



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Monday, November 16, 2009

Issue 57

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta

## The 27th Legislature

Second Session

Kowalski, Hon. Ken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Speaker  
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

Ady, Hon. Cindy, Calgary-Shaw (PC),  
Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation  
Allred, Ken, St. Albert (PC)  
Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)  
Anderson, Rob, Airdrie-Chestermere (PC)  
Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)  
Berger, Evan, Livingstone-Macleod (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Sustainable Resource Development  
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)  
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Advanced Education  
and Technology  
Blackett, Hon. Lindsay, Calgary-North West (PC),  
Minister of Culture and Community Spirit  
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL),  
Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition  
Official Opposition House Leader  
Boutilier, Guy C., Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (Ind)  
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Nose Hill (PC)  
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)  
Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (AL),  
Official Opposition Whip  
Dallas, Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)  
Danyluk, Hon. Ray, Lac La Biche-St. Paul (PC),  
Minister of Municipal Affairs  
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)  
Denis, Jonathan, Calgary-Egmont (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Energy  
Doerksen, Arno, Strathmore-Brooks (PC)  
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)  
Elniski, Doug, Edmonton-Calder (PC)  
Evans, Hon. Iris, Sherwood Park (PC),  
Minister of Finance and Enterprise  
Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)  
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)  
Fritz, Hon. Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC),  
Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs  
Goudreau, Hon. Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace (PC),  
Minister of Employment and Immigration,  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Solicitor General and Public Security  
Groeneveld, Hon. George, Highwood (PC),  
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC),  
Minister of Education, Government House Leader  
Hayden, Hon. Jack, Drumheller-Stettler (PC),  
Minister of Infrastructure  
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL)  
Hinman, Paul, Calgary-Glenmore (WA)  
Horne, Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)  
Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert (PC),  
Minister of Advanced Education and Technology  
Jablonski, Hon. Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC),  
Minister of Seniors and Community Supports  
Jacobs, Broyce, Cardston-Taber-Warner (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Agriculture and Rural Development  
Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)  
Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)  
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL)  
Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC),  
Minister of Service Alberta  
Knight, Hon. Mel, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC),  
Minister of Energy  
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)  
Liepert, Hon. Ron, Calgary-West (PC),  
Minister of Health and Wellness  
Lindsay, Hon. Fred, Stony Plain (PC),  
Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security  
Lukaszuk, Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Municipal Affairs  
Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC)  
MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (AL)  
Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)  
Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),  
Leader of the NDP Opposition  
McFarland, Barry, Little Bow (PC)  
McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Environment  
Morton, Hon. F.L., Foothills-Rocky View (PC),  
Minister of Sustainable Resource Development  
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),  
Deputy Leader of the NDP Opposition,  
NDP Opposition House Leader  
Oberle, Frank, Peace River (PC),  
Government Whip  
Olson, Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)  
Ouellette, Hon. Luke, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (PC),  
Minister of Transportation  
Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (AL),  
Deputy Official Opposition Whip  
Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC)  
Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)  
Redford, Hon. Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC),  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General,  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Renner, Hon. Rob, Medicine Hat (PC),  
Minister of Environment, Deputy Government House Leader  
Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)  
Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)  
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)  
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Education  
Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Health and Wellness  
Snelgrove, Hon. Lloyd, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC),  
President of the Treasury Board  
Stelmach, Hon. Ed, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC),  
Premier, President of Executive Council  
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL),  
Leader of the Official Opposition  
Taft, Dr. Kevin, Edmonton-Riverview (AL)  
Tarchuk, Hon. Janis, Banff-Cochrane (PC),  
Minister of Children and Youth Services  
Taylor, Dave, Calgary-Currie (AL)  
VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (PC)  
Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)  
Weadick, Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)  
Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC),  
Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations  
Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)  
Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC),  
Parliamentary Assistant, Employment and Immigration  
Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC),  
Minister of Aboriginal Relations,  
Deputy Government House Leader

### Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Clerk	W.J. David McNeil	Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Shannon Dean
Clerk Assistant/ Director of House Services	Louise J. Kamuchik	Sergeant-at-Arms	Brian G. Hodgson
Clerk of <i>Journals</i> /Table Research	Micheline S. Gravel	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	J. Ed Richard
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	Gordon H. Munk
		Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Liz Sim

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, November 16, 2009

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. Welcome back.

Let us pray. As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gifts of freedom and peace which we enjoy. We give further thanks for the gifts of culture and heritage which we share. As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued traditions of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving our province and our country. Amen.

Today we'll be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Paul Lorieau, and I would invite all here to participate in the language of one's choice.

### Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!  
True patriot love in all thy sons command.  
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,  
The True North strong and free!  
From far and wide, O Canada,  
We stand on guard for thee.  
God keep our land glorious and free!  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

Hon. members, I'd like to draw your attention to a new face at the table in front of me. Stephanie LeBlanc joined the Legislative Assembly Office in August of 2008 in the position of legal research officer. She was born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan, and received her law degree with great distinction from the University of Saskatchewan in 2006. In addition to her role in providing legal research to committees, she will now also be assisting Parliamentary Counsel at the table as part of our commitment to training and development. I'd ask all members to note Ms LeBlanc and welcome her to this Assembly.

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly His Excellency Margers Krams, the ambassador of the Republic of Latvia. Alberta has a long-standing tradition of co-operation and collaboration with countries around the world, including those throughout the European Union, of which Latvia is a member. I had the pleasure of hosting the ambassador at a luncheon at Government House earlier today. He joins us in the Legislature this afternoon to observe our debate. I ask the ambassador to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 76

enthusiastic and inquisitive grade 6 students from the George P. Nicholson elementary school, more affectionately known as GPN school, located in my constituency of Edmonton-Whitemud. I've had the privilege of joining them for reading week earlier in October. I can tell you that they're indeed an exceptional group of students, full of very good questions when I was out to the school. They are accompanied today by their teachers, Ms Jan Antoniuk, Mrs. Maxine Sprague, Mrs. Dawn Schmitz, and education assistant Mrs. Gail Stannard along with parent helpers Mrs. Bernie Lassu, Mrs. Lisa Ladd, Mrs. Julie Brooks, Mrs. Lina Kebbi, and Mrs. Verle McConkey. They're seated in both the members' gallery and the public gallery, and I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

**Mr. Benito:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a group of 27 students from my constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods, St. Elizabeth elementary school. The group is led by their teacher, Mrs. Sherri Zimmermann, and language interpreter Miss Hilda Schroeder. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Dr. Taft:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of introductions today. My first is a group from Malmo elementary school, who I met with and spoke to before our session today and who I hope to speak with again at greater length in their classroom. There are 23 visitors, very bright students, and they are accompanied by a teacher and two parent helpers. I believe they're seated in the public gallery, but wherever they are, I'd ask them to rise and to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, my second introduction is of three concerned citizens from Parkland county and that area. They're here to observe question period and the tabling of their petition regarding the construction of a new care centre in Stony Plain that is very badly needed. Later on we'll be tabling the first of 1,500 names on that petition today. I'd ask them to rise as I read their names. One is Jo Szady, who is the chair of the resident family council of the Good Samaritan care centre. The second is Zig Szady, who helped collect the names for the petition. I must say that these two people are also very active in environmental and energy efficiency issues. The third is Iolanda Duke, who is the secretary of the resident family council of the Good Samaritan care centre. You're welcome. Please give them a warm reception.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

**Mr. Groeneveld:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly Agriculture and Rural Development staff from the Agricultural Products Marketing Council. They're here today as part of their public service orientation tour. Dave Burdek, Maryann Urbanowski, Tunde Vari, Mike Pearson, and Rachid El Hafid are seated in the members' gallery. I would ask them to now rise and receive the usual warm reception of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly very special guests from my constituency of Edmonton-Manning. They are all sitting in the public gallery. They are Mr. Stan Fisher, president and CEO, Paul Teterenko, Wendy King, Kay Willekes, Lucas Gelink, Christine Teterenko, and Sharon Cohen. These visitors are from St. Michael's Extended Care Centre Society. I will be speaking more about the group in my member's statement later on. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

1:40

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in the members' gallery, two bright students who I met in the past year. One is Janet LeBlanc. I had the honour of meeting Janet during a French course we took at the Faculty of Extension. The other one is her daughter Rémi LeBlanc. I had the pleasure of meeting Rémi in the constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark at the St. Francis Xavier high school awards ceremony. Unfortunately, her name wasn't called. I said: why don't you come down to the Legislature, meet my friends, and we'll introduce you as a Rutherford scholarship winner in the Legislative Assembly? She also happens to be a political science student, and we'll be seeing more of her in the future. To Rémi, I'd like to congratulate her on all of her academic achievements and wish her the best for the future. I would ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

### Ministerial Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Culture and Community Spirit.

### National Philanthropy Day

**Mr. Blackett:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, November 16, we celebrate National Philanthropy Day. Whether it's volunteering for a local nonprofit organization or donating money to a charity or helping someone in need, Albertans of all ages, all walks of life, and throughout our province work to better the lives of others every day. It is with this attitude and the belief in goodwill that we recognize National Philanthropy Day.

Philanthropists come in many forms, from a neighbour or friend who gives up their weekends to volunteer at a homeless shelter to the child selling summer lemonade to support a local cause, the musician who lends his or her talents for a benefit concert, the person who donates \$20 or \$20 million. Each of these people may be doing different things, but they are all working towards the same goal.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps support their community and especially those that are most vulnerable. In this time of economic uncertainty supporting charities and the work they do is more important than ever. It is at such times that we act on those values that have built this province, looking out for one another and helping those in need and the least fortunate.

Albertans are some of the most generous people anywhere, donating \$1.4 billion in 2007 alone. Our province also has one of the highest charitable tax credits in Canada, meaning that there's a benefit to donating more to your favourite charity or not-for-profit organization. Including the federal tax credit, Albertans receive a 50

per cent nonrefundable tax credit for every dollar donated over the \$200 threshold. Mr. Speaker, that program is endorsed by none other than our Auditor General. The enhanced charitable tax credit will help our dollars work even harder to support these organizations. Just remember: donate often and keep your receipts. It will make a difference for you at tax time, and it helps to build strong and healthy communities.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize National Philanthropy Day, let us all take a moment and ask ourselves one question: what can we do to make our neighbourhood, our community, our city, and our province a better place?

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I join the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit in thanking those citizens who donate their time, talents, and money to our charities and nonprofits. The generosity of these people deserves celebration. I feel blessed to have known some wonderful philanthropists.

That being said, I believe that we must also recognize the challenges facing Alberta's nonprofit sector. As baby boomers age, they are volunteering less, and so far younger generations have not yet stepped up in great enough numbers to take their place.

The sector is also being challenged by this administration's constant failure to provide stable public funding. Our charities and nonprofits are consistently being asked to do more with less. With this administration cutting millions from core services, the problem can only be expected to get worse.

One of the primary responsibilities of government is to provide protection and leadership in those areas where private enterprise and charitable institutions cannot. Perhaps they could look to the Muttart Foundation for inspiration and ideas. This Edmonton-based philanthropic foundation does amazing work, dispensing funds to many causes, including NGO management development. One of their programs provides funding for not-for-profit managers to take a one-year educational sabbatical, a program that has kept many experienced, talented managers here in Alberta working in a vital sector.

Albertans are remarkably generous, but our philanthropy should not be mistaken as an endorsement for another round of massive cuts to the public sector. Government has a role to play, and it's time for this administration to stop off-loading their responsibilities to a sector that's already being pushed to the limit.

In recognition of that and on behalf of my colleagues in the Official Opposition I would like to thank again all those who donate time and money to make our society a better place. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, I trust you're requesting an opportunity for one of your members to participate in this?

**Mr. Mason:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The other one.

**The Speaker:** That will require unanimous consent of the Assembly, so I'll ask the question: is the Assembly prepared to hear from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona?

[Unanimous consent denied]

### Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

### St. Michael's Extended Care Centre Society

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to say that St. Michael's Extended Care Centre Society operates in my constituency of Edmonton-Manning. St. Michael's was created in 1974 to fill a need for care for people from Ukrainian and other Slavic backgrounds in the city of Edmonton. As the health sector has changed over time, St. Michael's has redeveloped and adapted to fill these needs. St. Michael's has an excellent reputation. They are known for the wonderful, quality care they provide to their residents.

St. Michael's is probably best known for Baba's Own perogies, which you can purchase from their main office or some stores around Edmonton. I must say that they are the best perogies I have ever had, and I'm sure many members, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. Premier himself, would agree with me.

St. Michael's is currently running their long-term care capital campaign. The centre is almost 30 years old, and many renovations need to be made to upgrade it to current standards. This campaign is called There's a Little Angel in Each of Us. They had a fundraising dinner, called the Blue Angel Dinner, which I was very pleased to attend last Thursday with you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to support St. Michael's in this and all of their other fundraising efforts.

I would like to thank the capital campaign cabinet members for their hard work on this project and all of the staff at St. Michael's for making it a great place and a true gem in our community. May God bless all those involved with this wonderful organization.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** All members will be glad to know that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning and I attended an event for the St. Michael's extended care 25th anniversary celebration, and true to form, when I asked the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning what his three favourite foods were, he quickly responded: perogies, cabbage rolls, and nalysnyky. He got a hundred per cent for the response.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

### International Education Week

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks Alberta's sixth year of participation in Canada's celebration of International Education Week from November 16 to 20. This year's theme is Promoting Global Citizenship. This is a wonderful way for Alberta's education system to promote the benefits of cross-cultural understanding in today's rapidly changing world. International education activities expose teachers and students to social and cultural differences, new educational methods, and diverse global perspectives. These activities include student and teacher exchanges, school partnerships, visiting teacher programs, foreign language consultants, and international student programs.

Mr. Speaker, 2009 marks the 30th anniversary that Alberta Education has been co-ordinating teacher exchanges in the province. Today the Alberta teacher exchange program has partners in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland. For several years now many Alberta teachers have taken on the challenge of leaving their homes and classrooms to live and teach in communities right across the world. Last year there were a total of 19 teachers that participated in full-year exchanges to Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., and Switzerland. Nine more participated in short-term exchanges to Denmark and to Germany. Not only have these teachers and their families changed and grown from their experiences. So, too, have the members of the communities they visited.

I would like to congratulate past and present participants alike, who recognize the value of international education in our schools, Mr. Speaker, and who have made this program such a wonderful success. What a wonderful opportunity to share Alberta with the international community and promote global citizenship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** First Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### H1N1 Influenza Pandemic Planning

**Dr. Swann:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Premier publicly admitted that there were mistakes in the H1N1 rollout this past month. To the Premier: will the Premier explain what mistakes were made?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the comment last week with respect to the rollout of H1N1 flu vaccination said that, yes, that first week we could have accommodated people in buildings so that they didn't have to wait outside. Although it wasn't that cold, it certainly could have been a lot colder at this time of the year. We've learned from the situation. I called a meeting last Monday with Alberta Emergency Management, with Health Services, the minister of health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and the Solicitor General and put a plan into place. That plan is working very effectively because we don't have any waiting lists whatsoever.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, again to the Premier: was it the Premier's decision or the health minister's decision to send an ambiguous message about who qualified for the vaccine in the first week?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, all advice on medical matters comes from the medical officer of health. I have great faith in and support the medical officer of health. He's doing a good job in spite of the circumstances in terms of interruption of supply of vaccine. I have tremendous faith in his advice. That's the advice the minister of health follows, and that's how the policy is set.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there are many documents relating to pandemic planning in the province that outline what the priority groups for vaccination would be in the event of a pandemic, and there are the four categories we've heard so much about. Will the Premier explain why plans that were laid out years ago were thrown out the window? Was this a political decision or a medical decision?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Once again, a medical decision.

**The Speaker:** Second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### H1N1 Influenza Hospital Admissions

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The CEO of Alberta Health Services has stated that now is when we will see the largest strain on the acute-care system and intensive care beds. Today there are a total of 830 Albertans who have been hospitalized for H1N1 this year. Again to the Premier: what proportion of the 6,800 acute-care beds in Alberta are being occupied today by H1N1 patients who were high risk and didn't receive their vaccine?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information in front of my fingertips. I don't follow every day's admissions into the hospitals throughout Alberta, but we can certainly get some more information on it. If it's relevant, we'll provide that information to the House.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, it's clearly relevant, Mr. Speaker, the number of people who should have had the vaccine and didn't and therefore ended up in hospital with H1N1. Will the Premier present that information, table it in the House?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, let's put this into perspective. Just a number of months ago Canadian public health officials were unable to identify the virus. They had to identify the virus. They had to start production of the vaccine and distribute that vaccine across Canada. From a Canadian point of view a lot of effort was put into ensuring that there was enough vaccine available for the very remote communities in northern Canada, so that was done.

We, of course, heard from the minister, heard from the medical officer of health in terms of what vaccine would be available, and the plans were built on that availability. That availability was interrupted without any warning to the federal government or to any of the provincial ministers, and as a result we had to change our plan.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For months we have been asking the Premier to ensure that our hospitals are properly prepared for H1N1 patients, yet we've received no evidence that this has happened. Will the Premier table the intensive care unit surge capacity plan, which is still not available, and show Albertans that we really are prepared to cope with the extra demands in intensive care units in this province?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the minister of health has all the detail.

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I had a lengthy discussion with the CEO of Alberta Health Services today. As we stand here on the 16th of November, our health system is coping extremely well. There are some areas where at times pressure has been applied, but there is a contingency plan in place. As I said at the outset, the system is coping extremely well and not out of the ordinary for the flu season.

