



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 1, 2017

Day 47

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (NDP), Speaker
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (NDP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (NDP)
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New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 2 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Vacant: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 1, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and make a number of introductions, both my own and on behalf of the Minister of Education. I'd like to start out by introducing to you and to all members of the Assembly the man from whom I inherited my incredible good looks and cheerful disposition, my father, Glen Schmidt. I've learned many things from my dad over the years, not just all of the swear words but also a healthy disrespect for authority and some critical-thinking skills. I ask my father, Glen Schmidt, to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Before going on to the next one, I must let you know that he learned very well not respecting authority.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With him today is a woman who deserves every order of merit that is available to a Canadian citizen, his partner for over 20 years, Judy Wilson. Judy is not only a fantastic, loving woman who cares very deeply for all of our family, but she works very hard to make sure that every family meeting is documented extensively with photographs, and she makes some of the best cabbage rolls in the whole province of Alberta. I ask Judy Wilson to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Also visiting today, Mr. Speaker, is my nephew Jaden Leckie. Jaden is 14 years old and in grade 9 at Ardrossan junior-senior high school. He is shadowing his uncle the Minister of Advanced Education today to learn about what I'm doing to make life better for Alberta students and what our government is doing to make life better for all Albertans. I'm pleased to ask him to now please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

I also would like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly 35 members of the NAIT radio and television program. Students in this program gain valuable skills in reporting, anchoring, and videography among other things. This program sets students up to fulfill their career options, and the teaching and direction of these individuals ensures that Albertans receive top-of-the-line education. Thank you, all, for your strong commitment to education. I ask them to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly 30 students, teachers, and parents of the grade 6 class from Scott Robertson elementary school here in Edmonton. Scott Robertson elementary, through collaboration, focuses on developing the leadership potential in all students. Thank you for your hard work supporting Alberta's future leaders. We all look forward to seeing the amazing contributions that these young people, their teachers, and their families will bring to Alberta. I ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you Private (Retired) Stan Edwards, a veteran of the Dieppe Raid, that took place over 75 years ago in World War II. He has received the Canadian volunteer service medal, the defence medal, the 1939-1945 star, and the war medal 1939-1945. He is joined today by his children and grandchildren: Barb Kujala, Ron and Kathy Edwards, Kim Carter, and Bob Edwards. Mr. Edwards, thank you for your service. I would now ask all of my guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly. [Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Sir, I think you need to know that for individuals like yourself, who have paid such a price, that was a sincere applause. You do not get that very often.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on your behalf to introduce to all members of the Assembly Jarryd Oosthuis. Jarryd is the son of Katja Oosthuis, who works in the Speaker's office, and is visiting the Legislature for bring your child to work day. Jarryd is a ninth grade student from Sir George Simpson junior high in St. Albert. He has also attended school in South Africa, the United States, and now Canada. He enjoys soccer, plays on his school's badminton team, and is an honours with distinction student. Jarryd was happy to become a permanent resident of Canada earlier this year.

Katja joined the Speaker's office in August of this year and has already proven herself to be a very friendly and hard-working asset to the team. In her time away from the Leg. Katja is a passionate volunteer with the humane society, fostering kittens and cats before they are adopted. Katja also gained permanent residency this year and is very proud to call Alberta home.

Jarryd and Katja are seated in the Speaker's gallery. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome, and thank you.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce to you and through you some of the most important people in my life. My partner, Will Gammon, not only supports my work in this House but supports all of us on this side of the House as the director of operations in the Alberta NDP provincial office. He supports me every day as a parent and partner and also supports my son's love of hockey as head coach of our son's hockey team. My father-in-law, Spurgeon Gammon, supports the work Will and I do and always makes time if we need him for anything. He hosts family dinners, which I truly do appreciate, and spends a lot of his time as my son's biggest hockey fan. And my son, Gabriel Babcock, is a grade 9 student at l'école Meridian Heights school in Stony Plain. I'm incredibly proud of the young giant that he is. I'm going to pull a bit of a mom moment and say that he is one of the kindest, smartest, most amazing young people I have ever met even if his sisters wouldn't always agree with me. I ask that my guests now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, we have a number of introductions today. I encourage the brevity of introductions as we move forward.

There is a school group, as I understand it. The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm introducing this group for the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie. I would like to ask the

students from St. Richard, a green STEM academy, to rise. They are accompanied by their teacher, Daryl Chichak, and their chaperone, Mrs. Marta Van Wachem. Please join me in welcoming these students.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly the members of the Métis Settlements General Council, who are in the gallery behind me here. They are here celebrating the 27th anniversary of the passing of legislation resulting in land and self-governance for those living on Métis settlements and making Alberta the only province in Canada with a recognized Métis land base entrenched in provincial statute, ensuring that Métis people in Alberta will always have a land base to call home.

Today I was pleased to join them all as we raised the Métis settlements flag in front of the Federal building, and I wear the Métis sash today in their honour. I would ask them all to stand as I read their names, beginning with the president of the Métis Settlements General Council, Gerald Cunningham; the vice-president, Darren Calliou; Dorothy Anderson; Sherry Cunningham; Blake Desjarlais; Jacqueline Bellerose; Dan St. Pierre; Arthur Tompkins; Stan Delorme; Harry Supernault; Irene Zimmer; Cory Cardinal; Ken Noskey; Greg Calliou; Herb Lehr. For any other council members who are in attendance today, please rise now, and I'll catch your names later to correct the record.

Thank you.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My guests today are seated behind me, and it's my pleasure to introduce them. They're a group who are advocates with Diabetes Canada. November is Diabetes Awareness Month, which is a time to focus attention on advocating for people living with diabetes and on prevention, research, and a cure. This year the theme of Diabetes Awareness Month is You Are the Centre of Your Diabetes Care Team. People across Canada are being encouraged to take part in the CanRisk test. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers, like those who are in our gallery today, for making life better for Albertans. I ask that Joan King along with the other staff and volunteers rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Derek Adams. Derek is a constituent and a student at Woodhaven middle school in Spruce Grove. He is here today as part of a take your child to work day program and is learning more about democracy and governance in Alberta. I would like him to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the wonderful students and instructor Clare Lazer from CDI College, north campus, legal studies program. CDI College

offers vocational training and continuing education to adults in pursuit of a new career path in a welcoming, supportive, and collegial environment. CDI believes in giving back to the community through extensive fundraising, and I have even assisted in these fundraising efforts by volunteering to be in the dunk tank in their annual massage-athon. Proceeds from that event went to the Edmonton Firefighters Burn Treatment unit, and I'm happy to say that a cheque for over \$12,000 went there. I would now ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you a group from the Canadian Patient Safety Institute. This week we recognize Canadian Patient Safety Week. You may know that medication incidents are one of the leading causes of patient safety harm in health care, and most of these can be prevented. By placing a spotlight on opioids and medication safety, this campaign seeks to reduce harm related to medication use. Patient safety is an important part of ensuring all Albertans get the care that they need. I ask Chris Power, Cecilia Bloxom, and Sandi Kossey to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Ms Sherrie Breese. Sherrie is the proprietor of the Lolly Pop Thrift Shop in Athabasca and the subject of my member's statement later this afternoon. I invite Sherrie to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you Garry Keller. For over 20 years Garry has had experience delivering strategic communication and political advice on domestic and international issues. Garry's experience in Canada's political landscape includes most recently serving as the chief of staff to Rona Ambrose, the Leader of the Official Opposition and interim leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. He's also served as the chief of staff to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as chief of staff to the Government House Leader, as chief of staff to the chief government whip, and on and on and on it goes, including serving as a senior policy adviser to the Prime Minister. His work has been recognized by media outlets, who have called him one of the most powerful and respected political staffers on Parliament Hill.

Perhaps, though, Mr. Speaker, his biggest challenge was serving as my chief of staff over the past summer. It was an absolute pleasure to work with him. I couldn't be more proud of the work that we did. He may have spent the last 20 years in Ottawa, but he certainly hasn't been Ottawa-washed. I invite him to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you a group of professors from China

who are here today with their program lead, Dr. Pamela Young. Every autumn the China Scholarship Council sends a group of professors to the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta, where they participate in a three-month professional development program designed to improve teaching and English skills. This year's group has a keen interest to know more about Canadian education, culture, history, and government. I'm so pleased that today they have the opportunity to learn more about Alberta's system of governance. I invite Dr. Young and her group to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Shepherd: I have an additional introduction, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

The Speaker: All right.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you. I would also like to introduce to you and through you representatives of the Child Friendly Housing Coalition of Alberta. Formed in 2016, they're a nonpartisan coalition of people and organizations from across Alberta advocating for equal housing choices for all members of society, including parents with children under the age of 18. Representing the coalition are Heather MacKenzie, Jodie McKague, who first raised this issue with me in June 2015, her daughter Franka, and Kirsten Goa. They're here today for the introduction of Bill 23, the Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2017. I invite them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two constituents of mine from the constituency of Cardston-Taber-Warner. If you like sugar on your table and in your coffee and sweetening all your baked goods in Alberta, you have the sugar beet growers to thank. From the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers we have Melody Garner-Skiba, executive director, and Arnie Bergen-Henengouwens, president. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Ministerial Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Family Violence Prevention Month

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize November as Family Violence Prevention Month. This month started in Hinton over 30 years ago as a local community initiative to draw attention to this devastating issue, to encourage victims to come forward, and to encourage all of us to speak out against violence. This year's theme is Reach Out; Speak Out; It Takes All of Us. Today I invite all members of this House to join me and send a powerful message that we stand with the victims and survivors of family violence and will continue to work together across party lines to end it. We all know individuals who have experienced family violence. I know that all of us recognize the tragedy of these crimes, and our hearts are with survivors and families who have been impacted. That is why we are all wearing the purple bow today, to show that we are here for all Albertans who are experiencing family violence.

