know that municipal offices are responsible for providing these accessibility plans, and communities—it affects community centres.

You know, I had mentioned some where it's libraries, many recreation facilities and a lot of public spaces that have to take this responsibility. And many municipalities, especially in small towns and rural communities, they operate with limited staff and resources.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities has been clear—and we've heard that on many occasions—that the reporting cycle created some administrative burdens. Municipal staff were often forced to spend a large amount of time preparing the reports instead of focusing on the other work that was required within the municipality or the town or the city, as well, to improve accessibility in their community.

From that perspective, extending the timeline between the reviews can help reduce in that unnecessary paperwork and, again, allow municipalities to focus on some of the other work that they need to do in their communities. Accountability still matters, and the goal should always be meaningful action and not less oversight.

Another concern that relates to the realities that we face in rural Manitoba and northern communities—they often face unique challenges when it comes to accessibility, whether it's the infrastructure, the—obviously the transportation in some communities, especially those in remote areas, can be very challenging, and some of these same communities, you know, require some specialized services to deliver on that accessibility plan.

Implementing these accessibility standards requires resources and training and often support to help these become implemented, and without that, even the well-intentioned policies can be difficult to put into practice and also create.

* (16:50)

Bill 5 adjusts those reporting timelines, but we also must look at the other question, and that is how will the government ensure that the municipalities, especially those in the rural and northern communities, have the resources that they need to implement and facilitate these accessibility plans effectively while—all one—maintaining the standards.

Accessibility must not become a policy that works well in large urban centres while leaving smaller communities struggling to keep up. And, again, Manitobans living in these rural areas deserve the same opportunities and access as those that are living here in Winnipeg, also maybe Brandon and some of those larger urban areas. We know that transportation can be an issue and a barrier to access other resources or services that those communities have.

Accessibility legislation is built on a simple but powerful principle: respect for the dignity and equality of all Manitobans. That principle must be reflected not only in our laws, but also in the conduct of those responsible for implementing them.

And, Honourable Speaker, unfortunately, we have seen the behaviour of the Minister of Families, the Minister responsible for Accessibility (MLA Fontaine). You know, we've seen where there's concerns raised among the deaf community, in particular the comments and the actions of the minister responsible when she disrespected and was very dismissive to the

ASL interpreter that she shared the stage with at an event.

And incidents like that remind us how important it is for those in positions of responsibility to demonstrate genuine understanding and respect for the communities that they serve and the individuals that they advocate for.

Bill 5 proposes that the funds collected through administrative penalties be directed toward public awareness initiatives. Many accessibility barriers arise simply because people are unaware of the challenges others face. It would be important for the government to ensure transparency in how these funds are used. Manitobans should be able to see clearly that these resources are producing benefits going directly to those people with disabilities.

The bill establishes the last week of May as accessibility awareness week. While symbolic measures alone do not remove barriers, they can play a role in promoting understanding and encouraging communities across the province to think about accessibility in their own spaces and their own institutions, raising an awareness so that people can become further engaged and become further educated in these areas.

Accessibility legislation must always balance several priorities. We have to look at what the progress is. Is it meaningful progress? We have to look at the responsible use of the public resources. What are those funds really going to and what is the initiative that it's promoting? And, of course, respect for the diverse communities that we represent here in our province of Manitoba.

Municipalities—Manitoba municipalities need flexibility so that they can focus on very practical improvements rather than just endless paperwork, and some of this certainly addresses that. We've all, like mentioned, heard from municipalities and the challenges that some of this paperwork bring to their staff and to their members.

Again, rural and northern communities need the resources required to implement accessibility standards effectively, and the government must demonstrate genuine respect for individuals whose lives are most directly affected by these policies.

As this bill moves forward, I can say that members on this side of the House will continue to examine it carefully. Our focus will remain on ensuring that accessibility policies deliver real results for all of us here in Manitoba while—*[interjection]*—thank you. Thank you.

Again, our focus will remain on ensuring that accessibility policy delivers real results for Manitobans while respecting the realities faced by many communities across the province. And again, accessibility shouldn't divide us; accessibility should unite us here in the province. And at the end of the day, I believe every member of this House shares the same goal, and that is to make Manitoba a place where no one is excluded because of barriers that can and should be removed.

So, Honourable Speaker, I just want to say that Manitoba is a great province where we can see all people be included, not turned away because of accessibility issues, accessibility concerns. I believe we're all entitled to the same access to services and we can all contribute to our province if some of those barriers were removed.

I believe that taking this off the plates of municipalities gives them an opportunity to focus on other issues and concerns that their communities and their municipalities are facing with and allowing for dollars to be directed in other initiatives that are important to their homes, their people and, again, their communities.

And I do just want to say that—thank the people, thank the municipal elected officials who do the work on—in their communities, who do provide the reports on the accessibility and then those that deliver those accessibility plans and implement those infrastructure—whatever it might be. Whether it's infrastructure, whether it's other resources, whatever those supports look like, it always takes a team of people behind the scenes to implement and make things happen.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: If there are no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: Question before the House is passage of—second reading of Bill 5, The Accessibility for Manitobans Amendment Act and The Commemoration of Days, Weeks, and Months Amendment Act (Access Awareness Week).

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

The motion is accordingly the passed.

The honourable Government House Leader—the honourable Opposition House Leader.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): I was up first.

The Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader did rise first.

MLA Fontaine: I am announcing the—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Is there will of the House to recognize it as unanimous?

The Speaker: Is it the will to recognize it as unanimous? *[Agreed]*

House Business

MLA Fontaine: I am announcing Bill 10—that Bill 10, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Attachment Leave for Adoption and Surrogacy); and Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act, which were previously announced for the Standing Committee on Justice on Wednesday, March 18, at 6 p.m., will instead be considered by the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on the same date at the same time.

Furthermore, I am announcing that Bill 5, the accessibility for Manitoba amendment act and the commemoration of days, weeks, and months amendment act, access awareness week; and Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act, will be considered by the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 6 p.m.

The Speaker: It has been announced that Bill 10 and Bill 17, which were previously announced for the Standing Committee on Justice on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 6 p.m. will instead be considered by the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on the same date and same time.

Furthermore, it's been announced that Bill 5 and Bill 23 will be considered by the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 6 p.m.

* * *

The Speaker: And the hour now being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 16, 2026

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