**The Speaker:** Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

#### Electricity Transmission Lines

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of Alberta don't like this government's attempt to cut them out of the process of determining whether the multibillion-dollar high-voltage transmission lines that it's about to foist upon us and make us pay for are needed. The government is already letting ATCO and AltaLink move ahead with the planning of the lines between Edmonton and Calgary before Bill 50 has even been debated in this House. Then when the PC Association was setting up its conference the weekend before last, it took sponsorship money from AltaLink. To the Premier. This bill is so obviously contentious. It so obviously matters to Albertans. Doesn't he see that this looks as though AltaLink gets access to government in exchange for cash?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the legislation will be before the House, I believe, tomorrow for second reading, and there'll be opportunity for active debate. But as I said before, there's a critical need for new transmission infrastructure in the province of Alberta. We will not be able to achieve all of our economic goals if we don't have new infrastructure in place, and that's the purpose of the bill.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's why they call it question period, not answer period.

Given that AltaLink has already been picked by the government to build one of the lines at the heart of the controversy over Bill 50, given that the line in question will cost \$1.5 billion or more, and given that the electricity users of Alberta are going to get stuck with the bill for that, how can this Premier assure Albertans that his government's transmission policy isn't being impacted by these corporate sponsorship donations?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, over 30 public meetings were held across the province. Hundreds of people came forward to deliver evidence based on the need for new transmission. We are working on that. We want to of course do everything possible to tie all of the green energy sources that we have available to us, ensure that we are competitive in terms of our electricity rates, and move badly needed electricity from one end of the province to another. That is critical to Alberta's economic goals.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, earlier this session I asked the Premier which lobbyists he and the other members of cabinet were meeting with behind closed doors on Bill 50. I'm still waiting for that information. The people of Alberta and this House are still waiting for that information. Albertans, who are going to be paying for these lines for the next 40 years, have a right to know what the companies that'll profit from them are saying to cabinet. To the Premier: when can Albertans expect to find out who's been trying to influence this government on Bill 50, or are you just waiting until after the debate is all over?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the opposition supported this government's position on legislation that was passed in this House – of course, that's the lobbyist registry – that provides the transparency and openness that this government is all about. He can go to the registry and get that information any time.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by the hon. Member for Strathcona.

#### Health Care Reform

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend the Premier responded to falling support among Albertans and even his own party by promising to correct mistakes his government has been making. Perhaps the most serious mistake has been this government's handling of changes to the health care system. Massive changes to health care delivery without a mandate, without a plan, and without public consultation have Albertans angry from one corner of the province to the other. My question is to the Premier. Will you direct the Minister of Health and Wellness to stop the overhaul of the health care system until a comprehensive plan is placed before Albertans and public input is sought?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is doing all of the above that the hon. member mentioned. He does have a committee in place to look at whether there are legislative changes that are necessary in the future. He has also consulted with Albertans through various organizations. But at the end of the day we've seen the cost of health care delivery in this province increase over 180 per cent in the last 10 years. All Albertans know it's not sustainable, and all I'm asking is for all Albertans to come together, especially our health care professionals in this province, to work on a plan together so that we can sustain it for the next generation because it is our duty.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, Albertans have neither been informed nor consulted. The Premier said that change is coming, but he won't say what it is or when it will be. That's not good enough. Albertans are increasingly skeptical about this Premier's promises. Will the Premier tell his health minister to lay off until Albertans are both informed and consulted about government health care plans? Yes or no?

2:00

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, well, at least he's not asking for his resignation today. He's just asking to lay off, I guess. [interjections] Oh, that's what he means: lay off now. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to consult with Albertans. Recently having travelled to a number of communities in Alberta, we've heard a lot from medical/ health care professionals – doctors, nurses, other allied health care professionals – that are working together in communities to see how they can improve access, improve quality of care, keep costs reasonable but at the same time, again, ensure that we have this really good system, that all Albertans enjoy, for the next generation.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier suggested that it's not his policies but his communication that's flawed. Albertans are very unhappy with the Premier's health care policy. The best spin doctors in the world won't change that. You can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig. My question is to the Premier. Will you change direction on health care as Albertans demand, or is your promise of change just more spin?

**Mr. Stelmach:** I'll take your direction, Mr. Speaker. We'll keep consulting with Albertans. This is actually a very good discussion that we're having because many people are coming forward and coming forward with good ideas on how we can change the way we deliver health services for the positive, how we can also deliver more seniors' accommodation in the province of Alberta. That is one part of our population that has gone through some difficulty this last number of months with the downturn in the economy, losing some of their savings, and, of course, not getting very much in the bank in terms of what they have saved. We're all working together, and I know that Albertans will come together and find a resolution to some of the challenges we're facing.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

#### H1N1 Influenza Immunization

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month the mass H1N1 immunization clinics were temporarily suspended due to long lineups at clinics and a short supply of the vaccine. Since then the province has rolled out a more targeted campaign for priority groups

eligible to get the vaccine. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: now that everyone deemed a top priority for immunization is able to get it, what is the plan for making the vaccine available to the general public?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Liepert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our chief medical officer of health later this afternoon will be outlining plans for the remainder of this week, but in a nutshell we are at the point now where 1 in every 6 Albertans has been vaccinated, and that is a very significant achievement. We will be, starting I believe tomorrow, offering vaccine to seniors in this province who are over the age of 75 and to their partner or spouse. Then, in addition to that, we'll be later in the week rolling it out to additional seniors, and those details will be provided this afternoon.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the program does open up to the general public, will people continue to have to go to these mass clinics, or will there be other options available to them for getting this vaccine?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, that's something we're going to continue to monitor as the week wears on, but we believe that by the end of this week we will be in a position where we can probably start to distribute the vaccine across the province to physicians, to pharmacists, and to other providers. It has been a careful calculation of ensuring that we have the appropriate amount of vaccine, so as we move through the next four or five days and we see the take-up with the general population, it will give us a better sense of whether we'll be able the following week to distribute on a broader basis.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what is being done to ensure that supply issues don't create another scenario in which people are going to get the vaccine, only to be turned away at the door?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, that's one of the reasons why we plan to roll it out in a staged way yet even this week. The last thing we want to see is seniors standing in line behind others who may be able to cope better than our seniors population. Starting with those who are over 75 and their spouses or partners I think will work well, but again we want to manage it in a way to make sure that we don't get into the situation that we had earlier in the week. All indications of the past week are that the panic has subsided, but Albertans are still aware that the vaccine is necessary.

I just want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank all of those who have been involved in this program over the past three weeks through the health care system. As I say, a tremendous achievement, probably the best on a per capita basis anywhere in Canada, when at least half a million people in this province now are vaccinated.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by the hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

#### Pastoral Care in Health Facilities

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health and Wellness and the CEO of Alberta Health Services have shown that

they're not concerned with real people but only with what can be measured and put on a chart or a graph. Caring, empathy, comfort, and dignity are neglected. To the minister of health: can the minister explain why pastoral care is being cut across this province?\*

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, I asked that same question of the CEO of Alberta Health Services, and he assures me – because I had someone, when I was in Lacombe recently, ask that same question. I've been given the assurance that that is not happening. I'd be happy to inquire further as a result of the member's question, and if there's something that's different, I'll answer the House later in the week.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you. I'll look forward to that answer.

A nationally and internationally recognized and respected pastoral care clergyman who devoted 23 years of his life at the Royal Alex hospital was terminated and escorted out of the hospital by security guards like a common criminal. Mr. Minister, what on earth is going on in this province?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, one of the things I have learned in the short time in this House, Mr. Speaker, is not to take very much of the preamble of the opposition's questions as fact, so I will inquire into that and report back along with my earlier commitment.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am more than convinced that the minister will find that, in fact, that is a fact.

Will the minister agree that the priceless value return from the people who do chaplaincy work is worth the meagre amount that they take out of the health care budget?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, again, I'm not familiar with what part of the health care budget we would be talking about. I will endeavour to get the answer to the member, as I promised earlier in question period, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

### International Trade

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Way Forward is Alberta's four-point economic recovery plan, and one of the points in the plan is ensuring that Alberta's energy sector and other industries are globally competitive and continue to attract investment. This point is especially important to my constituency in the Alberta Industrial Heartland. My first question is to the new and able Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations. Can the minister tell us how his ministry is helping to ensure Alberta's industry remains internationally profiled and competitive in the midst of this global recession?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Webber:** Well, thank you, and thank you, hon. member. My first question. I'm honoured that I take my first question from such an honourable person, so thank you very much.

I'd have to say that, yes, absolutely, Mr. Speaker, my ministry is focused on maintaining a strong presence on the world stage even through these tough economic times. We will continue to defend our export markets. We do have numerous trade missions as well throughout the globe, and we will continue to do so in order to build

our opportunity for this province. We also have nine international offices. I won't name them all, but I will tell you that through these offices we will continue to promote Alberta.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year the Alberta Industrial Heartland associations and local municipalities do a great job to send a trade mission to Texas to encourage investment in this growing region of Alberta. They are planning their next one for March of 2010. To the same minister: what is his government doing to help this important group of community and business leaders build stronger relationships with our neighbours to the south and help to attract new business and value-add to the Industrial Heartland?

**Mr. Webber:** Oh, boy, that was a long question, Mr. Speaker, and I will try to answer everything that was asked. Our offices do work in DC with respect to providing essential services to help Alberta companies compete south of the border, including Texas, as the hon. member alluded to. My department does not, though, provide funding to these organizations to cover their costs. We do, however, have department staff that can promote and provide advice and facilitate meetings with senior officials across the United States, not only in Texas. We do have a very strong relationship with governments and businesses in Texas. In fact, our Premier just recently went on a trade mission himself down to Texas. I would encourage any Alberta business or community member to contact my department if they are looking for information on trade missions.

Thank you.

2:10

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the same minister: in our current economic situation are we getting good results from our investment in these international offices, and does it make sense to continue to invest in these international offices?

**Mr. Webber:** That was a great question as well, Mr. Speaker. During these tough economic times the specialized knowledge of local markets and the advocacy efforts of our international offices are critical. As I mentioned, we do have nine international offices in trade.

**An Hon. Member:** Where are they all?

**Mr. Webber:** Please, please. I can't even hear myself think in this room. It's getting so busy here. Thank you very much. I've been trying to answer questions.

Anyway, we are facilitating a number of networking opportunities throughout the world. We have 200 trade shows, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** Unfortunately, hon. minister, doing this doesn't give you more time.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne.

### H1N1 Influenza Immunization for Homeless People

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After questions in this House about vaccine clinics for the homeless in the inner city a flurry of phone calls erupted from the minister's office, and on

\*See page 1815, left column, paragraph 10



October 30 a clinic opened at the Hope Mission and was then cancelled. Other clinics for the Boyle McCauley health centre, Operation Friendship, and Boyle Street Community Services centre never opened. The agencies who serve the inner-city population were surprised they were not provided with vaccine to distribute as part of last week's expansion to include vulnerable people. To the minister of health: what can the minister tell these agencies about timelines now?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, I don't want to sound like someone who's going to take another question under advisement, but I have to. It is my understanding, in consultation with the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, that the vaccine had been provided to the homeless. Now, I don't have where exactly it was provided to the homeless, but I will check into it and get an answer by tomorrow for the member.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Blakeman:** Well, thank you. Yes, if the minister can confirm that government will release vaccine supplies to these agencies to administer for the inner-city population of vulnerable people, which, of course, includes the homeless and those who are immune compromised, we would appreciate it.

**Mr. Liepert:** I can give the member that assurance.

I'm going to ask the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs to supplement the answer, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mrs. Fritz:** Thank you. I'm pleased to let you know, Mr. Speaker, that at Hope Mission we did vaccinate 289 people. With the change in the priority plan that has occurred most recently, the homeless are very much in the high-priority area. I can also assure this member that the Boyle health centre will be receiving the vaccine very shortly, I think tomorrow or the next day, and they will be out vaccinating more of the homeless.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you. Back to the Minister of Health and Wellness: given that the Edmonton Police Service requested special treatment for its front-line officers and was turned down the same day that a special clinic was held for friends, family, and team members of a hockey club, when will the minister release the ethical guidelines that established the priority ranking for vulnerable people and allowed for these two groups to be treated in the order that they were?

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we've dealt with the issue in Calgary relative to what the member raises. I am pleased to say that effective today any of the first responders – firefighters, police – can get vaccinated. They are in that group. They can go to a mass clinic any time today and going forward. In addition to that, we will be making arrangements today with the various municipalities around the province to provide the vaccine. In most cases the municipalities are wanting to do the vaccination themselves. If they choose to do it that way, we will provide them the vaccine, and those arrangements are being made today by Alberta Health Services.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

### Sour Gas Well Licensing

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents work within the sour gas industry and have expressed concerns regarding the recent ERCB suspensions on issuing sour gas licences. My questions are all to the Minister of Energy. Can you please elaborate on why the ERCB suspended the licensing in the first place?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Knight:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I'll preface my comment and answer here with the statement that the province of Alberta under the direction of our regulator, the ERCB, for about 60 years has had a very, very solid record with respect to developing these resources in the province.

What had happened, Mr. Speaker, was that there was an inconsistency in the area description of emergency preparedness zones and a protective action zone. The courts rightly noticed the discrepancy and asked the ERCB to take corrective action.

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Back to you again. I do agree that the ERCB has had a great working record in this province, working with the oil and gas industry and helping to develop it. But I'm concerned that this may have a negative effect upon the ability of the sour gas industry to get back to work and to business as usual. Can the minister comment on that?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Knight:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. People are very concerned across the province with respect to this issue. I can tell the member, the House, and all Albertans that the issue has been recognized and dealt with. I believe that the 69 licences that were affected by this decision have now been released.

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Again to the same minister, and thank you for those comments. The resizing of these protective action zones is more than industry; there are people that live within these regions. What impact on the safety of Albertans who reside in these zones will occur now?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, of course, as you would know, the number one mandate that the ERCB has is the protection of Albertans relative to development of industry in the province of Alberta. What's happened here is that the clarification of protective action zones has absolutely no effect on the health and safety of Albertans. As a matter of fact, the clarification will in fact enhance the protection and safety of Albertans.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

### Fine Arts Education Curriculum Review

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fine arts contribute so much to our society, economy, and the development of our young people. However, this government is using a curriculum review to deliberately weaken valuable fine arts programs in our schools. Students, parents, and teachers are outraged. My questions are to the Minister of Education. If the government truly believes in the importance of our fine arts programs, why is this minister dramatically cutting the amount of student instructional time for fine arts in the K to 12 curriculum?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that this member couldn't be further from what actually is going on than he is in that statement. First of all, the arts are not peripheral to education. The arts are fundamental to education in this province, and they will remain so.

What the hon. member is referring to is the fact that we are doing a review of the arts curriculum, which hasn't been done in 20 or 25 years in the province. In September a draft of a framework for the preparation of a new curriculum was posted on the website and sent out to stakeholders for comment. It was put up specifically so that people can comment on it, get back to us, and let us know what they like about it and what they don't like about it. We're hearing back from lots of people. It's part of the public process of consultation before you do anything with the arts. Nothing could be more fundamental than arts to education.

**Mr. Chase:** Well, unfortunately, the ministry is putting out mixed messages; for example, cutting down five credits to one credit and limiting the amount of time.

The minister talked about consultation, so here is the question with regard to consultation. Given that the government failed to properly consult with Albertans prior to this review, will the minister commit to extending the January deadline for feedback on these proposed changes?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, these are not proposed changes. This is a proposed draft for a framework to discuss what the curriculum should look like. In that draft framework what they've put up is one process which would suggest that modules for the arts could be set up. There's no intention at all to move away from intensive arts courses for those who want to take intensive arts courses. What it's really trying to accomplish is to move arts right into the curriculum and right across the curriculum because, as we know, moving forward, innovation and creativity are going to be fundamental skills for 21st century Albertans.

2:20

**Mr. Chase:** This daft draft that you have put out is causing confusion. This government has already damaged any kind of discussion of religion and sexuality with Bill 44, and now it's targeting the fine arts. Will the minister tell Albertans which aspect of the K to 12 curriculum he intends to undermine next?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, I won't comment on what is daft. I'll only say this, and I'll say it again. We've been talking about Inspiring Education. We've been talking about what education looks like 20 years from now, what we need so that Albertans can be prepared to trade out into the world. We know that as part of that, innovation and creativity are fundamental. The arts is fundamental and core to our curriculum. It will remain core to our curriculum. We will continue the discussion with Albertans as we have for the past year – going out with focus groups, going out with discussion groups – in the way that curriculum is normally developed. We've put up a framework for discussion. That framework is open for discussion until the end of January, and once all the feedback comes in, there'll be more opportunities for everyone interested to participate.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-East.

#### Critical Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nothing has changed in the way Tories do business since their much-anticipated convention.

Half of their party's most faithful told them that they wanted Bill 50 scrapped, but this government says it won't even listen to them. To the Minister of Energy: why do you insist on eliminating public input into the proposed transmission lines? What are you afraid of?

**Mr. Snelgrove:** The big bad wolf.

**Mr. Knight:** No, not the big bad wolf.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that since 2007 there have been 300 open, public meetings . . .