It is our collective action that will ensure a prosperous future for our province and all those who live here. That is why our government and communities across the province are working together to end family violence. We are working closely with local community agencies, other orders of government, women's shelters, sexual assault services, law enforcement, health services, and others to help Albertans affected by family violence. We are funding women's shelters across the province to provide families a safe place to go to escape violence. We are supporting families to help them recover and break the cycle of violence, and we are reaching out to all Albertans to ensure each and every one of us understands how to stand up for those who are suffering. We have taken action, but there is more to do. November may be the month that is officially recognized for family violence prevention, but our support and our action must continue all year round.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move that we continue with responses to the ministerial statement followed immediately by the beginning of question period. I'd ask for unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

1:50

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, on November 1, to speak to all members of the Assembly about Family Violence Prevention Month in Alberta. Today marks the beginning of a month dedicated to the prevention of family violence in our province and to the protection of those who need our support.

Over 20 years ago four bold Albertan women based in Hinton were brave enough to take a stand against family violence at a time when it was considered taboo and never publicly addressed. Katherine Kennedy, Sonja Bennett, Faye Wheeler, and Glenda Carter fought against the norm and set the precedent when they created the Hinton Society for the Prevention of Family Violence and launched a campaign to empower those who faced domestic abuse and to educate society on this critically important issue. These amazing women launched a groundbreaking campaign that targeted all facets of society through school, media, public workshops, churches, and even setting up informal booths at local shopping malls. These women were determined and organized, and through their efforts they started an important discussion that continues on to this day.

Mr. Speaker, family violence destroys lives, and it's still too often wrapped in stigma and secrecy. Victims of domestic violence and abuse of all ages often feel the shame that they're alone in this struggle. That's why having a month dedicated to family violence prevention is so incredibly important. We need to continue to support those who have faced this kind of violence and those who are still healing. We need to ensure that they know they are not alone and that we as elected representatives in this House and their fellow Albertans are behind them one hundred per cent. We need to continue to create awareness about the scale of this issue and to highlight the services available for those who are looking for safety.

To the Albertans who are currently facing family violence, my heart and the hearts of every member in this Assembly go out to you. Know that you are brave, you are valued, and you have people in your corner. I would encourage all of my colleagues to engage with your local communities this month, whether it's wearing purple, attending or hosting a community event, putting up Family

Violence Prevention Month posters in your community, or simply collecting supplies for an emergency centre.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank from the bottom of my heart the front-line staff that work tirelessly in emergency centres, counselling facilities, and through community service providers to provide the supports for those facing family violence.

Every man, woman, and child in this province deserves to feel safe and loved in their own home, and I know that I speak for my entire caucus when I say that we will always fight to ensure that the rights of victims are protected and that they have the services that they require and that they have a legal system that will work for them and not against them.

Today, in recognition of Family Violence Prevention Month, I would ask that all members of this Assembly reflect on the amazing work that has already been done on the issues as we look ahead to the vitally important work that still needs to be done.

Thank you.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent of the Assembly to allow a representative of the Alberta Party caucus and the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster to respond to the minister's statement.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Ms McPherson: November is Family Violence Prevention Month, and I'm honoured to rise today and recognize such an important initiative.

Hard work by community advocates in 1986 in Hinton led to the creation of Family Violence Prevention Month in our province and helped bring light to a mostly secret issue that is far too pervasive. This issue affects everybody, and it can take many forms: child abuse; incest; spousal, domestic, and sibling abuse; parent and elder abuse. We all know someone who has been impacted even if they haven't spoken up. My heart goes out to those who face violence at home, have grown up in households impacted by it, and those who have watched their friends and loved ones struggle with family violence in their lives. Discussing family violence is deeply personal and can be very painful, and I commend everyone who has sought to heal from family violence and understand that not everyone is at a place where they can heal yet.

I ask myself: what can we do? How can we find ways to work toward healing, toward healthy families and healthy relationships, toward healthy relationships that can empower people rather than constrain them in narrowly defined roles? We can talk about family violence without shame and without reservation, knowing that by sharing our experiences with one another, we can begin to eliminate the secrecy and entrenched inequality that has allowed family violence to exist. We can take a stand that shows people that family violence is unacceptable, and we can support those agencies that do such great work in supporting and educating both survivors and offenders.

I'm reminded of the courageous speech given in this House by the Member for Lethbridge-East, who transformed the conversation about family violence in this Chamber, and I'm grateful for her bravery and for how she is a role model for anyone facing family violence.

We all have a role to play in eliminating family violence from our society, standing beside the survivors, and I'm grateful we're talking about it today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues for allowing me the opportunity to briefly address a few remarks to this issue. I certainly concur with everything that has been said by the previous speakers about the gravity and the seriousness of family violence and that this is a scourge that we must work constantly to erase from our province, but I do want to address one aspect of this that has not been addressed thus far. It is one that is very familiar, sadly, to me, and that is that animal abuse is a part of domestic family violence and that animals are members of our families.

In fact, in many homes animals act as the silent sentinels for a more dangerous situation that exists within our homes, and sadly many people who are experiencing family violence do not flee an abusive situation out of concern for family pets that they can't take with them. That, Mr. Speaker, is a concern. Now, it's a concern that, thankfully, has been recognized by some agencies. For example, the Calgary humane society and the Calgary Police Service are working together already to try to erase some of the problems and to recognize in an early intervention way that animal abuse is an early indicator of a propensity for domestic abuse. This has been known for centuries, and it is time that we included animal abuse in the conversation.

As a veterinarian speaking for the silent, speaking for those who also suffer abuse at the hands of those they are supposed to love, the ones they are supposed to trust, I ask everyone to consider that if we're going to effectively address family violence, let's address the violence and the abuse that is directed at all members of the family, whether they have two legs or four.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Pipeline Approval

Mr. Nixon: The NDP continue to claim that they stand up for energy sector workers. Unfortunately, those in the sector don't seem to agree. The president of the Petroleum Services Association has blasted the NDP and its federal Liberal allies for failing to stand up for our industry. They point to the cancellation of Energy East as another blow to investor confidence. For the last two days we've tried in vain to get agreement on a simple motion that would call for the government of Canada to remove upstream and downstream emissions from pipeline assessments. Will the government finally agree to stand with us and stand for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do understand that the members opposite are struggling with their staffing resources right now, but I would have thought that we could have not completely recycled our questions from yesterday. That being said, the reality is, as I've said before, that our government has stood against the federal government on the issue of downstream emissions. We actually support the matter of upstream emissions because that's how you move forward on the matter of climate change, which is what we have to do if we're going to secure a market for our stable and sustainable energy industry.

Mr. Nixon: What a shame, Mr. Speaker, to watch the Premier of Alberta out here laugh with her caucus about people's lives and people's livelihoods. What we're talking about right now is hundreds of thousands of jobs. In this case why would a unanimous motion

from this House demanding removing upstream and downstream emissions . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

Keep going.

Mr. Nixon: Why would a unanimous motion from this House demanding the removal of upstream and downstream emissions from pipeline assessments be in any way controversial? Why won't this government do what they say they believe and stand up for this issue, stand up to the Justin Trudeau Liberals, and make . . .

2:00

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Lots of students in the place today, folks. Let's keep the tone on both sides positive, please, everyone.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said a number of times now in response to this question, the reality is that our government has indicated to the federal government that we don't believe that it is fair for downstream emissions to be part of the calculation, and we are working furiously on means of ensuring that it does not end up being a key part of it.

But, Mr. Speaker, upstream emissions do matter. That's how we say to the world that we are a responsible energy producer. That's how we make sure that we have more markets, not fewer, and that's how we got a pipeline to tidewater, something that the members opposite could not do because they wanted to stick their heads in the sand, pretend there was no problem, deny science, and generally stop the growth of our energy industry.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. This government has got two cancelled pipelines and does not have one built yet. I think it's clear what's happening here. The NDP raised polite objections to Ottawa's invasion of Alberta's provincial jurisdiction so they can tell the voters that they've done all they could. No, they have not. They're simply checking off a box and moving along to happy times with their Trudeau allies as per normal. For once could we finally see some emotion from the NDP when Ottawa attacks our province and our citizens and the people that they are elected to protect? When will the Alberta NDP finally stand with Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me just say that what I will not do is have temper tantrums on Twitter in order to politically grandstand. Instead, I will continue with our government's record of getting results. For instance, when you talk about PSAC, we worked with the federal government to leverage \$250 million towards orphan well reclamation, creating 1,600 jobs in a sector that was looking for work. That's how you get things done. You work with people, you don't yell at them, and you don't grandstand.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier means that she won't have a temper tantrum again on Twitter.