**An Hon. Member:** How many?

**Mr. Knight:** Three hundred.

. . . with respect to the transmission system in Alberta and how we should move forward with it. I'm not sure what part of that is not understandable, but we've done a lot of public consultation. We will continue to do that, and the AUC will still direct at the end of the day a public and open meeting with respect to siting and the other issues around transmission.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. Experts are telling us that the Premier and the minister are exaggerating the true need for the massive transmission expansion that's being proposed; meanwhile, the government's spin doctors warn of apocalyptic power outages and crumbling infrastructure. This dichotomy of opinion is the very thing that public hearings are meant to sort through. Why is the minister so afraid to test his arguments in public? Is your spin really that thin?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times that I would have to actually repeat this. However, I will do it one more time and perhaps more. The Alberta Utilities Commission has a mandate to work in the public interest, and their mandate includes – includes – the fact that there will be open, public hearings where intervention is not only allowed but encouraged to make sure that at the end of the day, in the public interest, the decisions they make are the right decisions for all Albertans.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this government is proposing to allow the power companies to spend billions of dollars to overbuild capacity completely at the expense of the consumer and without giving them the chance to voice their opinion. Power companies are looking at massive profits, and you're asking the general public to finance it. Why won't you withdraw this antidemocratic and unnecessary legislation that railroads Albertans into paying more for power they don't need?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased, actually, to engage with the electrical engineers that she has used, obviously, to indicate that we're doing something that is not in the public interest. If they have more engineers than AESO that have a better idea of what we should do, I would be very pleased to engage with them. The 200-plus – 200-plus – professional electrical engineers and technicians are the people that plan the system for Albertans. I think that that speaks for itself.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-East, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

#### Employment Insurance Benefit Program

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like many other jurisdictions Alberta is facing higher than normal unemployment numbers. Some must rely on the federal EI program for temporary support.

However, Albertans are subject to different criteria due to regional variations in eligibility requirements. An applicant in my constituency of Calgary-East, for example, must work at least 665 hours to qualify, compared to the lower extreme of 420 hours in Newfoundland. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: what is being done to ensure that Albertans are treated fairly in the EI system?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Goudreau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that it is very difficult when somebody becomes unemployed, and we are concerned that benefits vary based on local unemployment rates. We've raised this particular issue at several federal-provincial-territorial meetings of first ministers. Our view is that EI should provide Canadians with equitable support regardless of where they live. But besides reforming EI, our top priority is getting Albertans back to work.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the minister raising this issue, what has resulted from Alberta's lobbying efforts to reform the EI program?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Goudreau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta and the other western provinces are in general agreement when it comes to EI reforms. The federal government announced it would provide additional EI benefits to unemployed long-tenured workers. While we support those changes to employment insurance, we still feel it does not address the issue of access to EI benefits regardless of where individuals live.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Employment and Immigration: what measures are in place for Albertans who cannot find work and cannot qualify for EI in their region?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Goudreau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've got two major federal funding agreements to support those who do not qualify for EI. These agreements support a wide range of training, employment, and career development opportunities. This week, for example, my staff are organizing job fairs for recruiting employers like Momentum, Southland Transportation, Blockbuster, and Sun Life Financial. This year we plan to help over 155,000 Albertans through a range of provincial and federally funded employment and training services.

### Electoral Reform

**Mr. Hehr:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta's former Chief Electoral Officer provided this government with a wealth of material to improve electoral practices before being unceremoniously shown the door. Research from the 2008 election revealed that 61 per cent of those who didn't vote would have been more likely to cast a ballot if they could vote at any polling station. Will the Minister of Justice commit to amending the Election Act to change these outdated residency requirements?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Ms Redford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The former Chief Electoral Officer did provide a number of recommendations that we are currently reviewing and will bring to the Legislature in due course.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, Mr. Speaker, on that, what about allowing advance polling stations to be placed in high-traffic areas such as malls and universities to improve voter participation? This was also in the Chief Electoral Officer's report. I was wondering if the minister will be committing to this any time soon.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Redford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a second recommendation from the former Chief Electoral Officer. I don't know if the hon. member has ever had an opportunity to be involved in administering an election. What I will tell you is that in a province of this size, with 3 and a half million people, if you start to remove residency requirements, you run into a number of incredibly problematic situations with respect to how you actually calculate the ballots on a constituency-by-constituency basis.

The recommendations will be reviewed. The legislation will be tabled. He can introduce those issues at that time.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. minister is correct. There were numerous problems with the last election, and the former Chief Electoral Officer was trying to comment on those through his 85 recommendations.

Really, you know, I guess the next election is probably only two years away. Do you think we could have some legislation drafted by your department that maybe implements one or two of these things by the time that election comes?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Redford:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that in my first two questions I did suggest that there would be legislation coming forward. I would also suggest respectfully that those two particular recommendations would not help to resolve problems but would add problems.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

### 2:30 Geothermal Energy for Home Heating

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the ministers of Energy and Environment. As we move toward a clean energy future, Albertans in their efforts to be part of the green energy solution are researching alternatives for heating their homes. I know that in my constituency alone more and more residents are examining the advantages of using geothermal energy as a sustainable heating source. My first question to the Minister of Energy: what are the practicalities for Alberta homeowners wanting to switch to geothermal energy as a means of keeping warm during our frigid winters?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, of course, what the member is talking about is solar energy that's stored in the earth's surface. There are opportunities with heat pumps to recover that energy, but

switching becomes a bit problematic because of the economics of switching. However, most certainly, a lot of interest is being paid to and a lot of development being done on new build using a geothermal heat source for home heating.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplemental to the same minister: have subsurface studies been conducted in Alberta to determine the capability of Alberta's soils to make effective use of this energy source?

**Mr. Knight:** Mr. Speaker, yes. The answer to that is that the ERCB have the Alberta Geological Survey residing in the ERCB, and they are currently doing mapping of the province of Alberta relative to our geothermal capacity, the deep geothermal capacity. Again, they have already I think identified some very positive news for Albertans. There are opportunities where we could have things such as electrical power provided by deep geothermal heat and also things like district heating. It is doable, and there are places in Alberta where that exists.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplemental is to the Minister of Environment. Does the Department of Environment anticipate developing any programs to encourage the development of private geothermal systems in Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Renner:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Well, clearly, there's no doubt that the government and Environment support the concept of geothermal. It really would be a strong plank in our commitment to our climate change strategy, that talks about reducing the overall carbon footprint through energy efficiency.

There are two areas, Mr. Speaker. One is for the residential side. On the residential side we do have an existing program right now where consumers can apply for up to \$10,000 for investments that will significantly increase efficiency in home heating, and I would suggest that there are certain geothermal projects that would or could qualify under the EnerGuide rating. On the industrial side I think that there is promise that industry is showing interest in the area as well.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

#### All-terrain Vehicle Safety

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government seems content to be the least responsible jurisdiction in the country when it comes to ATV safety. Yet another province, this time British Columbia, is moving ahead with safety laws for ATVs while in Alberta this government sits and does nothing. To the Minister of Transportation: why are you sitting around doing nothing while other provincial governments are acting to protect their citizens?

**Mr. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely disagree with the hon. member. This government is always up and moving. We're never sitting around doing nothing. But I'll tell you: we really, honestly believe in safety. There are all kinds of things that we do for safety on ATVs. We have learn-to-ride education on it. That's the biggest

thing. If you don't educate people on what the machine is, how they should ride it, what it's capable of, you can put on all the gear in the world, and it isn't going to help you. We're saying: teach yourself all the safety features of the equipment that you could possibly wear, also all the safety equipment that's there on the machine, what size of machine you should have for the weight of the rider, and make sure that if they're under age, you supervise them properly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This minister talks a lot about developing helmet laws, but actually doing something is another matter, and while he was standing, he was still doing nothing. When can Albertans expect to see action rather than talk from this minister with the introduction of a law to require helmet use on ATVs?

**Mr. Ouellette:** Everyone that I know that rides ATVs that uses their common sense puts on a helmet. I've had ATVs my whole life, and I've had lots of people come over and enjoy the use of them. I've had people bring their children over. You know what, Mr. Speaker? If you brought your children over, I wouldn't let them ride my machines unless you put helmets on their heads. That's just common sense.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now we're going to talk about common sense. When asked about this issue, this Minister of Transportation talks a lot about how he feels that we need to rely on common sense, not laws. Well, helmet use on ATVs is as important as seat belts are in motor vehicles. Could the minister then explain why it is the government's policy to enforce the wearing of seat belts in vehicle law rather than relying on common sense? Why is it a law?

**Mr. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, as things evolve, so do regulations, so do laws, so does everything. With ATVs we're working on a whole bunch of different issues. There's a difference with seat belts. The highways are all public. The roads are all public. But 95 per cent of the people that ride ATVs ride them on private land. We don't have jurisdiction on that private land. Therefore, we're looking at how we can make this work so it works everywhere. If you can't make it effective, if you can't police it, and if you can't enforce it, there's no sense having the law.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Red Deer-South, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

#### Postsecondary Tuition Fees

**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Students across Alberta are expressing concerns about the prospect of having their tuition dramatically increased to help carry the load for postsecondary institutes having operating deficits. Three years ago the government limited tuition increases to the rate of inflation. Can the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology tell us if removing the tuition cap is being considered?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like any organization, when institutions are looking at tightening their belts, they look at almost

all of the things around the bottom line. I can tell you that the tuition fee policy still governs how tuition rates are increased in the province. For 2010-11, as an example, we know that that limit will be at about 1.5 per cent. There is no discussion in this ministry right now about removing that tuition cap, if you will, the CPI. Some institutions have indicated to us that when we did the cap, as an example, I believe we rolled tuition fees back to 2004 levels, and when you look at other jurisdictions and across the country in terms of Canada, perhaps some of these programs need to be looked at. However, we've made it extremely clear to the postsecondaries that we're only going to be looking at something that's fair and equitable for the three clients we serve, and one of those clients is the student.

**Mr. Dallas:** Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the same minister. Recently the University of Alberta discussed implementing what they described as market modifiers. Can the minister explain market modifiers?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Campus Alberta has discussed, and I alluded to it briefly in my first answer, is: are we comparable and competitive across the country in terms of tuition rates? Is it affordable? Is it accessible? With those three principles, if you will, in mind we have said that everything is open and on the table. We're in very interesting times when you have jurisdictions like the University of California, Berkeley, slashing their budgets by 20 per cent. We're not looking at anything like that. We do need to make sure that nothing is off the table when it comes to achieving efficiencies, when it comes to adjustments in the system. But the institutions cannot apply a blanket tuition increase. Whatever proposal they bring forward to the department has to be fair, has to be equitable, and has to have a proper case behind it.

**Mr. Dallas:** Mr. Speaker, my third question to the same minister: do I understand that to mean that the minister is endorsing the use of these market modifiers on certain programs?

2:40

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what I've suggested to the institutions is that we are open to whatever proposals they might want to bring forward; however, I am extremely concerned that those proposals have to be fair. They have to show a very solid reason as to why we would look at adjusting the base of a particular program or a particular tuition. It has to be fair not only to the institution but, for sure, to the student, the taxpayer, and society. Those are the three clients that we serve in Campus Alberta, and we'll continue to do so.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that was 96 questions and responses today.

In a few seconds from now we'll continue with the Routine. We're still on members' statements, but in the interim might we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Introduction of Guests

(continued)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you some guests that are here to witness the tabling of a petition regarding the construction of a badly needed new care centre in Stony Plain. These students heard about

the petition and have been studying this issue as a project for their school. I'm very encouraged by the interest that these students have taken in their community. As I say their names, I would ask them to rise: Kyla Dobson, Brianna Dechaine,\* Shelby Elder, and Shelby's mother, Lynette Elder. Please join me in giving them the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Little Bow.

**Mr. McFarland:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly an old colleague and friend of many of us, Mr. Denis Ducharme, former MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake. Denis and his wife, Rose, were good friends of a lot of us in caucus. As a former seatmate I am still looking to renew acquaintances with you, and I welcome you back to the Assembly. Next time bring the Road Runner.

Thank you.

### Members' Statements

(continued)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

### Public Health Care in Alberta

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our public health system is Alberta's most cherished institution. More than that, public health care forms part of our core identity as Canadians. As Canadians we value universal access as a human right. There is nothing of greater value than the life of a human being, and as a society Canadians have chosen to take care of each other by creating a publicly funded health care system accessible to all, rich and poor. The ministry of health, therefore, is the most important department in government, charged with protecting and carefully managing the public institution that protects and nourishes life itself. It's a ministry that demands thoughtful, compassionate, and knowledgeable leadership.

Alberta's ministry of health today lacks this kind of leadership. From the beginning the Member for Calgary-West's tenure as minister of health has been disastrous, especially in light of a predicted, planned pandemic. He has proven his incompetence time and again: disbanding the health regions, AADAC, and the Cancer Board without a plan; dismissing top-level public health physicians before the pandemic; giving out millions in bonuses and severance packages for work left undone; running up massive deficits; opening new beds only to close old ones, with no net gain; downsizing Alberta Hospital Edmonton; spending tens of millions on new facilities only to let them stand empty due to a lack of doctors and nurses; allowing public long-term care to disintegrate; and failing Albertans with his botched H1N1 vaccine rollout.

Through it all this minister has refused to admit mistakes. His arrogance and lack of compassion for the thousands of lives that his decisions have affected are unacceptable. His refusal to give straight answers to this Legislature and firing staff instead of taking responsibility himself shows incredible disrespect for the status and tradition as a minister of the Crown. Surely, the Premier must realize by now that Albertans are sick of this minister and his ignorance of public health.

One last time on behalf of all Albertans I implore the Premier: remove this minister.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

\*This spelling could not be verified at the time of publication.

### National Bullying Awareness Week

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Too often bullying is dismissed as a harmless and normal part of growing up, but bullying can have devastating consequences, especially on children and youth who may be kept from reaching their full potential by the hurtful words and actions of others. Something that can deeply scar so many lives should not be dismissed as just normal kids' stuff. Bullying must not be tolerated any time, anywhere.

During national Bullying Awareness Week, from November 15 to 21, Albertans are reminded to think about the harmful impacts of bullying and to take steps to prevent it from happening in their homes, their schools, and their neighbourhoods. Alberta has shown tremendous leadership in creating safe and caring schools and promoting the prevention of bullying across the province. Through the bullying prevention strategy government ministries work closely with community groups and schools to prevent bullying at the local level. Preventing bullying isn't just a job for government or schools. As caring Albertans we all have a role to play in ensuring that people feel safe, supported, and respected in their communities.

Albertans who would like more information about how to address bullying are encouraged to call the toll-free, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week bullying hotline at 1.888.456.2323. This helpline, Mr. Speaker, which I established when I was minister of children's services, has received 1,200 calls since it was established three years ago. Additional information and resources are also available at [www.bullyfreealberta.ca](http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca). The website features fact sheets, prevention strategies, and links to other interactive websites designed to raise awareness about bullying. I encourage all Albertans to make use of these resources and become part of the solution to bullying. Together we can create brighter futures and safer communities for all Albertans.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

### National 4-H Month

**Mr. Jacobs:** Thank you. I rise to recognize and wish you all a happy National 4-H Month. Today I want to acknowledge this incredibly valuable organization. Throughout the month of November we will be celebrating this organization.

Mr. Speaker, 4-H is one of the longest running youth organizations in our province, shaping the lives of youth and adults for more than 90 years. With over 250,000 alumni 4-H is one of the most respected and admired youth programs in Canada. This is a reputation that is well deserved. By following the 4-H motto, Learn To Do by Doing, 4-H helps build communities by developing leadership and interpersonal and technical skills of members, giving youth the skills they need to succeed in life, and creating a network of friends across the entire country.

Agriculture is vital to our province, and 4-H plays an important role in developing tomorrow's leaders in the agricultural industry and rural communities. Our youth want to be involved, accepted, valued, and heard. In 4-H they run the show. That's what makes it so successful.

None of this, Mr. Speaker, would be possible without the support of family and the terrific volunteer leadership from adults in the community. In honour of National 4-H Month I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of Alberta's 4-H clubs and extend a warm thank you to the volunteers and applaud our young people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

### Louis Riel

**Ms Calahasen:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 124 years ago today, November 16, 1885, the leader of the Métis people, Louis Riel, was executed in Regina by the Canadian government for his part in the Northwest Rebellion. A commemoration held here in the Legislature for the beginning of Métis Week, attended by our Premier, the Minister of Aboriginal Relations, leaders of the opposition parties, and Métis leaders, was to honour Louis Riel, a man who believed in his people, the Métis.

Today was not only significant of his death but signified the challenges that he experienced, like acceptance of being Métis, acceptance of the Michif language, acceptance of his culture and his heritage. He fought hard and stood steadfast in having Métis rights recognized. It is a rare act, indeed, to stand up for what you believe in. In Métis circles today everyone knows Riel died for what he believed, and present-day Métis continue to work towards that belief.

Riel predicted his legacy before his hanging as he said, "I will perhaps be one day acknowledged as more than a leader of the half-breeds, and if I am I will have an opportunity of being acknowledged as a leader of good in this great country." His dream of the recognition of Métis and being recognized as a leader doing good in this country continues to be awakened in the Métis people of this province and has occurred in a number of ways: the establishment of Métis settlements, the first in Canada; the recognition of the Métis Nation of Alberta and the agreements with this province; the Michif language development, which is occurring by Métis; most of all, the awakening of pride in the music and dance of the Métis, like the young people who performed today.

Of course, there are still many challenges. However, like Riel, I believe in the Métis. I know they will thrive and will continue to fight for what's rightfully theirs. Yes, Riel's dream and prediction is awakening.

2:50

### Presenting Petitions

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to present on behalf of my colleague a petition signed by almost 1,500 Albertans, several of whom are joining us in the public gallery today. The petition reads:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to free up the allocated construction money for the Good Samaritan Care Centre and start building the facility immediately.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort.

**Mr. Cao:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from 44 Albertans who have signed following the format prescribed by our Legislative Assembly out of 326 who have signed a petition to the same call. The petition reads:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government . . . to:

- Grandfather the rights and status of currently-practicing Registered Massage Therapists . . . in Alberta in a manner that they may continue their practice undisturbed and, when necessary, gradually upgrade to newly-proclaimed standards of training, so as not to force current therapists to lose their ongoing income whilst upgrading and so to ensure that clients of said therapists will be able to use their insurance coverage in order to pay for massage services from current therapists.

This is the proper number of copies.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, do you have a tabling?

**Mr. Cao:** I do have a tabling here. This is the petition to the minister of health by the same group, physical therapists, and it's signed by 282 members and to the same cause that I just said in my petition.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Mr. MacDonald:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling today. It's a letter dated November 2, 2009, from the Alberta Children and Youth Services minister, and it is an answer to a question that I raised in this House on October 27.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I have two tablings today. The first is another wonderful festival in my fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre and elsewhere in Edmonton. This is the Exposure festival, which is Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival, running for the rest of this week, so I'm tabling the listing of events and locations.

The second tabling I have is from a constituent, Cara Kane, who is writing to indicate her support for parts 2, 3, and 4 of Bill 48 but not with part 1, which is the punitive part of that. Parts 2, 3, and 4 are around tobacco litigation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am tabling an information package from a group known as Save Our Fine Arts. I attended a meeting on Monday just north of Beaverbrook high school, which is a fine fine arts program. The connected material indicates two ways of connecting to the organization. One is at [www.saveourfinearts.ca](http://www.saveourfinearts.ca), and the second is a Facebook site entitled Petition Against New Alberta Fine Arts Curriculum.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, I want to table five copies of a letter that last week I tabled in response to a question from the Member for Edmonton-Riverview. Unfortunately, the tabling last week was an unsigned letter, so I now would like to table five letters that are signed.

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk pursuant to the Legislative Assembly Act and the Government Accountability Act, the 2008-2009 annual reports for the following departments: Aboriginal Relations; Advanced Education and Technology; Agriculture and Rural Development; Children and Youth Services; Culture and Community Spirit; Education; Employment and Immigration; Energy; Environment; Executive Council; Finance and Enterprise; Health and Wellness; Housing and Urban Affairs; Infrastructure; International and Intergovernmental Relations; Justice; Municipal Affairs; Seniors and Community Supports; Service Alberta; Solicitor General and Public Security; Sustainable Resource Development; Tourism, Parks and Recreation; Transportation; and Treasury Board.

On behalf of the hon. Ms Evans, Minister of Finance and Enterprise, pursuant to the Government Accountability Act the consolidated financial statements of the government of Alberta, annual report 2008-2009; and Measuring Up: Progress Report on the Government of Alberta Business Plan, annual report 2008-2009.

### Orders of the Day

#### Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

##### Bill 205

#### Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my sincere pleasure to rise today and lead off third-reading debate on Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act. Bill 205 is a made-in-Alberta bill that addresses third-party finances and contributions disclosure. It places clear parameters around third-party advertising during provincial elections in a way that advances free speech and the right of people to express their views during an election period.

The concept of this bill is not a new idea. In fact, Mr. Speaker, across North America many jurisdictions have laws governing third-party financing. Some jurisdictions place spending limits, which would limit the amount that a third party could spend on election advertising, while other jurisdictions ban third-party advertising altogether. For example, the federal government and British Columbia have capped the amount that a third party can spend on election advertising.

That is not the case with Bill 205. We do not want to ban, cap, or limit the ability of third parties to spend on advertising during provincial elections. Rather, what Bill 205 aims to achieve is a hybrid of many different approaches where the overall goal is to place third parties on the same level playing field as political parties. The logic behind this is clear. For example, if we were to put a cap of a certain amount of money that a third party could spend on election advertising, then basically we'd be giving political parties a monopoly on speech during an election. Instead, Bill 205 is fair for all those participating in election advertising. Bill 205 finds the balance between respecting the rights of free speech with the need to keep our democratic playing field fair and level.

I would like to highlight some of the provisions of this legislation which would exemplify this balance. Bill 205 establishes a mechanism called the third-party election advertising account. All third parties would be required to establish such an account in order to run political advertising during a provincial election, much like political parties must do as well. In addition, contributions by donors to this account would be set at a fair limit of \$30,000 during an election year and \$15,000 in a nonelection year. This also correlates with the contribution limits currently imposed on political parties.

Mr. Speaker, all of the funds placed in these accounts could be spent by the third party during a provincial election. In other words, if a third party can raise millions of dollars from many different donors, they are free to spend every last cent of that during an election. This concept limits the influence that can be brought about by large contributions without preventing the participation of large amounts of donors. Essentially, if a few wealthy organizations or individuals are proponents of an idea, although they are free to advocate that idea, their ability to use their large wealth to dominate

the media during an election will be reasonably limited under this legislation.

These measures provide for the advancement of interests and ideas based not on the wealth of a few but upon that idea's ability to attract popular support among many. I want to be clear that in no way does this legislation control, stifle, or restrict free speech. In fact, freedom of speech will be enhanced by this bill by giving all ideas and viewpoints a more equal opportunity to flourish within our open and democratic society, and this is essential in a place like Alberta, where we believe so adamantly in the right of free speech.

3:00

Another important aspect of this bill relates to the transparency of third parties. One part of transparency in an open democracy is identifying who is supporting which idea and/or party so that voters can determine the intentions behind certain proposed ideas and legislation. Bill 205 enhances transparency in this regard by requiring third parties to identify themselves on all advertising and promotional materials. Identification is important in ensuring accurate communication between a third party and its targeted audience.

Bill 205 will also require a third party whose political advertising expenditures exceed \$1,000 in an election year to submit a financial report to the Chief Electoral Officer, which would then disclose all advertising spending. Furthermore, this report would identify the donors who contributed more than \$375 to a party's election advertising account. Again, these measures would be similar to the rules governing political parties.

Ultimately, these steps will achieve greater clarity and accountability surrounding third-party advertising and provide the electorate with more information about who is financially supporting an idea. Mr. Speaker, we believe in transparency and accountability and in freedom of speech. These fundamental principles are clearly protected throughout Bill 205. This bill strikes the balance between enhancing democratic fundamentals while achieving a more equitable and level playing field for third-party political advertising during elections. I believe this bill will strengthen transparency and democracy for all Albertans, and I encourage all members here today to stand in support of Bill 205.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. This Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009, suffers from a similar circumstance to Janus on a two-faced Roman coin. On one side it talks about transparency, accountability, and freedom of speech, yet on the other side it talks about limitations.

The side of the bill I support is the notion of accountability and transparency in terms of where the funding is coming from, who the donors are, and the size of the donation. Unfortunately, this type of transparency and accountability is lacking from our own government in terms of how it conducts its own leadership races. The Premier, for example, has yet to disclose where \$163,000 came from in terms of support, and the hon. minister of sustainable resources refuses to provide any information in terms of donors who supported his failed leadership bid. Therefore, the notion that this government is putting forward of transparency and accountability is at best questionable.

This government uses taxpayers' money through its Public Affairs Bureau with over 100 full-time employees to put out what can best be described on a regular basis as either pabulum or propaganda designed to support the Progressive Conservative Party, which is the

governing party of this province. So the accountability and transparency that Bill 205 purports to promote in terms of transparency and accountability and freedom of speech in reality seeks to limit those opportunities, to limit them specifically during an election period to the sum of \$30,000. During a nonelection period it wants to further limit it to \$15,000.

Now, I would have no trouble with the clauses that talk about: where does the money come from and which organizations are behind it? It's very similar to the very limited offerings in our lobbyists registry, where basically a name is all you get and maybe a topic that was being discussed, but it doesn't seem to go beyond that. If we want to be truly transparent and accountable, then eliminating the fear that some third party because of its pockets is going to influence the outcome of an election is rather ludicrous.

We saw what happened in the last election, where negative advertising, although very expensive negative advertising, had at best a limited effect and probably actually resulted in some sympathy vote for the government because it appeared that the leader of the government was being singled out for attack in terms of sort of fading black-and-white advertising, voice-overs, and so on. Obviously, Albertans don't respond to negativity on a large scale. They're looking for solutions alternatives.

If the third-party advertising is talking about what needs to be done, what should be done, and how we as a province could improve our transparency and our accountability and utilize our freedom of speech to put forward alternatives and concerns, then I would suggest that I could support Bill 205, but in its current unfortunate, schizophrenic circumstance the government has to decide whether transparency and accountability trump freedom of speech or whether they're equally important. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that members will realize that if you have a good product, as it seems has been the case for 38 years according to Alberta voters, you shouldn't be threatened by another party attempting to express an opposition point of view.

No campaign that I'm aware of these days can operate successfully under \$30,000. That's an unfortunate situation that only individuals who are capable of raising beyond that amount are likely to have an opportunity to get elected. It narrows the possibility and rules out the democratic experience for a number of Albertans who have good ideas but, unfortunately, shallow pockets. This is just one more method for Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009, to limit the voice of third parties who may not agree with the direction the government is heading.

Premier Klein had a way of singling out individuals that he disagreed with. For example, he would throw members of Friends of Medicare in a lump with the Raging Grannies and any other group that opposed what his view of the right direction of the world was. It was hardly a subtle way of attempting to squash opposition, and I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that I proudly wore my left-wing nut pin that the Premier used to castigate and denounce anyone who didn't follow his far right agenda.

At least he was straightforward. What Bill 205 is doing is more of a subtle gag. It's not nearly as subtle as what happened with the superboard in terms of Dr. Duckett saying to all Alberta health care employees that they would not be allowed to blow the whistle. If they didn't like what was happening or if they didn't appreciate Dr. Duckett's comments, for example, on nurses apparently being the highest paid in Canada or taking inordinately lengthy coffee breaks, they were told basically to shut up.

Alberta has amongst its legislation a blockage of freedom of speech. Whistle-blower legislation is not only frowned upon; there's an attempt to extend that gag. That's exactly what Bill 205, Election



Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009, is doing. It talks about transparency and accountability. It talks about freedom of speech, but in fact it is attempting to limit freedom of speech. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, as I began, it's a two-faced bill, and I can only support one of the faces. Therefore, I'll have to vote against it.

3:10

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased moments ago to hear the Member for Airdrie-Chestermere move third reading of Bill 205, and I just have some comments to add.

I do want to thank this member for his work on this issue. It's one that's important to me as well, and this aspect of the election process that he has talked about, about adhering to ideals that we've come to associate with democracy – namely, fairness, equity, and honesty – is also quite important to me as well. Mr. Speaker, I do believe that through this legislation this member has helped not only to highlight the need for consistency across jurisdictions but also to shed light on the necessity of ensuring an equal and level playing field during elections.

Bill 205 also recognizes that we need to know certain things such as where and from whom our influences are coming. To this end, the purpose of this bill is to specify rules around third-party election advertising in the province, specifically related to contributions. Mr. Speaker, this is to be achieved in part by clarifying the definition of what constitutes political advertising. Within Bill 205 political advertising is defined as that which promotes or opposes registered political parties in the province or the election of candidates in the Alberta Legislature. This would also include any advertising that may be more issue specific, wherein voters are encouraged to vote for or to not vote for parties or particular individual candidates in a constituency that supports or opposes a particular cause or point of view. It may seem somewhat convoluted, but just follow with me here.

Establishing the core definitions is necessary to help determine what falls within the contribution rules to be established by Bill 205. One such rule, Mr. Speaker, includes the regulation of spending on political advertising by requiring that funds relating to that advertising operate through an established third-party election advertising account. Contributions to these accounts could be made by either the sponsor or by eligible donors, all of whom would be required to follow rules similar to those for registered political parties as found within the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

In this case eligible Alberta donors and third parties would include individuals, corporations, nonprofit groups, and trade unions. All around it's not a self-serving exercise, Mr. Speaker. However, they cannot be charitable organizations, nor can they be those with political affiliations such as a candidate, as every member of this Assembly has been, a constituency association, or a registered political party.

Mr. Speaker, some may suggest that these rules, if implemented, could limit or control the flow of information, ultimately restricting free speech. Now, this argument is based, I would submit to you, on the flawed premise that in order for society to have free speech, we must only have two choices: allowing all free speech or allowing no free speech at the same time, all speech at all times by all people. Fortunately, the choice isn't between allowing everything or nothing. It's about determining where the measured and appropriate boundaries do exist and where we want them to exist and what's in the best interest of our democracy in this province.

The simple fact is that we do place limits on freedom of speech and expression for many reasons, Mr. Speaker. One case is to limit cases of libel and slander, another is to eliminate the abuse of power, and another one is to ensure some measure, mode of decorum, professionalism, and good taste, which, of course, we have in this Assembly. Indeed, every society acknowledges that some limits need to be placed on free speech in order to achieve a balance between rights and responsibility. This is consistent with section 1 of our Charter. Whether it's in workplaces, public venues, or political debates, some limits in society are necessary to ensure that we balance appropriately the rights and freedoms with personal responsibility and, of course, good governance.

In the end we're always making assessments and judgments about how much to allow and how much to limit. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, it is this common-sense approach that best serves this province, and it is the one that would help guide the implementation of Bill 205 and ensure a more measured mindset in political speech.

Besides, Mr. Speaker, the problem is not that there are too many restrictions or the kind of advertising that may actually take place but, rather, that sufficient rules do not exist to keep the playing field level. Without a level playing field advertising may allow certain political interests or agendas to monopolize the political dialogue, particularly during elections. In this way, far from being an attack on freedom of speech, Bill 205 would enhance it. How? By implementing a simple, fair, and transparent set of rules. Allowing them to donate and to support third parties that reflect their opinions and concerns allows for more direct voter participation from an individual basis. For the voter these rules help better identify who is trying to influence their vote through advertising. It also puts third parties on an equal footing with political parties, making advertising and rules more consistent across the board and preventing one third party from having an unfair advantage over another third party.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is also consistent with the example set by the Premier over the last few years. This Premier has brought in a lobbyist registry since he came in. This Premier also has brought in all-party committees. This is consistent with accountability that's been set from the top here.

Earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transportation talked about ATVs. You may ask me: what do ATVs have to do with accountability? Well, the distinction that the Minister of Transportation issued was that ATVs are usually on private land whereas vehicles like the one I drive are usually on public land. Likewise, there also is a distinction in accountability. The distinction is that this would apply to public elections.

The previous speaker, the Member for Calgary-Varsity, talked about how this should also apply to private elections. I disagree. I don't feel that for the last leadership race that happened, the leader of the Wildrose Alliance Party should have to go and disclose her donations. Why? Because that's a private election. Neither should anyone who actually ran for a political party in this province. It's a clear distinction between public and private. Obviously, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona disagrees with me. Again, I'm quoting a *Vue Weekly* from October 22, 2009.

Again I say, Mr. Speaker, that there's a distinction between public and private elections. This deals with public accountability. A private election: it's none of my business what happens in another party, who contributes to another leadership candidate's coffers or war chest. That's how they run their own business. This is about public accountability.

I would ask, therefore, just in conclusion that we should be supporting Bill 205 to the fullest degree. I'm happy it has made it to third reading, and I look forward to the rest of the debate.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in order to speak in a very cautious and limited way in favour of this bill, and that is because it is a bill which moves us in a very, very halting and substandard and inadequate way towards the right destination, which, unfortunately, is too far off in the distance to see, but at least we're going in that general direction. That is about ensuring and enhancing transparency and accountability when it comes to election financing and also structuring our election financing in a way where the value of an individual's dollar does not overtake the value of their vote, which, unfortunately, is a little bit of a question mark in Alberta at this point.

We are moving towards having third parties governed by the same legislation that governs the political parties and candidates in Alberta, and that's a good thing for all the reasons that proponents of the bill have identified. The difficulty, unfortunately, is that the rules in Alberta which govern political parties and candidates are themselves inadequate. We have in Alberta what I would suggest are the most freewheeling election financing laws in the country, and it creates a number of problems.

I'll start first by just mentioning one shortfall which the previous speaker ended his comments on, which is the failure of our election laws to require candidates, either for leadership or for nomination, to disclose the sources of their funding. I suggest that the argument is that these are private organizations, so why should we know how much they raise and from whom as they go about selecting their leader? That's an interesting argument. However, I would have loved to have seen them or members of the government use that argument during their leadership contest for the current Premier because I'm pretty sure they ran around telling people that if they wanted to have a say on who the Premier should be, they ought to buy a Tory membership and use that Tory membership to select the Premier. I'm quite sure that that was the exact language that people were subjected to.

3:20

You know, there was certainly some merit to that position, and that is why, of course, those same people who buy those memberships have a right to know who supports and funds different leadership campaigns. I find it interesting that to this date we have still not heard who financed the Premier's successful leadership campaign, nor have we heard about who financed the unsuccessful leadership bid of the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. I suspect we might find that there are some similarities between that donor list and those who financed the new leader of the Wildrose Alliance Party, but there again we don't know.

This is politics. This is politics, and I think that to the extent that you can open that up for people to see it, then that's what should happen. You know, I suggest that that should also be the case for people who run for nomination because, again, in many cases that nomination battle in some parts of the province ultimately amounts to the decision around who is going to be elected in that area. In my own nomination – very, very small scale, of course, compared to the huge dollars that the members opposite engage in – I made a commitment that all those who donated to my nomination would have their names disclosed to the public because we felt that that was an important part of the political process. When one particular donor asked that their name not be disclosed to the public, I simply sent the money back to that person. I would suggest that that is the approach that all members of this Assembly should take.

Now, with respect overall to the funding and the rules around funding elections in Alberta the bottom line is this: we have a very inadequate set of rules. We allow for a maximum of \$30,000 in election time. We allow for a maximum of \$15,000 in other years. Depending on who you're getting your money from, that can add up pretty quickly if people actually take advantage of those maximums.

It was interesting to me. Last Sunday I happened to be listening to the radio and heard an interesting political discussion on CKUA radio, and one of the people speaking there was the former Minister of Energy for this government, who is now a private citizen, Rick Orman. They were talking about the royalty rate issue, and they were talking about whether or not the apparent ascent of the Wildrose Alliance would result in yet even more cuts to the royalty rates enjoyed by oil companies in Alberta. The discussion was around whether there was a political desire for it on the part of the people of Alberta or not.