Energy Policies

Mr. Nixon: While our drilling activity is slowly crawling back, it's still 30 per cent lower than 2014 levels. Yes, I know the NDP will try to blame the global oil price, and sure, that has played a role. But if that's the only reason, why have things bounced back much

more quickly in places like North Dakota and Texas? PSAC says that drilling growth could be much stronger, but unfortunately the government seems to be doing everything in its power to deter growth through new taxes, more new taxes, more new taxes, and even more regulations. When will this NDP shift strategies so that our energy sector can thrive? Just get out of the way.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What our government did do under the leadership of our Minister of Energy is we brought in a modernized royalty framework which actually stimulated – stimulated – economic growth, particularly in the energy sector. That's why, for instance, in Alberta we have more new wells than we do, say, in our neighbour of Saskatchewan. In addition, we have been working very hard to stimulate the economy. That's why the economy in Alberta is growing by over 4 per cent while next door in Saskatchewan, following their plan, every time you check, the projections are ramped down. We picked the right way . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, over the past two years we've seen tens of billions of energy investment dollars flee this province. Oh, the dollars aren't leaving the energy sector; they're just leaving Alberta as Albertans and investors realize Alberta is increasingly closed for business under this government. Companies are pulling out investments. Instead, they're moving to Texas and North Dakota but also places like Iran and Kazakhstan. Let us use common sense. Isn't it better to have oil from an ethical player like Alberta rather than deplorable dictatorships abroad? When will this NDP government stop driving business out of our province and start standing up for our oil industry?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Is Texas a dictatorship?

The Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the last election we made it very clear – and it was in a way that people voted for – that we are not interested in engaging in a race to the bottom with Iran or Kazakhstan or with Donald Trump. That's not what we're here to do. We are here to build Alberta. We are here to support our energy industry as we develop a sustainable and environmentally responsible energy industry that is able to compete world-wide for decades and decades to come because that's what the whole world is looking for. Sometimes it takes leadership to look more than a year or two ahead. I know it's a little hard for those guys. They're looking 10 years behind. But that's why we got elected and they didn't.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, despite what NDP supporters might want to think, oil is not going out of style any time soon. The International Energy Agency shows increased demand for the foreseeable future. That oil is going to come from somewhere; why not Alberta? Unfortunately, the NDP fellow travellers are working to ensure that oil doesn't come from ethical players like Alberta. They are working to land lock our province and our resources. Two pipelines have already been killed under this government, and now a third is in the crosshairs. When will this Premier and this NDP government stop giving the Trudeau Liberals a free pass, start denouncing what they're doing, start denouncing them sabotaging our economy, and stand up for Alberta?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are so politically motivated to talk down Alberta that they just get so confused and disrupted by the facts. You know, in October of 2017 the BMO provincial forecast: “Alberta’s economy has returned to growth, and could potentially lead the country this year with 4.1%.” Meanwhile in Saskatchewan the economy is underperforming the national average. In September of 2017 TD Bank’s forecast said that it’s “full steam ahead for Alberta.” Our plan is working. Jobs are up, manufacturing is up, investment is up, and growth is up. That’s because we are standing with Albertans, not cutting our way to some alleged prosperity. This is the right choice.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, the NDP promised that its massive new carbon tax would gain us a so-called social licence, but since then we’ve seen two massive pipeline projects die, Northern Gateway and Energy East, and the same environmental zealots are working to kill off Trans Mountain pipeline, too. That makes three. We’ve given an inch, and the opponents of our oil and gas sector have taken a mile. The president of PSAC said it the best, quote: that social licence thing is a myth; it is a set of goalposts that will never stop moving. End quote. Will the NDP admit that social licence is a failure?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I will admit is that our plan is working. Jobs are up, wages are up, drilling is up, production is up, and it’s because of our climate leadership plan. That was the plan that secured two pipelines. One pipeline is in production and in construction as we speak. Make no mistake. The second pipeline, Trans Mountain, will be built. [interjections]

The Speaker: Folks, I don’t want to stop the clock, so allow me to hear around the rest of you here the answers to the questions and the questions.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, the NDP’s own allies are actively working to kill the Trans Mountain pipeline. Their friends in the government of B.C. have said that they’ll use every tool available to stop the pipeline, and two of this government’s own appointees are more encouraged than ever. Ms Berman, the NDP’s hand-picked oil sands adviser, has pledged to stand in front of bulldozers to stop the pipeline. Ms Mahon, another NDP star pick, is currently training activists how to physically block the pipeline. Will the NDP at least admit that its social licence plan has failed as far as two of their own appointees are concerned? [interjections]

2:10

The Speaker: Hon. members.
The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we know that pipelines to tidewater are critical. They’re not just critical for Alberta, but they’re critical for our country. They supply good jobs, they help the economy, and, as I said before, make no mistake: the Trans Mountain pipeline will be built. It has federal approval. The federal approval was because of our climate leadership plan.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, the city of Burnaby is actively working to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline right now. They’re dragging their heels on the issuing of municipal permits for construction. The company has asked that the National Energy Board intervene as the city is clearly overstepping its bounds. A few days ago we asked this government of Alberta if they would back Kinder Morgan’s request, and the government said that they’d check with the company. Has that happened? Is the NDP ready to step up and stand up for pipelines?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, pipelines are critical, especially to tidewater. We have one customer which goes south. We need to expand our borders and our access to market. We are doing that, and to be clear, the Trans Mountain pipeline has a permit to be built. It has federal approval. Make no mistake. It is going to be built.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Cannabis Distribution

Mr. Clark: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One hundred and sixty-eight million dollars: the government could do a lot with \$168 million. It could hire a thousand teachers, a thousand nurses, fund a cardiac cath lab in Red Deer, and pay for a few schools, to boot. But this government is seriously thinking about spending \$168 million or possibly more to create a brand new government bureaucracy to sell cannabis. To the Premier: will you commit here and now to not establish an expensive, inefficient government retail model that would all but guarantee the black market would continue to thrive?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, there are a number of very complicated issues that our minister is working through very, very furiously to get resolved as it relates to implementing the directive of the federal government around cannabis. There are a number of complex issues, and there are a number of consequences to each of those decisions. She is working very hard, and she’s working very hard to ensure that we meet the following principles, that we kill the black market or reduce the black market as much as we can, that we keep people safe, and that we keep people’s health and safety uppermost. With that in mind, we are deliberating on how to do that best, and we’ll have more . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

Mr. Clark: If safety is important, you’ll go with the private model because the AGLC reports 98 per cent compliance for private liquor distribution.

One of the four objectives, as you say, is to eliminate the black market, but most recently one of your MLAs has speculated that you may be considering a franchise model. Aside from this not being one of the two models contemplated on your cannabis framework website, there is a significant risk that an inflexible retail model wouldn’t meet consumer demand, allowing the black market to thrive. Again to the Premier: is your government actually considering a franchise system, or is it just unauthorized speculation from an MLA?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of the work we've done around cannabis and of the consultation that we've gone out with, not once but twice, to ensure that we're talking to Albertans, that we're getting to all perspectives. We've had over 80 meetings with different stakeholders and different groups with different perspectives on things. We're going to take that all into account, we're going to make decisions, and we're not going to engage in wild speculation.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, if the government does do the right thing and allow Alberta entrepreneurs to operate cannabis retail shops, another important question is: who will be allowed to invest? There are potential benefits to allowing vertical integration, which is not part of Alberta's liquor retailing system. Cannabis producers understand the security considerations, and they understand the market. Again to the Premier: if you do allow private investment in retail cannabis, have you given consideration to allowing producers to open and operate retail stores?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, we've heard a lot of different perspectives from across Alberta. We do certainly understand that Albertans support our main values, which are to ensure that we are getting the black market out and to ensure that we are keeping the health and safety of children and of our roads and of our workplaces at forefront of mind. We intend to do exactly that as we work forward. Obviously, we've done a lot of thinking about this and a lot of modelling and a lot of conversations, but this is not the time for wild speculation. This is a very important issue.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Service Dog Training and Certification

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Service dogs are vital supports for people with disabilities. Long wait-lists, unmanageable expenses, and restrictive legislation created by the previous government have resulted in Alberta's reality, only approximately 80 to 100 active service dog teams. In March of 2017 our government announced a pilot that would seek to improve the qualified list of trainers and testers. To the Minister of Community and Social Services: how has this pilot progressed in the last seven months?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We know that Albertans have faced long wait-lists for too many years, and that is why we are taking steps to make life better for Albertans with disabilities. Last spring we took action to increase access to service dogs with \$250,000 of funding for a new training pilot. We are supporting more schools to train dogs, and we are making it easier for owner-trained dogs to get public access.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. There has been a great deal of work across the country developing national service dog team standards. How will the Alberta regulations and standards align with these national standards?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question and for her advocacy on this issue. As I said, we will continue to monitor the progress of this pilot in our work, and in the meantime our new regulation makes it easier for Albertans with disabilities to have their service dog qualified. From March to July several organizations tested Alberta's new standard and qualified list process. The new qualified list of providers will be available in the coming weeks.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. Not all service animals come from accredited organizations. Some are trained by their owners. How will this pilot support non traditionally trained service dog teams in terms of testing?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Our new regulation allows dogs that are trained by their owners to take a test and become qualified in Alberta. Through our new regulation we are certainly making life better for Albertans with disabilities, and unfortunately the opposition wants to make life harder. They view support for Albertans with disabilities as a giveaway and want to slash 20 per cent of that, and we won't let that happen. We will continue to work with Albertans with disabilities to make sure they get the supports they need.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals (continued)

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has repeatedly talked about getting our resources to tidewater, and unfortunately all they do is talk. According to the Petroleum Services Association, who are industry experts, you know, those people that actually work in the industry, the only thing this government has been successful at is destroying investor confidence, and it's time for the Alberta Premier and Trudeau to stand up for the oil industry. The PSAC president may agree with me when I say that this government needs a proctologist to do a cranium exam if they think that Albertans are buying that the carbon tax has bought this mythical social licence. When will this government stop the talk and start the walk?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, when we talk about investment in Alberta, we're proud of Alberta companies who have stepped up and are doubling down on oil sands investment. We're proud of the recent Japanese investment in Alberta of \$2 billion. Those investments are because of our climate leadership plan, which is bringing carbon out of the oil and becoming a product that people want. We're working very hard for access to tidewater. Again, we have one pipeline under construction . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Loewen: Given that that is more rhetoric and not an answer . . .