Interestingly – and I paraphrase here – one of the conclusions that Mr. Orman talked about was, well, whether it is or isn't something that the people of Alberta want. The political power base in this province is in Calgary because that's where the money to fund politics comes from. It comes from the oil industry. They fund politicians whether it's the Conservatives or the Wildrose Alliance or, to a lesser extent, the Liberal Party. This is what he said. He said: for that reason, we could expect to see more movement towards reducing royalty rates even more because that's what the political power brokers in Alberta want.

That, my friends, is what is wrong with election financing in Alberta, and I would suggest that in the long run what we need to do is have third parties subjected to election financing rules. But we should then adopt the election financing rules used by the federal government, used by the province of Quebec, used by the province of Manitoba, where donors are individuals. The end. Corporations don't get to donate. Unions don't get to donate. Voters get to donate. So voters remain the people who ultimately control the outcomes within our democratic system and are not, instead, the innocent observers on the sidelines.

It is for that reason that we will give reluctant support to this bill but with the very strong proviso that there is a tremendous need for the province to overhaul the election financing rules overall. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in third reading to Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009. You know, when I see situations that develop such as the one that led to the impetus for this bill, I'm always really curious about what started that. Why did this whole situation create itself?

If I may hazard a little hypothesis here, I think there's an immense amount of voter and active citizen frustration out there with the political system that we have. People feel that they cannot influence the political parties. They cannot influence or move the party that has been in power for so many years in Alberta. They can get involved with other parties, but it doesn't help to sort of shift or move that monolith that's in place, so we end up with these splinter groups developing which are not political parties, but they may have come out of a special interest or they may have set themselves up as an alternative to the process.

We end up with groups like Public Interest Alberta, Parkland, Pembina. That right there is a mix of sort of very specific focuses,

Pembina, obviously, on environmental and natural resource issues. Then there's a whole other group in there that are the sort of traditional think tanks that tend to come out with a particular political bias like Canada West and the Fraser Institute, the centre for public policy, and a few other ones like that. I'm talking about the homegrown ones. I am talking about ones like the Greater Edmonton Alliance, Public Interest Alberta because I do see them as flowing from that active citizen frustration that they could not either get entry to or kind of move the system that they were in.

Interestingly, I think it has actually served to in some ways entrench the system that we're in because it certainly has syphoned money off of people who may have otherwise supported a political party, particularly political parties that were not the governing party. Those donations now tend to go to those groups, and of course they are active around election time. So these are the groups that now the attempt is being made to capture. Of course, we have the very famous one from the recent election, which was a coalition of various unions and trade associations and worker associations that were specifically trying to make a point about the last government.

Out of a particular set of circumstances we have citizens moving in a particular direction and creating a certain entity in order to explore something that suits them better than what we're currently offering them. That I take as a statement and an encouragement to work harder on how we're offering up our individual access points to political parties. Certainly, in a younger demographic it seems they're not very interested in joining political parties, and they say they never will be. It just doesn't work the way they want it to.

So who's going to be captured under this legislation? That's what we're looking at in third reading. What's the anticipated effect of this bill when it comes into place? Well, I wonder if the sponsor of the bill anticipated that it would likely capture groups, possibly, like Public Interest Alberta, where it would now be having to disclose its finances, but in fact it raises money for a number of other activities that it gets involved in. So how do we divide up that transparency? Do they have a right to say: well, we spent this amount of money during the election campaign or during the prescribed period, and that's what you may have access to and look at, but the rest of our activities have taken place over a number of years and have involved policy development and conventions and all kinds of other activities. They did a series of seniors' workshops, for example. You don't get access to that because it's not specifically directed to third-party advertising around an election campaign. I don't think that has been anticipated or explored by the sponsor of the bill, and I wonder if we have not created a rather large can of worms as a result of that.

3:30

The second thing for me that is a deciding factor in support or nonsupport of the bill is what I call the YISBYs, which is: yes, great idea, but not in my political party, or not in my backyard is another way of looking at it, so support for the general idea but not to apply to us, thank you very much. And here we have it. In fact, it was illustrated by a couple of the speakers supporting the bill. Great idea; love transparency; everybody should have to admit to this, well, except not for leadership campaigns and not for nominations. That is where you create the problem. As soon as you start to have exceptions to transparency, you create that problem.

There are some people that do not have to admit to this now – there's a curtain they can stand behind; there's a half-open door that they are looking through or that we can look through – and that's where the problems are created. So it is that sort of YISBY. I have to, I think, give credit to someone else for coining that particular term. I won't name them at this point, but it's not me, so I can't take the credit for it.

But that to me is the problem with what's anticipated here. If we had said, "Yes, we're going to throw this open, and we are going to

deal with everybody that gets involved in third-party advertising in an election campaign," and had a really clear and fairly wide-reaching definition around that but also around the rest of the political process – if we're going to talk about it, then let's do it.

It should be around nominations. It should be, in particular, around leadership. Where do we have a dividing line there? Well, I would argue that there shouldn't be one. You know, here we had the Wildrose Alliance. Well, they refused to give us, to make public, who donated to their leadership campaign or supported any given leadership candidate. But we had exactly the same thing when we had a leadership campaign in the governing party, and indeed that was what people were being approached with: you, too, can buy a membership and vote for your choice of the next Premier.

That's exactly what they were selling, and I was horrified at the time that people that I knew and loved in the community could be enticed to buy a membership in a political party that they told me they did not support – why? – because they were going to get to vote for their choice of the next Premier. That entire contest is not covered under what this legislation would cover, and that to me is the fatal flaw in the bill because as soon as you start to create those YISBY moments – yes but not in my political party – that's where the problem starts. People fail to be convinced that there's credibility in the process when they can see immediately that well-publicized and well-known opportunities to hide behind that curtain or hide behind that door out in the hallway are within recent memory. So I appreciate what the member was trying to do in throwing open that transparency; I think he's failed to do it.

I have been fortunate to attend twice the COGEL conferences, which are the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws, and they have been great opportunities for me, and I've learned a lot. I went to one a long time ago in Texas and more recently to one in Chicago, and both times I was really struck by what happens in the U.S., where there are no spending limits, but the trick is that everybody has to fess up.

Even in that system they have people that go to great lengths not to be seen donating the money. So they donate it through the names of their children, and companies donate it through the names of their executives who they give bonuses to – I'm moving my fingers in little air quotation marks there – with the expectation and the directive that those bonuses are funneled through to a political party. So even in a system where there are no limits – anybody can donate any amount of money, but you must fess up to it; you must put your name on it – there is a certain reluctance to have your name attached to a political donation, to be seen supporting a particular candidate. I think that even if we got this far, it still wouldn't solve the problem.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, followed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

**Mr. Mitzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009, brought forward by the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere. By clearly defining the parameters around third-party spending on election advertising, the proposed legislation would help level the political playing field. Indeed, Bill 205 recognizes the importance of political advertising and seeks to ensure that all Albertans, be they third-party sponsors or eligible donors, are more fully aware of the range of views that their donations may support. This helps safeguard free speech for Albertans and limits the ability of individual interests alone to direct a political dialogue and perhaps outcomes. At the same time, it enhances the ability of third parties to bring more ideas to the forefront, whereas in the past they may have been unable to do so.

To achieve this, Bill 205 would put in place a number of guidelines helping to bring a greater degree of structure to election advertising as well as a greater transparency over sponsorship. Third parties would be required to register an election advertising account and could only maintain one of these at a time. Furthermore, if they spend more than a thousand dollars on election advertising, third parties are required to disclose this spending to the Chief Electoral Officer. They must also disclose the identity of those eligible donors which contributed more than \$375. An eligible donor would include Alberta residents as well as nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations and corporations, provided they conduct their activities within the province, as well as trade unions.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation would also bring greater consistency and continuity to election laws in Alberta, an important element that helps the legislation integrate more easily into the rules and regulations that currently exist by specifying who can contribute to these accounts. For example, Bill 205 would bring third parties under similar contribution and disclosure requirements that political parties in Alberta must adhere to.

The bill would also limit the amount that donors may contribute, again, similar to political parties. Eligible donors would have their contributions to election advertising accounts capped at \$15,000 per year and up to a maximum of \$30,000 during a campaign period. But, Mr. Speaker, it's important to point out that while there's a limit on how much each donor may contribute to third-party accounts, Bill 205 does not limit the amount that a third party can spend on political advertising. Doing so would place an unnecessary boundary on the actions of third parties and inhibit free speech.

In addition, limiting the amount that may be spent on election advertising implies that the greater amount that one spends, the more likely it is that their ideas will be supported. However, this is less often the case. Greater wealth does not necessarily equate to more worthwhile political ideas. Instead, it's allowing discussion to take place, and the exercise of free speech allows the ideas to develop. Besides, in cases where a third party may have done an exemplary job of raising funds from a great number of individual donors, even to their individual maximums, they should be entitled to spend these funds as they see fit.

In this way Bill 205 is more targeted, addressing and resolving only those gaps and inconsistencies that exist in the current legislation that need to be corrected. As the saying goes, it's not trying to reinvent the wheel. In fact, I find this to be one of the selling points, Mr. Speaker. This is because there's a role to be played by third parties in the political process and the opportunity that election advertising can play in the exercise of free speech.

For one thing, it helps voters in their ability to make an informed choice. Election advertising allows third parties to contribute to the election dialogue by providing other points of view on election issues or on a candidate's platform. This allows the voter to consider issues in greater depth, and the ensuing discussion helps to clarify aspects of an election platform, allowing voters to look at issues that they may not have considered. Oftentimes third-party advocates may be more informed on the intricacies and substances of more complex issues. They can therefore ask more direct questions, challenging election candidates to deepen their positions. In the end, helping voters to become more informed allows them to be more confident that their choice most closely reflects their sensibilities.

3:40

This also strikes at the heart of something deeper; namely, the rights of citizens, either as individuals or within associations, to have the freedom to discuss with each other the issues that they believe

matter most. While there are certainly other methods such as public forums, it is most often through mass communication avenues that we convey many of these ideas. Particularly in the modern age, when electronic communication is overtaking print, the ability of third parties to use political advertising is key to conveying political critique and fostering a continuing dialogue. Although face-to-face discussions on political issues still exist, we're not always able to have these dialogues in person and with as diverse an audience as we may like. Therefore, we often rely on political advertising and the ideas promoted by third parties to bring matters of public interest forward to ensure that the concerns of all Albertans are raised and answered, Mr. Speaker, particularly during elections, when this often matters the most.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the extent to which we respect the plurality of ideas and support freedom of speech on political discussion signals our respect for democracy, which is fundamentally based on these concepts. Therefore, I would support Bill 205, and I encourage all members of the House to do so as well.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009. I would like to commend the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere for bringing forth this bill. Currently third parties in Alberta are not subject to any rules regarding their conduct with respect to election advertising. Bill 205 would establish rules to create legislative definitions of third parties and election advertising. Further, it would establish a process that these bodies would have to lawfully follow when conducting election advertising in Alberta.

By establishing a process, Bill 205 is designed to support third parties in their election advertising endeavors while enhancing the transparency of communications during the election period. This would ensure a greater consistency of transparency-related rules across all politically motivated bodies in our province. Mr. Speaker, currently political parties and candidates must follow a comprehensive process that guides the collection and disclosure of their finances. They use these finances to fuel their campaigns and opinions, to communicate their messages to the public.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Despite the fact that third parties do not have political candidates who are running for office, they too are political bodies, and like political parties, they also seek to inform the public of certain issues or promote or oppose a certain platform or candidate. Mr. Speaker, it would therefore make sense that they should follow a similar process in terms of the acquisition of funds as well as disclosure of contributions and expenses made for election advertising. Bill 205 seeks to accomplish this.

Under Bill 205 an individual or entity that wishes to run an election advertising campaign that promoted or opposed a particular candidate or political party either directly or indirectly would be known as a third-party sponsor. Their advertising would be known as third-party election advertising, and all funds used to fuel any political advertising would have to be paid out of a third-party advertising account, which would be registered to the third-party sponsor.

In addition, any and all third-party election advertising accounts would have to be registered with the Chief Electoral Officer. Third-

party sponsors would have to submit financial statements, including disclosure of contributions and expenditures from this third-party election advertising account, to the Chief Electoral Officer for examination and public disclosure.

Bill 205 would also establish a process for the collection of funds placed into a third-party election advertising account. Under Bill 205 donations would be limited by source and amount. For example, Mr. Speaker, to contribute any money to an election advertising account, the contributor would have to satisfy the rules of being an eligible donor. This entails that individual donors would have to be residents of Alberta. Organizations that are eligible donors would be trade unions, registered not-for-profit organizations, or corporations so long as they hold an office and carry a business in Alberta. All of these elements of Bill 205 set out to establish a clear, defined, and transparent process for third parties to follow when engaging in political advertising. This process would aid third parties in organizing their activities.

Mr. Speaker, in light of Bill 205 I believe it is important to examine the process of third-party election advertising on the federal level to see its success in enabling, not inhibiting, third parties in the political system. In the year 2000 the federal government in passing Bill C-2 established a newly defined process for third parties to advertise during political campaigns. The new process requires third parties to register with the Chief Electoral Officer during an election and places a spending limit of \$150,000 on political advertising per third party per election.

I believe this process assists third parties in their political advertising endeavours. This belief is based on the fact that since the federal legislation was enacted and a clear process for third-party advertising was defined, there has been an increase with every election in the total number of third parties that have registered. For example, in the November 2000 federal election, shortly after the enactment of this legislation, a total of 48 third parties registered with Elections Canada. In the election held in June 2004 there were 63 third parties that registered. In the election held in January 2006 there were 80 third parties that registered. Mr. Speaker, the fact that more third parties registered with the Chief Electoral Officer is indicative that establishing a clear process is facilitative for third parties.

In addition to an increase in third parties registered across these three elections, there has been an increase in the amount of money spent on political advertising. In 2000 there was just over \$675,000 spent collectively. In 2004 the number jumped to over \$710,000. In the 2006 election the total amount spent on third-party election advertising was well over a million dollars.

Mr. Speaker, these trends suggest that a definite process would further enable third parties rather than inhibit them. Ultimately, Bill 205 would establish a clear process to facilitate third parties in coordinating funding and running advertising campaigns during an election. Furthermore, because under Bill 205 a third party would follow similar rules as political parties, they would adhere to a greater level of transparency and accountability.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I stand before the Assembly in support of Bill 205. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 205, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009. Bill 205 works to establish definitions of third-party sponsors and to legislate guidelines for these groups to raise funds and run election advertising campaigns. Currently there are no formal definitions or rules that third parties must adhere to when engaging in political advertising during provincial elections.

Bill 205 would change this by establishing a clearly defined, fair, and transparent process. For example, Mr. Speaker, it would define political advertising as advertising that either directly or indirectly promotes or opposes the election of a political party or candidate to the Alberta Legislature. It would require third parties to identify themselves on all advertising and promotional material.

3:50

Further, Bill 205 would ensure that funds used to run an election advertising campaign originated from a third-party advertising account. In this way all third-party spending used for advertising would be required to originate from the advertising fund. Fundraising would also be regulated in that only eligible donors could contribute to this fund. This would mean that only Alberta residents, registered corporations, nonprofit organizations, and trade unions that hold bargaining rights for employees in Alberta could make contributions to the third-party advertising account.

Under Bill 205 donors would be required to adhere to similar contributions and disclosure rules as those that govern political parties. That would entail that eligible donors could contribute as much as \$15,000 to a third-party advertising account in a given year and a maximum of \$30,000 to aggregate to a third-party advertising account.

Mr. Speaker, time has run out, but I will let my hon. colleague know that I support third reading. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

I hesitate to interrupt, but Standing Order 8(7)(a)(iii) provides up to five minutes for the sponsor of the bill to close the debate. The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to move third reading of Bill 205 and would like to thank all members for their contribution to the third reading debate on this bill. This bill sets these parameters in a way that levels the playing field for third parties while at the same time advancing free speech and the rights of people to express their views during an election period. This is important to me and my colleagues, who believe strongly in the advancement of free speech.

Again, I would like to thank all the members who have participated throughout this Bill 205 debate, and I would encourage all members to support this important bill. With that, I close debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 205 read a third time]

### **Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** I'd like to call the committee to order.

#### **Bill 206**

#### **School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009**

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure to begin committee stage for Bill 206, the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009. I want to start by

thanking my colleagues for their input during second reading. Their comments were very helpful to me as I moved forward with this bill. I've had feedback from some of my colleagues and from some other stakeholders about the intent of this legislation, and I want to make one thing very clear. This bill is about protecting students and staff in our schools; it's not about usurping the power of the school boards or the principals or the teachers. The students who are bullied frequently live in a constant state of torment. This bill aims to protect them.

As I mentioned during second reading, I've done a lot of work with stakeholders to make sure I got this bill right. I've talked with parents, I've talked with police, I've talked with principals, and I've also talked with the Alberta Teachers' Association. The ATA expressed some concerns that section 5 of Bill 206 could take away the power of principals to suspend students whose conduct is detrimental to school safety. This was completely inadvertent and not consistent with the bill's intent. I fully appreciate that suspending a student is sometimes necessary.

To ensure that there is no conflict between the intent of this bill and its provisions, Mr. Chairman, I would like to table an amendment to Bill 206. This amendment deals with section 5 of the bill, which impacts section 24 of the School Act.

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. member, we'll pause while the amendment is being passed out. This will be amendment A1.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amendment proposes to strike out section 5 of the bill and substitute the following. Section 24 is amended (a) in subsection (1) under (i) in clause (a) by striking out "section 12, or" and substituting "section 12, 12.1 or 12.2," and under (ii) by adding the following after clause (a): "(a.1) the student has failed to participate in an educational measures program, as directed under section 23.1, or"; and (b) in subsection (7) by striking out "section 12" and substituting "section 12, 12.1 or 12.2".