The Speaker: No preambles, please.

Mr. Loewen: . . . and given that when it was announced in 2015, the carbon tax was to reduce emissions and buy social licence for pipelines and that earlier this week the Finance minister claimed that

the carbon tax was responsible for the reduction of small-business taxes and that this summer the government claimed that it was for green line transit, Mr. Speaker, this government needs to get its story straight. I believe in recycling as much as anyone, but could the minister please explain how many times the same money from the carbon tax can be recycled and reannounced?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the climate leadership plan and the carbon levy money are being used to innovate and make Alberta greener not just in the energy industry, which is full of innovation and doing a lot of things to make the carbon greener in the oil industry, but we're making investments in things like the green line and green technology. Unfortunately, our opposition would make \$9 billion in cuts to those structures, which would take away the green line in Calgary, for example, something we don't want. We're working very hard in Alberta to create green . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Hon. member, no preambles. Second supplemental. Go ahead.

Mr. Loewen: Given that the carbon tax was supposed to buy social licence for pipelines and that now Albertans just want a return for their defective social licence, which was simply not as advertised, and that this government claims two pipelines as a result of the carbon tax when in reality two pipelines have been cancelled and their friends are protesting the others and that just like the St. Lawrence Seaway downstream of Montreal, this doesn't pass the smell test, when will this government consider their own toxic emissions, simply admit that their crowning achievement is an abject failure, repeal the carbon tax, and start supporting Alberta with actions, not just words?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, our climate leadership plan was cited by the Prime Minister when he gave permission for the two pipelines, one of which is being built as we speak. But other investments that are being done with that with respect to the energy industry are \$998 million for large-scale renewable energy, bioenergy, technology, coal community transition, and other climate leadership plan initiatives. Because of the climate leadership plan we're looking at \$566 million for energy efficiency, \$565 million for the small business . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Workers' Compensation Board Surplus Funds Support for Small Business

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, today the CFIB released a report showing that workers' compensation boards across the country are retaining approximately \$6.8 billion in surplus funds, with Alberta's share amounting to \$1.9 billion. Typically Alberta employers see rebates, but in the wake of the WCB review panel report Alberta job creators have yet to see anything come back in 2016. To the Minister of Labour: will you confirm that your government will not be transferring WCB surpluses into general government revenue?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of seniors.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, all employees have the right to a safe, fair, and healthy work environment, and our review of the WCB is supporting that to happen. We are absolutely committed to working with the WCB, who

works with workers throughout the province to make sure that they're treated fairly, and we'll be following the recommendations.

Mr. Hunter: Given that Alberta employers paid their premiums in good faith with the understanding that any surpluses would be returned to them at the end of the year and given that all the additional costs imposed on Alberta businesses by this NDP government are really starting to add up, to the same minister: will you do the right thing and direct the WCB to follow past practices and immediately return the \$1.9 billion to Alberta employers? That could really help them right now.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, it's absolutely crucial that Albertans feel confident that the Workers' Compensation Board provide fair compensation and meaningful rehabilitation. The last comprehensive review was back 15 years ago. Certainly, we're working hard to make sure that Albertans are treated fairly, employers and workers, and we know that the opposition would be cutting billions from our budget and making it much harder for Albertans.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that in addition to corporate tax increases, minimum wage increases, and the carbon tax, the federal government now wants to impose punishing new tax increases on Canadian small businesses and given that this NDP government has consistently shown a propensity not to stand up to the Trudeau Liberals and fight for Alberta businesses, Minister, will you not help them now when they really need it? Small businesses desperately need you to champion them.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll thank the member for the question. Our government has stood with and stands up for small businesses. We know that Alberta small businesses have a larger impact on the economy than businesses anywhere in the country. That's why we reduced the small-business tax rate by a third. We are the second lowest in the country. There are a number of initiatives that we've introduced that are supporting businesses, whether they are starting up or they're looking at growing, including the investor tax credit, which will see Albertans have the ability to invest in companies in their own backyard. We support small business. The opposition would cut billions to hurt businesses even more. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order, please.

Opioid Use Prevention and Treatment

Mr. Fildebrandt: In March the opposition asked for an emergency debate on the opioid crisis in Alberta. All members of this House worked together to help those battling addiction. Since the minister struck the opioid emergency commission six months ago, it has held just three meetings and made only one recommendation, the creation of safe injection sites. Between April 1 and June 30 119 people have died from opioid overdoses. Will the minister please tell this House why the emergency commission has not yet provided any recommendation on addictions treatment or prevention?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am so happy to be able to comment on this. Just earlier today the opioid commission posted a series of other recommendations. I have accepted all of the

commission's recommendations to date. These include funding substance abuse treatment for doctors' offices at primary care networks, funding for indigenous communities to develop resources tailored to their specific needs, and exploration of supervised injectable opioid replacement therapy for Albertans who've not responded to other treatments. We've also made improvements and expansions to the provincial naloxone program as well as expanding treatment across the province.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, given that in April a 17-year-old boy from a village in my constituency was thrown from his horse, breaking his spine, and was discharged from the hospital with 80 hydromorphone tablets, which pulled this previously clean kid down into the world of addictions and street drugs, and given that he went to his mother seeking help but that in southeastern Alberta there was nothing available for him, what is this government doing to ensure that youth have access to detox treatment in rural Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I would like to express my condolences for the member's constituent. That is a tale that is far too often told throughout Alberta, which is why we've been working very carefully with the members of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta to ensure that not only are opioids prescribed properly in our province but that there's also an extended treatment plan that involves tapering off in appropriate doses and supports as an individual ends their prescription period.

With respect to the question around treatment, we have worked to expand access to opioid replacement therapy treatments across the province, including telehealth, through . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, given that the family of this boy paid \$18,000 out of pocket to send him to a youth detox centre in Winnipeg and that his mother came to me not asking for the government to reimburse them but to ensure that in the future our youth have access to detox treatment in a timely fashion and given that I've seen first-hand the devastation that the opioid crisis is having in rural and First Nations communities, will the minister speed up her work to provide real results to prevent and treat youth addiction in our rural and First Nations communities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. One of the key findings of the opioid response commission has been that there is a need for additional services across our province. We have moved forward on expanding many of the treatments that are currently available. There is more work to be done. The work that we have done is saving lives, but our work will continue.

2:30 E-mail Management in Government

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, yesterday this government outrageously claimed to be the most open and transparent that anyone had ever seen. The facts are different. Just ask the Information Commissioner. The facts are that the Premier's most trusted advisers and inner circle, Brian Topp and Anne McGrath, sent a total of two e-mails between them in their entire time at the Premier's office. No one believes this. The Premier needs to come clean. What are the Premier's key decision-makers hiding from Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated, we believe that government should be open and transparent. These are values that we work on very hard. Access to information is an important issue that we take very seriously. That's why we're practically sharing more information with the public than the government has ever before.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of e-mails, certainly I can attest to the fact that our ministerial offices receive training in terms of FOIP. With respect to what types of records need to be saved . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplemental.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this secretive government has welcomed the opportunity to clear the air on the mass deletion of 800,000 government records unearthed by the Official Opposition, will the Premier reassure the people of Alberta that her innermost circle has not, is not, will not be using private e-mail servers to conduct government business and hide from Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've stated, we welcome the investigation, and we're confident that our actions with respect to records management are in line with the law. The opposition might like to yell and scream more than they like to listen, but I would like to give some facts to put in context. The government of Alberta processes approximately 1 million incoming and outgoing e-mails each and every day. When we put 800,000 in context, it might sound huge, but I think we need to put it in context of the government of Alberta, not our personal e-mail inboxes.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cooper: Given that the United Conservative opposition uncovered a shady scheme to reward government employees for deleting records and since yesterday this minister admitted that these incentives were not allowed by government policies, can the minister please update the House: what other rule-breaking, illegal government activities is her government turning a blind eye to?

The Speaker: I caution again the use of certain words and the implications that come along with them.
The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would invite the member opposite to wait upon the results of the Privacy Commissioner. I certainly intend to take her guidance on this issue, although he seems more interested in a smear campaign despite the fact that his own leader of his own party absolutely refuses to abide by honesty and transparency and the promises that he's made to Albertans. That's why I'm so concerned by the fact that Jason Kenney . . .