With this issue cleared up, I'd like to make a couple of points about Bill 206. Some have asked if I would include more provisions to define certain behaviours as illegal. I've been asked if I would include a specific section on hazing or to protect those who are bullied because their family is poor. There certainly is some merit to this position. At the same time, defining behaviours too narrowly leaves room for the offender to argue that their behaviour is not covered under the act. I don't think anyone wants to get into that kind of debate. The bill in its current form will outlaw all behaviours which harass or intimidate other students.

The provision in this bill which deals with bullying has sparked a lot of interest. My phone has rung off the hook with people asking questions and offering feedback. This is very positive, Mr. Chairman. It's high time that we have this discussion.

There is another part of the bill, though, that I want to highlight. Bill 206 would make it illegal to have drugs, drug paraphernalia, or weapons in our schools. Period. No more wrangling about the student's intent or whether that billy club was really going to be used to harm another student. It would be illegal to have these things, and the bill would give our police officers and school staff the ability to deal with it.

It's also going to tackle the problem of cyberbullying head-on. We know that being bullied on Facebook or your cellphone or Twitter or any one of the myriad of other technologies out there can turn a student's life into a living hell. Mr. Chair, sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me. Or will they? Ugly. Faggot. Slut. Fatso. I hate you. You are sad and disgusting, and you will never amount to anything.

Mr. Chair, I just finished a book, which was given to me by a mom whose son was tormented. He eventually took his own life. This book is about other kids who were bullied in school and ended up committing suicide. The name-calling was the start of many more things to come.

Mr. Chair, Bill 206 is a positive trend for our schools, and I'm asking my colleagues to assist in helping me pass Bill 206. Thank you.

4:00

**The Deputy Chair:** Any other members wish to speak to the amendment?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question on the amendment?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. members, may we interrupt for a moment to have Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Introduction of Guests

(reversion)

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek mentioned a book that was given to her by a very concerned parent, and if I'm correct, that book is *Bullycide*. It talks about children who were driven to suicide. Today in this House we have with us the lady who provided the hon. member with that book. Mrs. Betty Wedman, if you wouldn't mind standing up. Betty knows all too well the importance of this particular bill and prevention. Can we give Betty recognition and a round of applause for being here.

### Bill 206

#### School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers)

#### Amendment Act, 2009

(continued)

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity on the bill as amended.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. Speaking to the bill as amended, in order to be successful, the bill has to have two things behind it. One is funding, and the other is teeth, or strong language, in order to make sure that the honourable intentions of the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek can be realized.

Now, as part of the parliamentary procedures we realize that private members' bills cannot ask specifically for funding. For this bill to be successful, there has to be funding to develop curriculum programs for use throughout Alberta schools. There has to be funding for in-services for teachers who are currently teaching, including principals, administrators, so that they can recognize bullying in all its aspects. There has to also be funding for curriculum development at the university level for students entering the Education faculty. This is absolutely essential for this to happen, and hopefully it will follow in order to make Bill 206 the success that both the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek and I would like to see happen.

I would like to also talk about successful programs that have been piloted in this province. I'd like to share with the members a letter that I received from a lady by the name of Lisa Dixon-Wells. She's the founder of a nationally recognized bully prevention program called Dare To Care. Dare To Care, thanks to funding from EnCana, has operated in a number of schools throughout Alberta and has raised the profile of the importance of being proactive in preventing bullying.

I'd like to share with the members some of the concerns that Lisa Dixon-Wells brought up. She says:

I read with great interest, the article in the Calgary Herald on Sept 20th.

That article was written by Sarah McGinnis, an education writer with the *Herald*, on the subject of Bill 206.

The provincial legislators are looking to implement a plan that will mandate that schools report all bullying and weapons-related incidents to Alberta Education annually (Bill 206). This letter is to support your stand that the Bill itself will do very little to reduce or even address the horrible stories of bullying and violence in our schools. Through years of experience working in schools around this province, I absolutely agree that the only solution is to implement a comprehensive and proven bully prevention program in all schools in Alberta. If everyone would start speaking the same language around bullying, start defining bullying consistently and correctly, and if everyone had the tools to recognize the problem early and intervene effectively, then, and only then, will we start making significant progress in helping the 15% of students in every school that are the vicious targets of daily physical and emotional assaults.

And that 15 per cent, Mr. Chair, is just the extremes of bullying. Lisa Dixon-Wells goes on to say:

It is my strong belief that a school can have the most committed staff, the most solid discipline policy, and the most supportive parent community available to them, but if the school fails to mobilize the students themselves nothing is going to change. Only 4% of bullying is ever reported by students so a Bill alone will not change the pervasive, hidden nature of bullying. Almost 80% of every school community is made up of a silent majority of students. These students are the eyes and ears of our schools. They know what's going on in the locker rooms, the bus, the gym and the hallways. These are very caring students who are very capable of dealing with normal, day to day conflict. But when it escalates into bullying, these students become almost debilitated . . . much like adults in the community. They are fearful of making the situation worse, fearful of retaliation, fearful of being seen as a "rat", and fearful that adults will not take it seriously. Bill 206 is going to do nothing to dispel this fear. Education and support will.

Now, Mr. Chair, I would like to talk about the second part of my consideration, beyond the funding that is necessary to implement a successful bullying program for children, for their teachers, and for curriculum instruction. In order to do that, I have an amendment that I would like to have distributed, and when that has been done, I'll talk about the need for strong language.

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. members, we'll pause while this amendment is distributed.

Hon. members, we will call this amendment A2. I'd ask the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity to continue, please.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As I pointed out in speaking to the previously amended Bill 206, we don't have the option as private members to lay out the types of funding that we believe would be necessary to accomplish the ends of the legislation that we are putting forward. What we can, however, do is strengthen the wording, provide a degree of teeth to the legislation. We can

change may's to must's in order to ensure that the action actually takes place, and that is the gist of amendment A2, that the members have before them.

**4:10**

The amendment states that Mr. Chase is to move that Bill 206, School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009, be amended in section 4 by striking out the proposed section 23.1(3) and (4) and substituting the following.

Now, if hon. members wish to follow along with the original bill, I'd just like to highlight some key changes. Section (3) remains basically as it was indicated with the exception that

if the principal believes on reasonable and probable grounds that a student may have contravened section 12.1 or 12.2, the principal . . .

And here's a key word: must. Members, you might want to circle that key word because it's at the heart of our discussions. "The principal must." It allows the principal discretion on whether or not he believes bullying has occurred, but once he has recognized the fact that the bullying has occurred, then there is a compulsion on the part of the principal to do something about it.

The rest of the wording continues, but instead of the principal "may meet and consult," it says that the principal must meet and consult with the student and the student's parent and, if a peace officer has been consulted under subsection (2), that peace officer.

So the key part of (3) is changing "may" to "must."

In section (4), similarly, the idea of may is turned into must.

If the peace officer after having been consulted under subsection (3) believes on reasonable and probable grounds that a student has contravened section 12.1 or 12.2, the principal and the peace officer must.

That's the difference. Instead of may, it's must. It's a requirement that action be taken.

Now, going beyond the may's to must's is (4.1), where it says: "Where the peace officer and principal deem it appropriate." In other words, the decision is still being left in the principal's hands as the administrator of how many thousands or, in a small elementary school, hundreds of children. So the principal still has that option of taking appropriate action. It's not binding the principal in this case to take appropriate action, but it says:

Where the peace officer and principal deem it appropriate, other persons belonging to the school community may be directed to participate in an educational measures program under subsection (4).

There is not just simply an aggressor in a bullying situation. There are also all the children that that bully has impacted the lives of. So simply developing a program for the bully as though it were a singular inoculation and not dealing with bullying as a major disease, so to speak, that not only affects the bully but the victims of the bully – and after the fact every other child and every other teacher in that school needs to be brought into the creation of the solution. Unless that happens, then we're dealing with one-offs, one bully at a time, and that is an incoherent attempt.

In putting forward amendment A2, the key factors I pointed out are the must's and the (4.1) section. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek on amendment A2.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've listened to the hon. member very intently, and quite frankly I'm not opposed to changing it from "may" to "must." He made some valid points, so I am prepared to accept his amendments.

**The Deputy Chair:** Any other members wish to speak on amendment A2?

Hearing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A2 carried]

**The Deputy Chair:** Back to the bill as amended.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I very much appreciate the collaborative process that has just been demonstrated in this House. We're doing what we've been elected to do, and that's to put forward legislation that is going to improve the lives of Albertans, in this case Alberta children. Mrs. Wedman is here today to see that what happened to her son Alex is not repeated. That is the intention of the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, and that is what we all have to be directed toward accomplishing, the well-being of children.

As I pointed out in arguing amendment A2, it's not just the bully whose attitude has to be changed, but it's the climate of fear that surrounds the school, that ripples out from that bullying. We have to address the factors that turned the bully into the bully, that continue to make victims of everyone who stands by and does nothing to intervene to prevent bullying from happening. That is why I support the hon. member's intent, and I am hoping that a government bill that has the funding requirements necessary to make Bill 206 realized will follow in subsequent legislation.

I thank the hon. members of this House for collaboratively working together to improve the bill through the discussion process, through the amendment process. I would suggest that democracy is alive and well and operating in this House at this time.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Strathcona.

**Mr. Quest:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to rise today and join in the discussion in committee stage on Bill 206, the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009. I believe that establishing definitions for what constitutes banned items and bullying would enhance the foundation for effective conflict resolution and ensure a safe learning environment for both students and teachers. In light of this, I'd like to speak to section 2 subsection (1.1). This section states that bullying includes all actions outlined in clause (b.1) which are conducted through electronic media. In turn, subsection (ii)(b.1) of Bill 206 defines what constitutes bullying. It states that bullying includes written abuse directed at an individual and threats of physical and sexual assault on an individual.

Mr. Chairman, due to the prevalence and popularity of electronic media outlets, bullying can now be conducted without face-to-face interaction both on and off the school grounds. Electronic media sources include text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail, and websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. Text messaging along with websites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter have provided students with the opportunity to share information and network with friends.

The speed at which information travels through the Internet and cellphones is an attractive feature to users; however, these electronic media outlets can have serious drawbacks when students use them to intimidate and bully fellow classmates. The issue of electronic bullying affects students of all ages, from elementary school to postsecondary and continuing education programs. Bullying through electronic media sources has an equally damaging effect on students' academic lives, social lives along with the students' mental and

physical health. The legislation is clear that bullying in the forms described is equally as intolerable when issued over the Internet or through cellular phones.

Mr. Chairman, we're all well aware that bullying takes place in our schools, and we know the emotional and physical distress it causes its victims. In fact, we've witnessed the tragic effects that bullying can have on students. Delivery of threatening or abusive messages through electronic media sources is no exception. Students subjected to these threats and abuse may fear entering the school just like students who are subject to more conventional bullying.

Furthermore, electronic media can be used not only for students to bully or threaten fellow classmates but also to humiliate the individual on a public stage. An example of this is the numerous social media outlets that allow users to post status updates on their personal page and post comments on their other friends' pages. When these updates and comments are threats or demeaning remarks directed at a particular individual, all the user's friends have the opportunity to view the exchange. This type of repetitive harassment, which works to maintain an imbalance of power over another student, is unacceptable. This behaviour cannot be tolerated through electronic media sources inside or outside the school walls.

A student's time outside of school should generally consist of leisure activities, homework, and time spent with family and friends. These activities coupled with the student's time in the classroom provide the basis for a healthy social relationship both at school and at home. Many students who are bullied see their home as a refuge from the harassment they encounter while at school. However, now with the use of cellphones and computers verbal abuse and threats can be issued at any time.

4:20

Bill 206 recognizes that electronic media sources can be used to foster a culture of fear and intimidation by stating: "bullying includes any of the actions outlined in clause (b.1) that are conducted through electronic media." Section 2 subsection (1.1) ensures that Bill 206 is inclusive of bullying that occurs through these harmful mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that under certain circumstances it is important to change our approach. Bill 206 acknowledges how conventional bullying has evolved and how important it is to be inclusive of electronic media within our legislation. This approach will continue to protect the teachers and students in Alberta from harassment and bullying. It's true that preventing bullying inside school walls is necessary to ensure that students can achieve their full academic potential.

Alberta schools should be a place where both students and teachers feel safe and comfortable, a place of learning and healthy social interactions. Mr. Chairman, section 2 subsection (1.1) enhances our ability to effectively achieve this environment. This is the basis for future academic pursuits and career ambitions, therefore creating a comprehensive approach to protect individuals from bullying that's crucial to the development and success of our students.

Mr. Chairman, just to draw a parallel, numerous electronic media outlets provide a forum that is similar to a school assembly. We would not tolerate a student being verbally abused in front of the entire school while other students watched. This is why the inclusion of an electronic media clause is so important. Our students cannot be expected to perform at their peak if they fear physical assault or have been repeatedly slandered and demeaned regardless of how the comments are issued.



Countless studies on electronic bullying have concluded similar negative effects on students as the bullying that occurs in the schoolyard or the classrooms. The prevalence of electronic media has transformed the issue of bullying beyond a simple schoolyard issue. By focusing on electronic media sources in addition to bullying inside our schools, we take a comprehensive approach to a very serious problem.

I believe that Bill 206 is a step forward in eliminating bullying and intimidation in our schools and in further promoting a safe learning environment for both students and teachers. That being said, I urge all members to vote in favour of Bill 206 at this stage.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for St. Albert.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to get up and speak again to this bill in committee stage. This bill obviously has a very, very worthwhile intent to it. When I spoke to this bill – I think it was in the spring – in second reading, I outlined my concerns with how it was perhaps a little bit incongruent with decisions made by this Assembly with respect to Bill 44. But separate and apart from that issue, I would like to talk about the rest of the bill and what it's attempting to do.

I think there are some good elements to the bill in terms of dealing with the problem that I think exists in almost every school, probably, across the province. One of the things that I do like about the bill is sort of the notion of setting out a clear process of response and setting out some mechanisms of accountability in terms of how bullying is identified as well as how it's responded to once it's raised by the student or friends of the student or parents or whomever.

Certainly, in that sense it's very good because as things stand now, I have to say that there's not really a consistent response in many of our schools. It's often subject to the discretion of teachers and principals, and while there's something to be said for that, the fact of the matter is that from the perspective of students and from the perspective of parents they need to know what the process is, and they need to know what they can expect to have happen and what they should be able to ask their teacher or principal to deal with. The reality is that there is inconsistency on the part of teachers and on the part of principals in terms of their relative skills in dealing with these kinds of issues when they arise.

I'm not, as I think I said before, a huge fan of the role of the peace officer in this particular legislation although, again, I do understand that it's trying to raise the level of seriousness that is directed towards the assessment of the activities or the behaviour in question. I appreciate the value of that. Again, I think that when you get into issues of trying to change behaviour, the punitive aspects of changing that behaviour, ultimately you're almost at the last. You're at the end of the line on that at that point if you have to start engaging in punitive action because that's probably your least effective mechanism of changing behaviour, in changing the culture within the school setting. I understand that it was not the intent to take away a teacher's or a principal's ability to suspend a student. I'm sorry if I missed if that was part of the amendments that were put into place. I'm going to assume that they were – I'm not sure – and then I'll check before I go forward to vote on this.

The other point that I'd like to make with respect to all of this, though, which I think is really important for all of us as members of the Assembly who are working on this problem to consider, goes back to the point that I was making about how if you're at a point when you're engaging in punitive actions and you're taking someone out of the school or you're bringing in a peace officer, in many

respects you're at the end of the process. You're not likely to get a change in behaviour from the bullying student, nor, frankly, are you very likely to make a fundamental change to the culture within that school setting.

Most people who engage in behaviour modification strategies with children at risk know that the better mechanism for changing behaviour is through basically changing the behaviour when the child is motivated to do it simply by offering them other alternatives and other options rather than through punitive options. For instance, the fact of the matter is that you can find relatively simple mechanisms to change the dynamic on the school ground so as to negate the potential of bullying. So rather than having 15 kids go run to a part of the school ground that's not supervised, where it's partially hidden from supervision, you actually have more staff time dedicated to organized activities, to intramurals, to staff on the playground who can intervene and actually establish more positive behaviour by all the students on the playground by organizing activities or whatever.

What this links into, of course, is the fact that many of our schools are suffering from a shortage of staffing, and much of that work right now on the playground is being done by volunteers, usually by parents and relatives of children. They are the ones that are on the school ground, often, trying to manage the behaviour of students. They either do it on a volunteer basis or on an honorarium basis, which works out to much less than hourly wages. These are the people that our system has essentially invited to engage in this behaviour management. Now, obviously, the better approach would be for there to be trained staff there on the playground, in the gyms, in the lunchrooms, behind the bushes, wherever, ensuring that negative behaviours don't ever start, and part of the reason that doesn't happen is because there simply isn't the capacity in the school system.

4:30

In one sense this bill goes towards this broader issue; you know, do you simply put all your efforts into punitive actions, or do you try and prevent the crime from happening in advance by providing the kinds of supports that would negate it or discourage it from happening? I'm not saying that my solution is the only solution, and I'm not saying that there aren't elements of this bill which are worth while because there are.

What I'm saying is that it's not the only answer and that if you are going to control the playground and control the school grounds and control those places where bullying occurs, you need to have the resources to do it. If you can do it there and build productive, positive, mature relationships amongst and between your students, you're less likely to have bullying in that setting as well as off the school grounds through cyberbullying, through people walking home, whichever. It really comes down to whether you're going to invest in the resources and the supports to really try to reduce and limit incidents of that sort.

At this point those are the primary observations that I'd like to make on this bill. I will review it in more detail before we get to third reading to assess the implications of the amendments that were made earlier this afternoon.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for St. Albert.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's an honour to rise today and join debate on Bill 206, the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009, brought forward by my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. This debate

is particularly timely in view of the fact that this is National Bullying Awareness Week. This legislation will provide a novel mechanism to deal with acts of intimidation or bullying in Alberta schools. Furthermore, it will prohibit the possession of weapons and drug paraphernalia on school grounds.

Currently, Mr. Chairman, section 24(1) of the School Act provides a teacher or principal with the authority to suspend a student if their conduct is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school. Bill 206 will enhance this provision by mandating all schools to address and document all incidents that involve bullying or possession of any drug paraphernalia, tool, or device that may inflict harm on others. This will ensure that all circumstances of bullying and possession of weapons are acknowledged and dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, it is important to understand what may be deemed a weapon or drug paraphernalia under Bill 206. To this end I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to section 2, provision (a.1). That section defines a banned item as “a weapon as defined in the Criminal Code” of Canada or “a controlled substance and offence-related property as defined in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act,” again of Canada, and “any item listed in the regulations as a banned item for the purposes of this Act.” Essentially, section 2, provision (a.1), speaks to banned items, including weapons and controlled substances, that under Bill 206 will be prohibited from schools.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 206 refers to Canada’s Criminal Code for the definition of a weapon. The Criminal Code states that a weapon consists of

- any thing used, designed to be used or intended for use
  - (a) in causing death or injury to any person, or
  - (b) for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person
- and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes a firearm.

This means that any object used by one student against another student to inflict or threaten harm against a fellow student would constitute a weapon.

Such items could include the use of common school or personal property such as scissors. Furthermore, it could include items we traditionally associate with being weapons such as knives or, in a worst-case scenario, a firearm. Through preventative measures Bill 206 hopes to avoid circumstances where the weapons are used to harm other students. By effectively confronting bullying when it occurs and leaving no doubt that it is unacceptable behaviour, students may be encouraged to cease and desist from carrying on in these objectionable actions.

Mr. Chairman, as mentioned earlier, Bill 206 also prohibits drug paraphernalia on school property. To this end it defines such banned items as a controlled substance and offence-related property as defined in the controlled substances act of Canada. The prohibited substances outlined under the controlled substances act are too numerous to name in this speech. However, a few include cannabis, amphetamines, and methamphetamines.

Furthermore, offence-related property means, with the exception of a controlled substance,

- any property, within or outside Canada,
  - (a) by means of or in respect of which a designated substance offence is committed,
  - (b) that is used in any manner in connection with the commission of a designated substance offence, or
  - (c) that is intended for use for the purpose of committing a designated substance offence.

These provisions clarify what constitutes offence-related property when substance-related offences are committed. When such an offence is committed, these definitions provide important clarity for

all parties who may be involved, including students, teachers, parents, and the police. Ultimately, Mr. Chairman, the clarity provided by these provisions will ensure the effectiveness of this legislation. Bill 206 reaffirms the fundamental value that we share as Albertans that weapons and drugs have no place on school property and that every child deserves a safe, world-class education.

I believe that the provisions I have described today, which clarify what constitutes a weapon as well as controlled substances and offence-related property, are key elements to this legislation. Mr. Chairman, there is simply no place for weapons on school property. The physical and emotional harm that they are capable of need not take place, in fact must not take place. That is why Bill 206 unequivocally states that regardless of intent the mere possession of these weapons is unacceptable and constitutes a serious offence.

For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, every instance of weapons possession must be documented, and police intervention may be called for when dealing with a student who commits such an offence. This intervention would take the form of meeting with the offending student, the parent or guardian, and school administration to discuss appropriate consequences and the next steps for the student. In addition, police would have the authority to lay a mandatory court summons, or they could provide recommendations to courts that would be appropriate for the offender. I believe that these measures offer a constructive alternative or perhaps complement a suspension when addressing serious offences, thereby helping to prevent future instances and the escalation of these activities in our schools.

Bill 206 will help to provide greater safety for all of our children in schools across Alberta; therefore, I would like to throw my enthusiastic support behind this well-intentioned and constructive piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It’s a great honour and a pleasure to speak in favour of Bill 206, sponsored by the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. I’d like to thank the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for bringing in an amendment to strike out section 5 and to amend it. I’d also like to thank her for accepting an amendment from my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

I want to congratulate the member for bringing in this bill because bullying has no borders. The last time I spoke, I said, you know, that I was a victim of bullying, too. This bill will go a long way to address this bullying problem in the school system. This legislation will improve the quality of life not only of the students but also of the parents and families affected by the problem of bullying. I know there are so many students who don’t want to go to school. They will just skip school because they are afraid of bullies. They will just, you know, wander around in the shopping malls, go to movies.

**4:40**

Bullying doesn’t start in high school or in junior high school. Bullies, I think, start at a younger age. We had a meeting with the Calgary police chief, and then we started talking about bullying. They said: you know, this problem has to be nipped in the bud in the earlier years. I think this bill will strengthen the hands of the school boards and principals, and we will be able to tackle this problem with teeth in the law. I’m glad to support this bill, too, because this bill goes a long way in addressing bullying in gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural background, and you name it. I think this will almost cover it all.

I congratulate the member again for bringing in the bill and accepting all the amendments we were hoping to have put in. I think this bill has come pretty close to a perfect bill. You know, maybe in the future we will not have to tinker too much with this. I congratulate you on that, Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. Thank you very much.

I fully support this bill, sir. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Elniski:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my pleasure to rise today to join the debate on Bill 206, the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009, as brought forward by my friend, the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. I would like to thank the hon. member for bringing forward this well-thought-out piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 206 will help to ensure the safety of all children and staff on school property, including school buses and school-sponsored activity. Additionally, this bill clearly defines what constitutes a bully. This definition is important in order for the goal of this bill to be achieved. The full definition of bullying is referenced in many sections of Bill 206. However, I would like to specifically discuss section 2, subsection (b.1), sub (i), and sub (ii).

In section 2, subsections (b.1) and (b.1)(i) state that to "bully" means to repetitively harass an individual to maintain an imbalance of power over that individual by

- (i) gestures, verbal abuse or written abuse directed at that individual, including gestures and abuse that are based on the individual's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability.

As well, in section 2, subsections (b.1) and (b.1)(ii) include the stealing of possessions of that individual in the definition of bullying.

Mr. Chairman, these sections explain in detail what it means to bully. In order to properly discuss these sections, each one needs to be examined and addressed in greater detail. First, as referenced in section 2, subsection (b.1), a bully is someone who repetitively harasses an individual to maintain an imbalance of power over that person. This means a bully would be someone who continually harms or threatens another person. If the word "repetitively" was not included in this definition, some behaviours may be incorrectly defined as bullying, which would ultimately reduce the effectiveness of the legislation.

It is pivotal that the definition of bullying be accurate and not too far reaching as we do not want to inadvertently suggest that all acts, in fact, result in bullying. This definition has to be specific and clear in order to address the behaviour of those individuals who are regularly cruel or overbearing and not the person who may have gotten into an argument with another individual at one point in time. In this way Bill 206 achieves the balance.

Mr. Chairman, that being said, it is necessary to use broad language when protecting others. An example of this is how section 2, subsection (b.1) uses the word "individual" rather than the term "youth" or "child." I can appreciate this because a bully may harass a teacher or another person on school property who may not be a youth or child. This wording, therefore, ensures that Bill 206 would protect everyone on school property.

As mentioned previously, section 2, subsection (b.1) says that bullying means to "repetitively harass an individual to maintain an imbalance of power over that individual." Mr. Chairman, an imbalance of power creates inequity. Section 2, subsection (b.1) addresses this imbalance in order to ensure that everyone is treated as equals.

Second, Mr. Chairman, section 2, subsection (b.1)(i) goes on to provide ways in which this imbalance of power could be maintained. Some of these ways include gestures, verbal and/or written abuse directed at someone. The language used in this part of the bill is general enough to include many different types of harassment. Words and gestures can be very hurtful, which is why it is critical to have these terms included in the definition of bullying. The subsection affirms that any gestures, verbal or written abuse directed at someone are not permitted. This alone covers many different types of abuse. However, in case of confusion this definition provides even more clarification by including specifics such as gestures and abuse that are based upon the individual's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability. Therefore, this would ensure protection against any sort of discrimination.

Third, section 2, subsection (b.1)(ii) is another part of Bill 206 worth mentioning. It addresses how an imbalance of power could be maintained through bullying by stealing another person's possessions. Mr. Chairman, students bring valuable items with them to school. Some are sentimental, some are religious, and some are necessary medications, for example. That being said, stealing a person's nonvaluable items can be another form of bullying as well. An example of this could be as simple as someone's pencil constantly being stolen. Something as small as this could be frustrating for an individual and may affect that person's performance at school. Stealing in general is cruel and can severely affect the individual's well-being or self-esteem, which is why the subsection is necessary in the definition of bullying.

Overall, Mr. Chairman, this definition of bullying protects everyone on school property and does not wrongly accuse an individual of being a bully. In short, section 2, subsection (b.1)(i) and (ii) provide clarity, and as a result there would be no confusion around what constitutes bullying. Ultimately, these sections would ensure that Bill 206 is effective.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to rise and speak on these important sections.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Marz:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to stand and join the Committee of the Whole debate on Bill 206, the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009. I'd like to commend the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for bringing forward a piece of legislation that endeavours to make our schools a safer place for students by providing administrators and teachers with more tools to fight bullying.

This afternoon I'd like to discuss section 2 of the bill, specifically provision (b.1), clauses (iii) and (iv). Mr. Chairman, this bill would be incomplete if it did not clearly define what bullying is, and defining "bully" is the sole purpose of provision (b.1) and its four clauses. The provision defines someone as bullying when he or she repetitively harasses someone else, maintaining an imbalance of power over that person. The ways of harassing and maintaining this imbalance are then described in the four clauses that follow.

Gestures, verbal and written abuse, and theft are outlined in clauses (i) and (ii). Gestures and abuse include those based on a person's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability. Much of the bullying seen on a playground is of this nature, and it can have lasting psychological ramifications for its recipients. But bullying can and sometimes does escalate into violence or the threat of violence. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, clauses (iii) and (iv) further define the ways a bully can repetitively harass and gain an imbalance of power over a peer by

- (iii) physical or sexual assault or threats of physical or sexual assault on that individual, or
- (iv) threats of death to that individual.

**4:50**

We can all recognize physical assault as being part of bullying. Probably many in this House have either seen it first-hand or experienced it first-hand. Movies and television are rife with images of bullying, being a tough kid looking to meet his victim after school on the baseball diamond or in the alleyway. But, Mr. Chairman, I think we can all agree that reality is not like the movies, where a bullying victim often prevails as a hero. If anything, the prevalence of these images in popular entertainment trivializes the suffering of those who find themselves as a bully's target. Still, physical assault is widely recognized as a tool that bullies use to retain power over their victims.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to also take a moment to highlight the importance of the second portion of clause (iii), sexual assault, as it's written into the bill, as a bullying tactic. Like physical assault, sexual assault can also be used to maintain an imbalance of power. The fear of an assault can also terrorize a victim.

Mr. Chairman, this brings me to the last portion of clause (iii) and to clause (iv), where the threat of violence is included as a bullying tactic. The threat of violence is outlined in the bill as threats of physical or sexual assault on that individual or threats of death to that individual. It doesn't matter how plausible the threat seems to an outside observer for the threat to work. The bully's intended victim must believe that the bully is both capable and willing to act out that threat.

In today's information age and with technology, delivering a threat has become much easier. Kids who might not have had the nerve to threaten a peer with harm in person can feel empowered behind the anonymity of a keyboard or the distance of a cellphone text message. Again, I think we've all experienced that with e-mail in our own offices. People are much braver when they're using that technology than they are face to face.

Threats, however they're delivered, can torment their target even if they aren't carried out. No child deserves to live in fear. This fear can be debilitating and as equally detrimental as the act itself. Therefore, threats should be included among the harassing behaviours that bullies can use.

The clear definition of the verb "bully" provided in Bill 206 is an important tool that can be used if the bill is passed because it empowers teachers and administrators to define a tool in identifying a bullying student and provides them further tools to respond accordingly.

For these reasons I wholeheartedly support the intent and the wording of the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009, and I encourage my colleagues in the Legislature to do the same and help stop bullying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure to rise and join the Committee of the Whole debate on Bill 206, the School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009. As a former teacher of 36 years I would like to sincerely thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek for bringing forward this timely and well-crafted piece of legislation.

As this Assembly heard during second reading last spring, Bill 206 intends to prohibit acts of intimidation or bullying in Alberta's schools and will provide a mechanism for dealing with these unfortunate events when they occur. It would require all schools to

address and document cases of bullying, possession of drug paraphernalia, tools, or devices that may cause harm to other students. In short, this piece of legislation seeks to ensure that Alberta's children can learn and grow in an environment that is free of detrimental activities associated with bullying.

I would like to specifically address section 12.2, which reads:

No student shall bully another [person]

- (a) in a school, on school grounds, on a school bus or at an activity sponsored or approved by a board,
- (b) by means of a school computer or the Internet accessed through a school computer, or
- (c) at any other time where such activity may reasonably be expected to cause a substantial and material disruption at school.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the strength of this bill is in how it recognizes that acts of bullying are not only limited to such things as name-calling. Bullying in today's schools can be perpetrated in many different forms using various media. As such, we have to ensure that we give school officials the necessary tools to effectively mitigate the ever-evolving forms of bullying.

Mr. Chairman, cyberbullying has become more prevalent as the Internet has become more accessible to students. We hear of situations time and again where popular social network sites such as Facebook and MySpace are used as a tool to bully. Students who bully may create fake social networking profiles as well as groups with the intent to inflict serious mental harm on their victims. Indeed, these new tools may create more mental anguish as their actions can be witnessed by a larger audience. Section 12.2(b) recognizes this reality and effectively bans a student from using a school computer as a tool to bully.

**The Deputy Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, but pursuant to Standing Order 8(6), which provides for consideration of motions other than government motions at 5 p.m. on Monday afternoons, the committee will now rise and report.

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

**Mr. Weadick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 206. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur in the report?

**Hon. Members:** Concur.

**The Acting Speaker:** Opposed? So ordered.

### Motions Other than Government Motions

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort.

### Canadian Forces Training and Service Recognition

516. Mr. Cao moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to recognize the qualifications, skills, knowledge, and personal development that military personnel gain from training and service while in the Canadian Forces as equivalent to civilian qualifications.

**Mr. Cao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure to rise today to introduce and open debate on Motion 516, military personnel qualification recognition. The Canadian Forces are highly respected by Albertans, Canadians, and our international partners. They are there to protect and help us both domestically and internationally, at home and abroad. The Canadian Forces seek to bring peace and stability in conflicts around the world in places such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, and Haiti.

Canadian Forces personnel receive a high level of training while employed as both regular force members and as reserve force members. The qualifications and skills they learn and the education they receive is first class. Mr. Speaker, Motion 516 builds on the good work that this government has already implemented in Bill 1, Employment Standards (Reservist Leave) Amendment Act, 2009. We can build on this by recognizing the skills that are learned when one is a member of the Canadian Forces.

This government has already made strides in recognition of skills with the implementation of their prior learning assessment and recognition, or PLAR. PLAR is a powerful tool that can be used by many, including those in the Canadian Forces. PLAR is a process that identifies, assesses, and recognizes skills learned in informal, nonformal, experiential, or formal means. In addition, the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act recognizes certain skills and trades that are learned in the Canadian Forces. However, I believe that it is essential that all trades and skills are recognized. This is why I have brought Motion 516 forward, urging the government to continue to work with professional organizations, the Canadian Forces, and Canada's ministry of defence to ensure that more skills and qualifications are recognized.

5:00

Mr. Speaker, the catalyst for bringing this motion forward was hearing from my constituent, a lifelong Canadian Forces member, a Mr. Andrew Downey of the Erin Woods community in Calgary. Upon leaving the forces, he was unable to have the skills that he had learned and practised transferred over to the civilian world. It cost him time and money to go through training repetition and recertification of the skills he had practised for many long years in the military.

Now, at this point I recognize that the Canadian Forces are currently working on the red seal trades to standardize skills. This is a step in the right direction. The red seal trades are vital to our economy. Additionally, the Canadian Forces offer assistance with achieving accreditation for military experience through civilian training accreditation programs. Mr. Speaker, as I have said, there has been considerable work done by the Canadian Forces and the Alberta government. However, this motion encourages that this commitment continues and that more qualifications and skills are recognized. By recognizing the qualifications and skills learned in the Canadian Forces, we can have forces members re-entering civilian life having marketable assets they can use to their advantage.

Our Canadian Forces should be respected. They defend this country, bring peace to troubled areas around the world. Mr. Speaker, Alberta can take the lead and encourage the rest of the Canadian provinces to recognize the valuable qualifications and skills learned by our Canadian Forces. I encourage the hon. members to support this motion, and I look forward to further debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. I'm hoping that at some point in the debate the definition of "recognize" will come out because at

this point "to recognize" is vague. Is it just a symbolic recognition, or will there be policy changes to reflect the equatability between military and civilian qualifications? This is extremely important.

I'm the product and I would suggest that I'm the proud product of military families. My grandfather Edward Arthur Chase was a British cavalry officer during the First World War. While he was gassed at Ypres, he managed to survive, and for that I am eternally grateful because I'm here and speaking on this important motion today. My father, Edward Bryce Chase, had a proud military career. During the Second World War he was a pilot flying in Burma, and I have previously recounted some of the experiences that he had where his major enemy was the monsoon-like weather that occurred in the Burma area.