Mr. Nixon: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Ms McLean: . . . has continued to break a promise to Albertans with respect to disclosure of his list of donors.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
A point of order was noted.
The Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Carbon Levy and Agricultural Costs

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opposition has been warning this government that their carbon tax, like their federal pal's plan, will do nothing to help emissions but continue to punish farmers and consumers. While it's long been maintained by this side that agriculture provides a carbon sink, a federal ministerial memo has now confirmed this. Minister, will your government stop your war on Alberta's farmers and roll back plans to increase the carbon tax January 1?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. In my travels across the province talking to producers, processors, importers, exporters, they don't ask me about the carbon levy, about what a burden it is. They ask me what more they can do to do their part on the climate leadership policy. They believe it's the right thing to do, as we do. Obviously, they do not.

Thank you.

Mr. Strankman: Again, Mr. Speaker, given that this recent federal memorandum, which I will happily table, shows that a carbon tax of \$50 per tonne will cost the average farmer \$3,700 per year in increased costs without any measurable lowering of emissions – in fact, the same document states that Canadian agriculture is creating more economic activity without increasing its GHG emissions – Minister, do you have any internal briefing notes, memos, or research documents disproving this federal memo's findings and, if so, would you table them in this House?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud of this government's climate leadership policy. It also extends to the agricultural community. The agricultural community is looking for those incentives to be able to do their part for climate leadership, to do their part to lower emissions, to do their part to diversify this economy. When you lower your emissions, when you take advantage of the climate leadership plan, you also grow economically. Our farmers know that, and I'm assuming that eventually this side also will clue in to that fact.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Strankman: Given that this memorandum also discusses a regional disparity between east and west – these ag input costs are primarily due to the different sources of electricity available to farmers; farmers in Alberta are punished financially because of the abundance of fossil fuels – Minister, will you admit that your carbon tax is more about punishing Albertans for certain geological realities and your negative ideological slants rather than actually reducing pollution?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The facts will speak for themselves. We had some major investments in agriculture in just this past year. The Cavendish expansion in Lethbridge is the largest expansion in Lethbridge's history, a \$360 million expansion. Champion Petfoods near Spruce Grove will be able to increase their plant. It's a \$250 million expansion. These expansions are taking place because agriculture in Alberta is robust, will continue to be robust, and will continue to be even more robust because of our climate leadership plan.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Unharvested 2017 Crops

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although the grain harvest seems to have gone well in much of the province, many parts of north-central and northeast Alberta are not so fortunate. Because of the wet spring many farmers were forced to seed later in the season and are now scrambling to bring in the crops against rain and snow. To the minister of agriculture: could the minister update the House on the harvest progress to date and where there might be areas of concern?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Last year's harvest was certainly a challenge, and that continued into the spring, with wet conditions in many parts of the province. While crops in some regions did get planted later than usual, producers have been very busy this fall, and the vast majority of the harvest is in. As of this week about 98.6 per cent of crops have been harvested, leaving about 170,000 acres still unharvested, compared to 1 million last year. I'm being very optimistic this year that our harvest is going very well.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given the number of farmers that may be impacted this year – I'm glad to hear it's a few less than it looked like a week ago – what plans does AFSC have in place to expedite claims, adjustments, and settlements?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member. First off, I'd like to thank the crop commissions from Team Alberta for their work representing their members, providing the AFSC, the department, and my office with day-to-day information throughout the harvest. This valuable insight comes to how the government and AFSC can help producers get crops in the bin.

Last season was marred with very difficult weather. In response to this I directed AFSC to take action to streamline its process in order to deal with the high volume of claims. This season we've seen much better weather for harvest, so process has not been an issue. That said, AFSC and department staff learned a lot from last year's harvest, and we'll look into ways to be able to expedite . . .

2:40

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that last year many farmers in my riding questioned whether the present insurance coverage is sufficient in how it addresses their costs and covers their needs, in the recent talks with our federal partners was there any discussion on improving the program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member. Taxpayers have long been supporting crop insurance as a very valuable way for our farmers to manage business risk so that they can put food on Alberta's tables and onto the market. The RME programs are robust and largely work well, but sometimes it's good to see if they can work even better. This was a topic during federal-provincial discussions, and we're currently undergoing a review of

business risk management products within the current federal-provincial agreement. As part of this review last week I had a round-table with agriculture stakeholders to find out where more of those opportunities for improvement are, and I look forward to more opportunities to discuss with producers.

Data Security in Postsecondary Institutions

Mr. W. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, Albertans expect that when they provide private information to public institutions, this same information is kept secure and is not to be used or held in jeopardy. Last year the University of Calgary's information and data systems were held for ransom, and the university was locked out of their information system by a third party, a hacker if you will. The university was forced to spend 20,000 ransom dollars to unlock their data systems, which they paid, I assume, with taxpayers' dollars. As the Minister of Advanced Education, what specifically have you done to assist the university to ensure this does not happen again?

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you to the Member for Highwood for that question. Of course, I did send out a letter to all of the institutions in Alberta to address these issues of cybersecurity. We are convening a working group of members from each of those institutions as well as the government department to look into the issue, to share best practices, and to make sure that these kinds of security breaches don't happen again.

Mr. W. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, given that, interestingly enough, this year Grant MacEwan's information systems were also hacked and their information and data systems were manipulated by criminals to the extent that 11.8 million taxpayer dollars were extorted, redirected, and lost, can the minister tell us specifically how his department is assisting these institutions that he is responsible for and how he will reassure taxpayers that this will not happen again? Not just a letter.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, after that incident came to light, I asked the board of Grant MacEwan to conduct an investigation and provide a report to me. We had a preliminary report submitted to us a couple of months ago, and a full report will be submitted to us in the fullness of time. Of course, we're very concerned about these incidents. We're working with our institutions to make sure that all of the proper financial controls are in place so that these incidents don't happen again and that taxpayer dollars that are going to students are used for that purpose and not stolen by bad people out there.

Mr. W. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a pattern here. Perhaps the minister in conjunction with, oh, say, the Solicitor General: please explain to Albertans what specifically they are doing to prevent this type of criminal activity from happening again and again. What exactly are they doing to get the 12 million taxpayer dollars back from these criminals?

Mr. Schmidt: Well, as I said in my previous answer to the member, of course, we asked MacEwan University to provide us with the results of the full investigation. We continue to make sure that all of our institutions have the best financial controls in place so that we prevent these things from happening again. There is an ongoing investigation into the particular matter the member raises, and once that matter is concluded, I will endeavour to inform the House of the results of that investigation to make sure that we've done all we could to recover taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Highway 1 and 791 Intersection Safety

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jaydon Sommerfeld tragically lost his life at the age of 17 in Chestermere in June of 2015. His parents, my friends Kenton and Sheri Sommerfeld, and the entire city of Chestermere have looked at measures to improve safety. In fact, I was out with Sheri a couple of weeks ago at the intersection, and she put flowers there for her son, where he was killed. Minister, I have begged this government to do something to improve the safety of this intersection. An acceleration lane was added on highway 1 going west, and the speed limit has now been decreased to 80 kilometres an hour, which has actually made this intersection a whole lot more dangerous. I'm asking: what will the government do to improve the safety at this intersection?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I can tell the hon. member that I have met with the mayor following this incident, and the department has studied it closely and has implemented a number of measures, including acceleration lanes and so on. So it is my view that the steps that have been taken will make the intersection or have made the intersection more safe. If the hon. member wishes to discuss with me why she doesn't think that's the case, I'm happy to do that and pleased to listen to what her concerns are.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's actually made it more dangerous.

Given that the concerned residents of Chestermere were actually invited to participate in an open house in April of 2017 and presented options for improving the safety at the intersection and given that many options are far too expensive given the economic downturn and the hemorrhaging budget deficit, the parents voted overwhelmingly in favour of a set of traffic lights that, using common sense, only need to be running during school hours at a cost of about \$800,000, so why hasn't the government listened to the people of Chestermere? Can you please explain to me what you know that we don't?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, the department did evaluate that option, and quite frankly I think it would make the intersection and the highway very much less safe. We're going from a highway where the speed limit is 100 kilometres an hour or 110 kilometres an hour, then you've got to slow the traffic down, and then you put a red light there that only operates part of the time. You know, you create a lot of opportunities for very serious rear-end accidents and so on. So the department's professional assessment is that this particular solution would not make the intersection more safe but actually quite the opposite.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, in the evaluation given by Alberta Transportation, they actually made it clear that this option of reducing the speed does nothing to address the root causes of the collision. In fact, it's in the report. Given that this reduction contributed to new hazards and that the school buses don't even turn there at this intersection, can the minister please invoke some common sense and listen to the people, install a set of traffic lights

at that intersection so that anybody coming onto highway 1, all drivers leaving the high school can drive safely, or does somebody else need to die?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, of course, we all mourn the tragic death of the young man, but we want to make sure that this kind of thing doesn't happen again. If we're slowing down the traffic and that doesn't work in the hon. member's opinion, then adding a red light that only operates intermittently is going to actually create greater hazards, and it is not something that traffic experts recommend at all.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Energy Policies

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By now you probably might have heard that the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, PSAC, lambasted our Premier and our Prime Minister for not standing up for the oil and gas industry.

The PSAC president said, quote, it's totally irresponsible that Canada is not getting its oil and gas to tidewater, to other parts of the world. Mr. Speaker, this is just common sense. Karen Mahon in her petroleum-made kayaks should have been out protesting the city of Victoria, not Kinder Morgan, for dumping untreated sewage into the ocean.

The PSAC president also said that the social licence thing is a myth; it's a set of goalposts that will never stop moving. He is right. You cannot tame a tiger when your head is in its mouth. He said that the number of wells to be drilled in Alberta could have been higher, but investor confidence is low, and the cancellation of Energy East is a blow to investor confidence.

This Premier's NDP celebrated the cancellation of the Northern Gateway pipeline. Coupled with the carbon tax going up by 50 per cent in just two months, carbon leakage to the U.S.A. will accelerate. Our Legislature passed my Motion 505, which, if implemented, would have brought more Alberta oil to replace dictator oil in the Canadian market.

2:50

I have written to the Transport minister, Marc Garneau, opposing the unconstitutional tanker ban in B.C. One can only hope for the arrival of Jason Kenney's United Conservative Party government to let the world know that Alberta is open for business again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore. Excuse me. I would try Edmonton-Castle Downs. My apologies.

Dieppe

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 19, 1942, the 14th Canadian Army Tank Regiment took part in Operation Jubilee and landed on the beaches of Dieppe, France. As the tanks came to shore, they were brought to a halt by German fire and were trapped on the beach. They managed to form a protective ring of steel around the infantry who were under fire, and their efforts helped in the withdrawal of many soldiers. The valiant tankers fought until all their ammunition had been expended. All the tanks that landed

were captured along with 167 men. Thirteen men, including the commanding officer, were killed in action.

Mr. Stan Edwards, who I introduced earlier this afternoon, was a private at the time of landing on Dieppe. This summer he returned to Dieppe after 75 years to take part in the unveiling ceremony of a monument dedicated to those who died or were captured.

At a ceremony held in Calgary this summer, I was honoured to meet Trooper (Retired) Tommy Baker and Tank Gunner (Retired) Bill Stewart. Another veteran, Trooper (Retired) Bernard Johnson, also lives in Calgary. Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Baker, and Mr. Stewart were not able to attend today.

Mr. Edwards and Mr. Stewart joined the Calgary tank regiment at the same time. While in Dieppe they were part of that valiant effort to protect the infantry. Both were taken as prisoners of war. To this day they remain close friends.

I want to thank these Albertans, Trooper (Retired) Johnson, Trooper (Retired) Baker, Tank Gunner (Retired) Stewart, and Private (Retired) Edwards, for your sacrifice. To those who paid the ultimate price, to surviving veterans, to serving members and their families across Alberta and this nation: thank you. Lest we forget.

2017 Municipal Elections

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, as you know, a couple of weeks ago Alberta cities and municipalities held elections for town councils. I believe everyone here understands and appreciates the time, the effort, and the dedication that all candidates put forward in their bids to be elected. Today I want to thank everyone who put their names forward for public office, and I want to congratulate all those elected. It takes a lot of grit and confidence to step forward, and it takes even more once you're in office.

As provincially elected officials we have the honour of working with our municipal counterparts regardless of political leaning, and I'd like to take this opportunity to remind reeves, councillors, and mayors that their duty is not a light one but one which involves standing up for constituents and working for what's best for them.

Increasing tax burdens is not the way to do that, so I encourage each town council to exercise fiscal conservatism so that their cities and towns do not struggle with ballooning debt from the federal and provincial governments in addition to their own. There are lessons to be learned, Mr. Speaker, and not every government is a good example to follow, especially the provincial and federal governments, I might add. However, they can give you advice on good grooming techniques and selfies.

I urge these new municipal governments to encourage small business and industry to invest in their areas so that residents can see additional jobs and prosperity. I urge them not to put any ideology before the needs and concerns of the people they serve. I caution them not to make enemies of business by taking them to court or creating reasons for businesses to file lawsuits. Rather, I encourage each elected official to use common sense, so often lacking in government, to work with businesses and individuals to create healthy, prosperous towns, cities, and regions.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent of the Assembly to extend the Orders of the Day to completion past 3 o'clock.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Athabasca District Business Awards

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 19 of this year I was delighted to attend the fifth annual Athabasca District Chamber of Commerce business awards night. There was a great turnout, especially considering it was a good night for combining, and the buzz in the room was very positive, a far cry from the perpetual doom and gloom we hear from the other side of the House. Optimism is justified. BMO's latest provincial forecast states, "Alberta's economy has returned to growth, and could potentially lead the country this year at 4.1%"

It is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit of Albertans and the value of diversification that such a wide range of small businesses are able to thrive in our communities. But not only do small businesses pay taxes and create jobs; they can also help to reduce waste and help the environment and support worthy causes. Today I am happy to recognize a local business that does all of these at the same time.

The Lolly Pop Thrift Shop was the winner of the chamber's 2017 green business award, an inspired choice. Why the green award? Because what they do is accept and process community donations of books, clothing, and household goods otherwise destined for disposal, which they use to stock their store with extremely reasonably priced items. Then they in turn donate the cleaned and sorted remainder to other worthy groups.

Why do they do this? They do it for the environment, they do it to help low-income families get the products they need, but they especially do it for the children. Every child that walks into their store gets two free books, a lollipop, and a toy. But what's more, every month they use part of their proceeds to support local youth sports and literacy groups, truly a virtuous business model. Like so many of our small businesses, they put community first. I am proud to recognize them in the House today for the wonderful work that they do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

2017 Harvest

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to salute the men and women who have just completed a provincial megaproject, men and women who have toiled many long hours and at times were concerned whether or not they would be able to finish the project in time. Thankfully most in Alberta's largest renewable industry are now able to proclaim that they have successfully completed the harvest of 2017. Alberta farmers faced many challenges this growing season, but I'm proud to say that once again they've done a magnificent job growing many diverse crops and doing their part to feed the world.

Although the focus is so often on the harvest activity on farms, many industries and individuals are required to get the harvest done and to market, from equipment manufacturing and maintenance to the fuel and fertilizer supply chains, from businesses necessary to process and market the crop to the transportation industry providing the roads and rail necessary to deliver the product.

In all of this it is important to recognize it will be that bushel of wheat, oats, barley, peas, or canola paying the bills. It will be the sugar beets, potatoes, pork, or lamb paying for the jobs in all of these support industries. The jobs Albertans rely on are created and paid for by the commodities we produce, harvest, and process.

Mr. Speaker, this evening Chops and Crops gives MLAs an opportunity to meet directly with producers and their associations to learn about key issues faced by the agricultural industry while enjoying some delectable Alberta-grown food products. We as legislators need to recognize the role we play in maintaining a

globally competitive and viable agricultural sector. Any extra cost public policy adds is paid for by the products we produce and sell. We have a huge responsibility to get it right, so I hope all MLAs take the time to attend Chops and Crops this evening to demonstrate our commitment to agriculture in this province and its contribution to both the economy and the health and wellness of all Albertans.

Thank you.

Mace Tour

Ms Jabbour: All of us are aware of the importance and the significance of the Mace. It is a powerful symbol of democracy and of the rights of the common people to pass legislation here in this House. What members may not be aware of is that our Alberta Mace has embarked on a series of adventures of its own.

As part of Mr. Speaker's Outreach, you, Mr. Speaker, and I along with the Sergeant-at-Arms and visitor services staff have accompanied our Mace on trips around the province so that those who live long distances from the Legislature can connect with our work and understand the democratic process. While on the road the Sergeant-at-Arms closely guards the Mace and ensures that it is treated with the utmost respect. At the same time, the opportunity to see the Mace up close and learn about its history has been an unforgettable experience for the communities we have visited.

3:00

Our first visit was to Medicine Hat, including a stop at Siksika First Nation, where a group of dynamic young people shared ideas about incorporating a First Nation presence into the Legislature. The second visit was to Fort McMurray, Fort MacKay, and Anzac. This was around the anniversary of the fire, which reminded us of the important role government plays in caring for Albertans in times of need.

This month the Mace tour came to my own constituency of Peace River. Because of its size we only toured the northern part this time, including High Level, La Crête, Fort Vermilion, Manning, Blue Hills, Paddle Prairie, and Beaver First Nation. On our visit to Beaver First Nation one of the community leaders suggested that, given the important role of the Mace in making good legislation, perhaps the Mace should be smudged. We agreed, and the smudging ceremony we participated in was a solemn and profound moment that felt absolutely right and truly historic, another small step forward in forging new relationships with Alberta's indigenous peoples.

The Mace adventure continued as we crossed the Peace River by ferry. The Mace has now crossed most of Alberta's major rivers: the Peace, the North and South Saskatchewan, the Red Deer, and the Athabasca.

Other areas of the province will be visited in months to come. Mr. Speaker's Mace outreach tour is an important way to connect with Albertans, and I'm proud to be part of the adventure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Bill 23

Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2017

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce first reading of Bill 23, the Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2017.