I fully support the notion of recognizing the value of not only military service but the training that takes place while one is in the military. My father did his training as a pilot both here in Alberta and then in Britain before shipping out to Burma, where he flew Wellingtons. Much of the work he did was evacuation of injured individuals, casualties of war. My father had an opportunity to upgrade his qualifications because he enlisted directly out of grade 12. He had to take his grade 12 by correspondence because in the small town where he was from, Meota, Saskatchewan, the opportunities for grade 12 were limited. So, father, after surviving the Second World War, had an opportunity to attend the University of Saskatchewan at the Saskatoon campus, and there he received his degree in psychology. So he had both the military training of being a pilot and the civilian training required in psychology.

When father was finished his university education, he re-enlisted, and we were sent out to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, where he worked in the personnel selection unit intaking individuals who were coming into the service and recognizing the skills that they had and how they could best be put to use within the military circumstance.

While father was in the military, he went through a series of courses with regard to instrumentation on a variety of planes he flew, such as the Otter. The plane that he finished up on out of Namao air base just outside town was the C-119, or the Flying Boxcar. In terms of military transferability father spent a lot of time on instrumentation. He logged a considerable number of flight hours. He served as a mentor to junior officers, and father rose through the ranks based on not only his civvy qualifications but his military qualifications.

As part of his military training, for example, in addition to instrumentation he took courses in survival. That was part of his experience. Also, although he was in the air force, there was weaponry training. When he was in Burma, for example, there was training on how to escape, and he's just recently donated to the military museum a silk map indicating escape routes from Burma in the event that he would be shot down or behind enemy lines. So the military training is of significant importance.

In 1959 we were transferred from the base at Namao to Toronto, where my father went to a military staff college. He rose in the ranks from a flight lieutenant, going into staff college, to a squadron leader, leaving staff college. We then went on to Ottawa, where again my father served in a more civil service end of the air force. Finally, in 1966 my father was the commanding officer of the personnel selection unit, which was responsible for transferring individuals out of the military into successful civilian postmilitary careers. Throughout the experience, I must admit, I was a guinea pig for psychological testing, for ROTC and a whole variety of other testing in terms of suitability and the quality of testing and so on.

There is no doubt that there are skills that are transferable from the military towards the civilian experience, and there are very few

military individuals who, when their military service is completed, can afford to simply retire because, unfortunately, military pay, while it has improved, is not the be-all and end-all. I think even generals might find that they had to be considered for consulting.

The transference of the skills acquired in the military is extremely important. However, how we qualify those services has to be taken into account. Obviously, some training is less adaptable to a civilian experience. I mean, for example, firing a series of munitions doesn't completely translate. So it will be important and I look forward to further discussion as to how it is that we, in quotes, recognize the qualities and attributes acquired during military service. Beyond a doubt it's important that we recognize these attributes, that we recognize the contributions of individuals who have undergone military service, whether it be in the reserve or whether it be in the active services.

With that, I look forward to further qualifications and discussions of this interesting motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5:10

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise today and speak to Motion 516 as proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort. Many things make me proud to be an Albertan and proud to be a Canadian, but one thing distinguishes itself above others, and that is the sacrifices made by the Canadian Forces. From their victories in the two world wars to their courageous efforts in Afghanistan today the men and the women of the Canadian Forces have always been a source of pride which all Canadians share. Across this province thousands of Albertans have accepted the call to duty in the Canadian Forces with honour. Today, whether it's Afghanistan or elsewhere in the world, our men and women in uniform are defending freedom and standing up for the values that we take for granted in this country.

There are currently about 90,000 individuals enlisted in either the Canadian Forces or the reserve forces. In carrying out their duties, Mr. Speaker, these men and women are being trained to carry out many activities that involve great skill and education. In the military, as I am sure many Albertans can attest to, you learn a different set of skills, skills that are not taught in our public school system or in our colleges and our universities. I believe these skills should be acknowledged. This is why I strongly support the direction of Motion 516.

This motion specifically moves to recognize the qualifications, the skills, the knowledge, and the personal development that military personnel gain from training and service in the Canadian Forces as equivalent to civilian qualifications. Currently, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Forces, the federal government, and the province of Alberta have already introduced the recognition of certain skills and are working on furthering this with suitable industries by working with both the Canadian Forces and Alberta's professional association for further skill recognition. For example, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology has implemented the advancing prior learning assessment and recognition. The advancing prior learning assessment and recognition is a process of identifying, assessing, and recognizing skills, competencies, and knowledge of individuals learned by informal, nonformal, experimental, or formal means.

In fact, the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board already recognizes military credentials as being equivalent to a trade certificate in several occupations. These include automotive service technicians, carpenter, cook, heavy equipment technician, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, and parts technician. In

addition, individuals may receive advanced standing in other trades through a prior learning assessment. Mr. Speaker, these are crucial steps forward in supporting our Canadian Forces so that after these men and women have carried out their duties, they can move back into their communities and work to support their families without having to be retrained and re-educated in a field where they have sufficient knowledge.

As a government I believe it is our duty to continue to do everything we can in showing our support for our military personnel. By recognizing the knowledge and skills that our heroes are able to gain while serving their country and risking their lives, we are one step closer to truly showing our appreciation for all they do. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I support Motion 516 and urge all my colleagues in the Assembly to do the same.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of Motion 516, military personnel qualification recognition. I would first like to commend the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort for bringing this motion forward. Motion 516 encourages the government "to recognize the qualifications, skills, knowledge, and personal development that military personnel gain from [their] training and service while in the Canadian Forces as equivalent to civilian qualifications."

Mr. Speaker, this motion is extremely important to me because many of my constituents, especially the Cold Lake residents, are active in the forces. The 4 Wing air base, located in Cold Lake, is one of the largest Canadian Forces air bases in Canada. Fifty-three hundred people live on the base in my constituency, which comprises approximately 45 per cent of our local population in Cold Lake.

Recently I have received calls from many of these constituents with concerns about transferring their military accreditations over to civilian jobs once they finish their service in the military. Many of these individuals don't stay in the Canadian Forces for their entire careers. Many would like to pursue other opportunities in Alberta, often in the trades, but feel that they will not be able to get the qualification recognition that they require. By increasing the credentials that can be transferred over to civilian jobs, military tradespeople would be more confident in pursuing this lifestyle and career choice. They would know that if they ever decide to leave the forces, they have the experience and the skills to fall back on when looking for an alternative career.

The Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board already recognizes military credentials for automotive service technicians, carpenters, cooks, heavy equipment technicians, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics, and parts technicians. Why can't we extend that to include other occupations in the Canadian Forces? The skills that the military personnel develop during their time in the forces are truly world class and, as such, should be recognized as equivalent to civilian qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, many individuals in my constituency and others across Alberta will benefit immensely if Motion 516 is passed. It is a great way to show respect to our troops and give them a chance to succeed in civilian life, just as they have in their commitment to the Canadian Forces.

Again, I would like to thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort for introducing Motion 516 and encourage all members to vote in its favour. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

**Mr. Elniski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour today to rise to speak in favour of Motion 516, brought forth by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort. Motion 516 seeks to encourage the government of Alberta to recognize the skills and qualifications of military personnel as being equivalent to civilian qualifications. If we pass Motion 516, it will create more opportunities for Albertans. It will allow military personnel to have an easier transition to a career outside of the Canadian Forces. In addition, it would help instill confidence in those joining the Canadian Forces because it would give them an opportunity to pursue other interests once they have finished their service.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 66 per cent of the industrial land in Edmonton is found in the constituency of Edmonton-Calder. As a result of this, many of my constituents work in the trades because there is such a high demand for the type of work that they do. Edmonton-Calder is also home to many senior citizens' homes, and some of those seniors living in these homes are veterans. If they'd had the opportunity to receive this type of accreditation back when they were finished serving in the Canadian armed forces, I imagine it would have helped them considerably. It would have acted to increase the availability of skilled workers in Alberta in the past and also in the present day. In addition to this, it would give our troops the marketable skills that they need to pursue a career outside of the military.

The Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board already recognizes military credentials as being the equivalent of trade certifications in certain occupations, and while I am not in favour of watering down the qualifications, I would like to see expansion to other trades. The schooling that military personnel receive while serving the Canadian Forces is, indeed, very similar to the training that they would receive in civilian certifications. So why not make it equivalent?

Mr. Speaker, our troops are providing a great service to this country. They are dedicating their time and putting their lives on the line for us. Motion 516 simply helps us to honour the sacrifice that these people have made for us and will help raise the awareness of military service in Canada and the skills that individuals learn while they are employed there.

I would again like to commend the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort for bringing this motion forward. If passed, this motion will benefit many of the constituents of Edmonton-Calder as well as troops all over Alberta.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

5:20

**Mr. Horner:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just very briefly. As a past reservist I wanted to put a few comments on the record as the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. Many members have already mentioned the fact that our department through the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board does actually cross-qualify many of the trades that our Canadian Forces do, the automotive, carpentry, heavy-duty mechanic as a few examples. The quality of the students that we have in our postsecondary of reservists and Canadian Forces personnel, the quality of the tradesmen that are coming to us from those disciplines is second to none, Mr. Speaker.

We will continue to work with DND, the Department of National Defence, on trying to ensure where there are easy crossovers or crossovers that we can identify that would, as my hon. colleague mentioned, not water down the trade certificate, because these are in many cases national trade certificates, but certainly work with the forces to identify where we can change them so that when a member

leaves the service of the Canadian Forces, they can easily transfer into whatever trade they were trained in in the military.

If this motion is passed – and I would urge acceptance of this motion – we will instruct our department to redouble their efforts in working with the Department of National Defence so that we can get more of those trades cross-qualified.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly urge my colleagues to pass the motion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any other members wish to speak? The hon. Member for Peace River.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and speak to this motion and to thank the Member for Calgary-Fort for bringing it forward. I think it's entirely consistent with the support this government or, indeed, this Legislature has shown for our armed forces in our province, and it's certainly worthy of every consideration.

I'm just fearful, Mr. Speaker, that this is beyond a provincial level. Any recognition of certification that we provide to a member of the armed forces based on equivalence or anything else, once we've granted that person a tradesman status, automatically means they have tradesman status in other provinces by trading agreements, certainly with some of the agreements that we have with British Columbia. So that would mean that British Columbia would have to be in agreement with our approach. It goes beyond provincial certifications for such things, for example, as pilots' licences.

I began my career in forestry as a helitack firefighter in British Columbia, and we worked almost exclusively with military pilots. The hill they have to climb after hundreds or thousands of hours of helicopter experience in the military is that in some cases they just about have to start over for civilian certification, and that's a federal jurisdiction.

So it's a fantastic effort and a discussion that has to happen, in fact, a discussion that's long overdue, but it's a discussion that has to involve other provinces and the federal government as well as the Department of National Defence. I think it's a fantastic effort. I again congratulate the member for bringing it forward.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any other members wish to speak?

Then I would invite the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort to close.

**Mr. Cao:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank all my hon. colleagues who have spoken on this motion. I would like to thank my many constituents, in particular Mr. Andrew Downey, for having brought this public issue to my attention.

Mr. Speaker, I would like once again to emphasize that Alberta is a province that values our Canadian Forces. Many of us recently had an opportunity to experience first-hand the skills that our Canadian Forces have. This government has already taken steps to honour our forces members with job-protected leave for the reservists. I believe that by recognizing the training, skills qualifications learned in the forces as equal to civilian qualifications, we further honour and respect our forces members.

With Motion 516 I really call on the Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology and the Alberta Ministry of Employment and Immigration to continue to work further with the Canadian armed forces and the Canadian ministry of defence in training programs and skills so that they can be seamlessly transferable.

Over this past hour there were many, many interesting topics discussed, and while there may be some concern on the wording of the motion and many details need to be worked out, I believe that any of this can be overcome and that recognizing the skills and

qualifications of our Canadian Forces is the right thing to do. I ask my hon. colleagues for their favourable consideration of Motion 516. Motion 516 is really a small contribution to last week's Remembrance Day, when we honoured our veterans and armed forces.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 516 carried]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we have concluded the business on the Order Paper for today, I would move that we call it 6 o'clock and adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:26 p.m. to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]





## Table of Contents

Introduction of Visitors .....	1775
Introduction of Guests .....	1775, 1785, 1794
Ministerial Statements	
National Philanthropy Day .....	1776
Members' Statements	
St. Michael's Extended Care Centre Society .....	1777
International Education Week .....	1777
Public Health Care in Alberta .....	1785
National Bullying Awareness Week .....	1786
National 4-H Month .....	1786
Louis Riel .....	1786
Oral Question Period	
H1N1 Influenza Pandemic Planning .....	1777
H1N1 Influenza Hospital Admissions .....	1777
Electricity Transmission Lines .....	1778
Health Care Reform .....	1778
H1N1 Influenza Immunization .....	1779
Pastoral Care in Health Facilities .....	1779
International Trade .....	1780
H1N1 Influenza Immunization for Homeless People .....	1780
Sour Gas Well Licensing .....	1781
Fine Arts Education Curriculum Review .....	1781
Critical Electricity Transmission Infrastructure .....	1782
Employment Insurance Benefit Program .....	1782
Electoral Reform .....	1783
Geothermal Energy for Home Heating .....	1783
All-terrain Vehicle Safety .....	1784
Postsecondary Tuition Fees .....	1784
Presenting Petitions .....	1786
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	1787
Tablings to the Clerk .....	1787
Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders	
Third Reading	
Bill 205 Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure (Third Party Advertising) Amendment Act, 2009 .....	1787
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 206 School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2009 .....	1793
Motions Other than Government Motions	
Canadian Forces Training and Service Recognition .....	1800

**STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

**Select Special Auditor  
General Search Committee**

Chair: Mr. Mitzel  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Blakeman  
Campbell  
Lukaszuk  
MacDonald  
Marz  
Notley  
Rogers

**Select Special Chief Electoral  
Officer Search Committee**

Chair: Mr. Mitzel  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Bhullar  
Blakeman  
Campbell  
Horne  
Lukaszuk  
MacDonald  
Marz  
Notley  
Rogers

**Standing Committee on the  
Alberta Heritage Savings  
Trust Fund**

Chair: Mrs. Forsyth  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Elniski

Blakeman  
Campbell  
DeLong  
Denis  
Johnston  
Kang  
MacDonald

**Standing Committee on  
Community Services**

Chair: Mr. Doerksen  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hehr

Benito  
Bhardwaj  
Chase  
Johnson  
Johnston  
Lukaszuk  
Notley  
Rodney  
Sarich

**Standing Committee on the  
Economy**

Chair: Mr. Campbell  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Taylor

Allred  
Amery  
Bhullar  
Hinman  
Marz  
McFarland  
Taft  
Weadick  
Xiao

**Standing Committee on  
Health**

Chair: Mr. Horne  
Deputy Chair: Ms Pastoor

Dallas  
Fawcett  
Notley  
Olson  
Quest  
Sherman  
Taft  
Vandermeer  
Vacant

**Standing Committee on  
Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Mitzel  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Bhullar  
Blakeman  
Campbell  
Horne  
Lukaszuk  
MacDonald  
Marz  
Notley  
Rogers

**Special Standing Committee  
on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Kowalski  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Oberle

Elniski  
Fawcett  
Hehr  
Leskiw  
Mason  
Rogers  
Taylor  
VanderBurg  
Weadick

**Standing Committee on  
Private Bills**

Chair: Dr. Brown  
Deputy Chair: Ms Woo-Paw

Allred	Jacobs
Amery	MacDonald
Anderson	McQueen
Benito	Olson
Bhardwaj	Quest
Boutilier	Rodney
Calahasen	Sandhu
Dallas	Sarich
Doerksen	Taft
Forsyth	

**Standing Committee on  
Privileges and Elections,  
Standing Orders and  
Printing**

Chair: Mr. Prins  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hancock

Amery	Mitzel
Berger	Notley
Calahasen	Oberle
DeLong	Pastoor
Doerksen	Redford
Forsyth	Rogers
Johnson	Sherman
Leskiw	Taylor
Liepert	Zwozdesky
McFarland	

**Standing Committee on  
Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. MacDonald  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Quest

Benito	Johnson
Bhardwaj	Kang
Chase	Mason
Dallas	Olson
Denis	Sandhu
Drysdale	Vandermeer
Fawcett	Woo-Paw
Jacobs	

**Standing Committee on  
Public Safety and Services**

Chair: Mr. VanderBurg  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Kang

Anderson  
Brown  
Calahasen  
Cao  
Griffiths  
MacDonald  
Sandhu  
Woo-Paw  
Vacant

**Standing Committee on  
Resources and Environment**

Chair: Mr. Prins  
Deputy Chair: Ms Blakeman

Berger  
Boutilier  
Denis  
Drysdale  
Hehr  
Jacobs  
Mason  
McQueen  
Oberle

If your address is incorrect, please clip on the dotted line, make any changes, and return to the address listed below. To facilitate the update, please attach the last mailing label along with your account number.

Subscriptions  
Legislative Assembly Office  
1001 Legislature Annex  
9718 - 107 Street  
EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4

---

Last mailing label:

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

New information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

Subscription information:

Annual subscriptions to the paper copy of *Alberta Hansard* (including annual index) are \$127.50 including GST if mailed once a week or \$94.92 including GST if picked up at the subscription address below or if mailed through the provincial government interdepartmental mail system. Bound volumes are \$121.70 including GST if mailed. Cheques should be made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Price per issue is \$0.75 including GST.

On-line access to *Alberta Hansard* is available through the Internet at [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

Address subscription inquiries to Subscriptions, Legislative Assembly Office, 1001 Legislature Annex, 9718 - 107 St., EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4, telephone 780.427.1302.

Address other inquiries to Managing Editor, *Alberta Hansard*, 1001 Legislature Annex, 9718 - 107 St., EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4, telephone 780.427.1875.