Bill 23 would add age as a prohibited ground of discrimination to the Alberta Human Rights Act under the areas of tenancies and

goods, services, accommodations, or facilities. Earlier this year the government agreed to these changes by way of agreement to a court order.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 23 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Mr. Mason: I'm not on your list, Mr. Speaker, but I do have some things to table on behalf of the hon. Premier. First, I would like to table the appropriate number of copies of the latest Toronto-Dominion Bank provincial economic forecast, which says that Alberta will lead the country in economic growth next year, and they are predicting a 4.2 per cent growth rate.

Secondly, it is also my pleasure to rise and table the appropriate number of copies of the latest provincial forecast from the Bank of Montreal, Mr. Speaker. This forecast indicates that Alberta is slated to grow by 4.1 per cent this year. They're one point off, but, you know, it's in the ballpark.

The third one I'd like to table, Mr. Speaker, is the economic forecast for the province of Alberta from the Royal Bank of Canada. This one agrees with the TD one, which says it's going to be 4.2.

I think that it's pretty clear that the economists at the banks are very bullish on the Alberta economy, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the appropriate number of copies of the CFIB report that earlier I mentioned in my question, Finding Funding Fairness in Workers' Compensation.

Point of Order

Language Creating Disorder Reflections on a Nonmember

The Speaker: Hon. members, I believe we had a point of order today. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nixon: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I rise about some comments from the Minister of Service Alberta at the time that I raised the point of order in question period. At that time the minister, unfortunately, referred to the leader of the United Conservative Party as completely dishonest. First, I would draw your attention to 23(j) in our Standing Orders, which says: "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." I would first suggest to you that referring to anybody would create disorder in this Assembly but particularly referring to the Leader of the Official Opposition or the party that is the Official Opposition as dishonest will certainly create disorder.

I would also go further than that, Mr. Speaker, and draw your attention to the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, pages 616 and 617, where it refers to reference by name to members of the public. For those following along at home, it says:

Members are discouraged from referring by name to persons who are not Members of Parliament and who do not enjoy parliamentary immunity, except in extraordinary circumstances when the national interest calls for this. The Speaker has ruled that Members have a responsibility to protect the innocent, not only from outright slander, but from any slur directly or indirectly implied.

Furthermore, the Speaker

suggested that Members avoid as much as possible mentioning by name people from outside the House who are unable to reply in their own defence.

Now, I have already risen on this once in a similar situation this week, Mr. Speaker, and you ruled in my favour, if you will, at that time over those concerns. Here we are now, three days into this week, seeing the same things. I am as excited as anybody about the election of the Hon. Jason Kenney as the leader of the United Conservative Party. I am thrilled, and I look forward to seeing him sitting shortly in this chair that I have the privilege of sitting in for the time being and, further to that, sitting in the chair that is across from me in the next two years.

But ministers referring to the leader of the United Conservative Party, a person who is not a member of this Chamber, who cannot defend themselves, is certainly slander. It is completely inappropriate, and, to my first point, Mr. Speaker, it's going to cause disorder in this House. So I would ask that the government stop calling people dishonest and start focusing on the work that they've been sent here to do, which is standing up for Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do not have, of course, the Blues, so I don't have a very comprehensive recollection of what was stated, but I will say, subject to your correction, that the hon. minister talked about the leader of the United Conservatives. I don't recall her mentioning him by name in this particular instance, but what the minister was referring to is the refusal of the leader of the United Conservative Party to disclose the dark money that he's received to finance his leadership race. This is an important issue, I think, that needs to be canvassed. I'm not sure what were the exact words used by the minister, so I'm at a disadvantage in that regard.

The Speaker: Let me read that to you, to all of the House: "despite the fact that his own leader of his own party absolutely refuses to abide by honesty and transparency and the promises that he's made to Albertans." I share that with you.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, that's quite a bit different from what we've heard from the hon. House leader in his point of order. You know, one of the things that happens in political discourse is that the veracity of statements made by different individuals is often made – it's certainly made on the other side as well. I don't recall any prohibited language being used. I know that the individual in this case was not named, as suggested by the House leader for the United Conservative Party.

3:10

I think that it is within the range of comments that are within the normal range of political discourse. A little harsh, but I think that it was a clear reference to the fact that Mr. Kenney has received money for his leadership campaign which he is refusing to disclose. That was the subject of what the minister was trying to get at. I think that many Albertans are indeed deeply concerned about the source of Mr. Kenney's funds. I think that it would be resolved if the leader of the UCP would simply stand up and tell Albertans where he got his money.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government House Leader has chosen to go where the minister earlier didn't, clearly finishing the job of slandering that was incomplete during the question period.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Government House Leader, obviously, didn't address the issue of creating disorder in the House, I think, clearly because he's fully aware that that's

exactly what occurred here, which is why I would respectfully ask you to ask the hon. minister to withdraw those remarks and apologize.

The Speaker: I'm sorry. Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been following the discussion and just wanted to ask if as part of your ruling there could be a point of clarification as well because members opposite used the names of many private individuals today, including former members of the oil sands advisory group, who also are not in this House to defend themselves and also could be considered slandered, I suppose. Could you clarify for us what the rules are around private names, if that applies simply to members of the opposition, the particular leader, or if that's all people outside this House?

Thank you.

The Speaker: I see that considerably more discussion of this will add limited value. First of all, to the point made by the Leader of the Official Opposition with respect to the individual's name, in this instance it was not actually identified. However, there were references to the leader of a party. With respect to that, I'm not sure that a point of order has been made.

However, the question before: you'll recall, some of you, that just prior to the minister making these comments, I cautioned the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills about the language that he was using and cautioned immediately prior to the minister responding. And if I've learned anything in this House, it is about context.

To the question from Edmonton-Centre, we've discussed this many, many times. There is no exact science to these words, as to what's on the list. I continue being asked: what are the lists of what I can say and what I can't say? Well, you've proven in here that it's an impossible task, and it is contextual.

In this situation the minister did say: "despite the fact that his own leader of his own party absolutely refuses to abide by honesty and transparency and the promises that he's made to Albertans." She went on to clarify that it was the promise issue that she was intending, I believe. Nonetheless, I'd ask that the Government House Leader address all of his members. That includes the other side as well. However, in this instance I would ask that you caution the minister to not make those kinds of responses, making reference to the character of individuals.

Will I rule that there's actually a point of order? Today I will not. But it seems to me that you all have the responsibility to avoid that kind of language. It's certainly not contributing to the tone and production of this House.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 22 Resident and Family Councils Act

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North on behalf of the hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to move second reading of Bill 22, the Resident and Family Councils Act.

If passed, this legislation will expect the establishment of resident and family councils in all long-term care and licensed supportive

living facilities. In facilities that already have them, resident and family councils are an important mechanism for enabling residents and families to present requests, concerns, and propose solutions to a facility representative or operator. A number of Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services initiatives and activities over the last five years have identified resident and family councils as a means of improving the experiences of residents in licensed supportive living and long-term care facilities.

The Resident and Family Councils Act aligns with this government's direction by engaging and empowering Albertans living in facilities to take an active and engaged role in their own care. Furthermore, it will support traditionally underrepresented individuals and communities to be heard and participate more fully in their facilities if they so choose. The Resident and Family Councils Act will expand on the existing concerns and complaints processes and provide new opportunities for residents, families, and operators to work together on issues that affect them.

Madam Speaker, our government is committed to enhancing the delivery of continuing care in Alberta's facilities, and we believe that those most affected by these services should have a say in how care and supports are being delivered and how they can be improved. With this legislation residents of Alberta's licensed supportive living and long-term care facilities can be assured that no matter whether their facility is private or publicly funded, they will have a forum to voice concerns and share feedback with their facility operator.

I'd like to now go over the legislation in detail. The Resident and Family Councils Act includes all licensed supportive living and long-term care facilities serving four or more residents. A supportive living accommodation is a facility where the operator provides for the safety and security of four or more residents and offers at least one meal per day or housekeeping services. Seniors' lodges as supportive living accommodations would also be included under the legislation. Long-term care facilities include nursing homes and auxiliary hospitals.

The requirements within this legislation will apply to facilities operated by public operators as well as those that are operated by private for-profit and not-for-profit providers.

It will also cover residences that support persons with developmental disabilities that have four or more residents, which are licensed under the Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act. The decision to include PDD residences was determined after initial conversations with advocates representing residents and families. They felt that councils would be a benefit to residents and family members and would give them greater opportunity to voice their concerns to facility operators.

Government is currently developing a plan to engage the PDD community should this legislation pass. This will be done to engage persons with disabilities, their families and guardians, who also support this decision to include PDD residences in this legislation.

3:20

Should the legislation pass and once it comes into force, any facility resident or family member will be able to establish a family or resident council. The act supports self-governing councils and is flexible to enable residents and family members to determine their council processes and procedures, procedures such as members' roles, meeting format and frequency, and when and how facility representatives should be involved in council meetings. If a facility already has some form of group in place at the time, the group will be considered a resident and family council for the purposes of this legislation.

Facilities with three or fewer residents, which fall outside the Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act, will not be

affected by this legislation. Though residents of these facilities are welcome to establish councils, we recognize that the mechanism of a council may not be appropriate for residences of this size.

Under the Resident and Family Councils Act operators will be required to do the following once the act comes into force. They must ensure a resident and family council can be established within a facility. Operators must notify residents and family members of their right to establish councils within 60 days of the act coming into force. Operators must also provide the council with assistance in making other residents and their families aware of the council and provide administrative support upon request of the council. They must provide facility performance information to the council; for example, results of inspections and survey results; consult with the council on issues; for example, meals, personal choice services, and social or leisure activities; develop and implement a written response process to address feedback brought forward by the council; provide the council information on how to access an Alberta health complaints officer; and attend council meetings when invited by the council.

Compliance with the act and its requirements would be monitored by Alberta health inspectors through the existing accommodation licensing process. Monitoring for compliance would include, for example, interviews with resident and family council members and a review of documentation to see whether feedback is being collected and that complaints are being logged and rectified.

If passed, the Ministry of Health will take a number of actions to ensure a smooth transition when the act eventually comes into force. First, as I mentioned, Health will engage PDD stakeholders, including meaningful engagement with persons with disabilities, their family members and guardians, to make sure the unique needs of their community are considered. Some early engagement has already occurred with PDD organizations, including the PDD Provincial Self-Advocates' Advisory Committee and Inclusion Alberta.

Secondly, Health will be developing a tool kit intended to help residents and family members establish effective councils. This will contain helpful advice and useful templates such as sample terms of reference to support new councils. The tool kit will be shared with stakeholders from both the continuing care and PDD communities, including operators, residents, and family members.

Alberta Health will also be developing an information guide to support operators in complying with the requirements. Associations representing operators will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the tool kit and information guide.

In conclusion, colleagues, the Resident and Family Councils Act will support long-term care and supportive living residents and their family members to take an engaged and active role in the delivery of care and accommodation services. It will strengthen the relationship between operators and residents and ensure that residents and their loved ones will have a voice in improving Alberta's continuing care facilities.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I look forward to hearing the debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the second reading of Bill 22, the Resident and Family Councils Act. As a representative of Albertans and especially those from the Drayton Valley-Devon constituency I feel strongly that we have a critical and important responsibility to protect the vulnerable Albertans and Albertans that built our

province especially and that are now in lodges and nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Bill 22 guarantees that the residents of long-term and licensed supportive care facilities will have the right to establish self-governing councils that would allow them to pursue and to engage and to work towards ensuring a strong, healthy, high quality of life, and I will be supporting this initiative.

As the previous critic for Seniors and Housing and mental health for my caucus I've done research and outreach with residents of the facilities that we're talking about today across this province. I've met with these facilities and with the seniors that are living in them, and I can see that this piece of legislation can have a positive effect on their lives.

Now, there have been times over the last two years where we've been shocked and, quite honestly, appalled at some of the stories and some of the things that have happened to our vulnerable citizens and our seniors in this province. Albertans feel that sometimes our seniors do not have a strong enough voice in the current system that they're a part of. It should not take a story leaking to the press for changes to be made to a facility. As we saw last spring at the Lacombe long-term care facility, it should not take the events that occurred around that facility for something to be done.

Our caucus, the former legacy Wildrose caucus, shared and shone some of the light on some of those glaring issues, and while it's hard to say if a council would have been able to intervene effectively, it may have been capable of preventing some of the issues seen there. I would hope and I would believe that had there been a council of residents there, this facility would not have been allowed to deteriorate in the quality of its care to the extent that it did, and I believe that if the residents had been granted a seat at the table, they would have been more effective in their capacity to ensure a high quality of life. Ideally this legislation will give residents a voice and the power to make meaningful suggestions and to create change in the places that they live.

3:30

While I would hope that the facilities' operators would already be working with residents to improve practice and to improve quality-of-life outcomes and to address concerns, there are clearly facilities where this is not the practice. We can, through this legislation, encourage that to occur.

Bill 22 will grant the residents of long-term care facilities the right to establish a self-governing council and to work with facility operators to ensure that many of the quality-of-life concerns that they have identified are going to be addressed. I think that it's critically important that this legislation also allow for members of the residents' families to initiate the establishment of a resident and family council given that family members are frequently heavily involved in the decision-making and protection of their parents or their grandparents and other members of their extended family.

I think all of us have had family members that have been in some of these institutions, and I believe that for all of us it's not a stretch to understand that our loved ones at times need people to advocate on their behalf and to oversee and to make sure that our loved ones are being taken care of.

I've heard from many constituents that sometimes they feel discouraged by their lack of ability to protect their loved ones within a care facility. They feel that they are sometimes pitted against the facility's management in defence of their loved ones. They should be working together. Families, seniors, and the operators of these facilities should be working together, but that's not always the case, and sometimes that can lead to an incredible amount of frustration as family members are simply trying to take care of the people that they love. I believe that this legislation, which regulates the creation of a meaningful council that will

promote dialogue between residents and family members and care providers, will help to ensure that the ultimate goal of providing for the residents will occur and that it will occur with the highest quality of life possible.

Legislating that one or more representatives from the facility must be present at the meetings that they are invited to is also important for without the facility input and without the facility operators in attendance, changes cannot be effectively communicated nor probably implemented. So I believe it's important for there to be a place for the operators at the table on these councils. It is not helpful for residents of the facility to simply talk amongst themselves if that information is not transferred to the people that can effectively make those changes.

I've travelled across my constituency and have seen first-hand and have been involved in many of the lodges and the nursing homes and the long-term care facilities across my constituency. I've seen first-hand the wonderful work that is being done to support the seniors in my constituency. But I've also seen some of the pitfalls, and I've had feedback on many occasions from the seniors across my constituency. I can tell you that it is important to them to have a high quality of life. That doesn't mean a high standard of living sometimes. Quality of life and standard of living are distinct and different.

Quality of life is a far broader category. Quality of life includes not only the income but the health care, the nutrition, the transportation, the entertainment, the relationships, and the community that our seniors fall into when they are part of a nursing home or a lodge. All of these are important. We as people are far more than the income that we make, and our quality of life is very important. It's complicated, it's intricate, it's individual, and it's ever-changing. I believe these councils can help seniors come together to define for them within their individual communities what is a high quality of life and what are the necessary things that need to be improved as they live together in community.

When Albertans transition from being independent and from independent living into a lodge or a nursing home, often control of their individual decisions in life starts to be taken away a little bit, and many of the aspects of a person's life that previously were decisions that you and you alone would make now begin to be transferred to others in our lives or even to the facility operators. It's because of this reality that we need to ensure that there is regular communication between the residents and those that manage the facilities to ensure that all aspects of a resident's quality of life are being reasonably fulfilled.

Now, I've seen amazing initiatives across my constituency that take place in many of the lodges and nursing homes that my constituents are in. I've been asked to be part of church services, to help to barbecue at barbecues. I've been to dances, had picnics and entertainment nights, all of the things that make a community in our nursing homes and lodges and extended care facilities. I believe that most if not all of them do an incredible job of trying to make sure that the quality of life of our seniors is high and that it meets their needs and their desires. Events such as the ones I've talked about here allow our seniors and the vulnerable population to continue to be involved in their communities.

Unfortunately, I've also seen and heard that there are not always the logistics in place to facilitate community and to engage our seniors not only in the community of the lodge or the facility that they're in but even outside in the wider community that they're a part of. I know that residents of several facilities, lodges, and other nursing homes in my community and my constituency have been plagued with issues of not being able to access off-site services. Doctors' appointments, dentists' appointments, and even the

capacity to go shopping for many of our rural seniors is very difficult.

I believe that a council that we're talking about in this bill, Bill 22, may be a vehicle by which they could communicate and work together to try to address some of these really important needs, needs that will allow them to be independent, to move about, to go shopping, to be able to be a part of community. Should they have access to forming a council with a representative from the facility, I believe they would be better able to more effectively organize and to lobby not only the facility but the government and the organizations that serve their needs.

3:40

If these councils meet, listen, address the issues of our seniors, we can sidestep some of the things and some of the issues that we've seen occur even in this last year. You need look no further than the Berwyn lodge to see a prime example of what happens when there's a lack of communication between residents and the facilities and the operators that oversee those seniors. The lodge has been deemed financially unviable and is being closed down. The residents were informed of this. However, clearly, communication fell apart.

As a result, we now have some seniors who've had to do at their stage of life far too much worrying about being displaced and about even where they were going to end up. This poses a significant stressor for the residents and the families alike. They're already hard-pressed to find suitable seniors' housing in Alberta. Given the shortage of available housing, perhaps a council that would have supported communication and the capacity to be able to listen to the seniors would have allowed for some of the stress not to be placed on the seniors. Had there been a council of residents that was consulted, they could have taken steps to address the issues, and this would have led to the time that was necessary and needed to make alternative arrangements.

I believe that the document-tracking portion of this legislation is important for ensuring that a paper trail of the issues is highlighted, so that there is some accountability and so that residents and facility representatives can monitor the progress of the various projects and initiatives that they are working through.

Madam Speaker, a crucial portion of governance is outreach and stakeholder feedback. The United Conservative Party strongly believes in local decision-making and accountability. I hope this legislation will give the residents of our long-term and supportive living facilities the ability to provide regular feedback as they are the local experts. They are the ones that understand best how their facilities are affecting their lives and whether they're meeting their needs. These residents represent a font of knowledge, of wisdom, or of expertise that at this moment has not been given the weight that it deserves. We owe it to our seniors, the people that built this great province of Alberta, to ensure that they have a seat at the table and to empower them to be local decision-makers – dare I say, in the parlance of the new curriculum, “agents of change”? – regarding their quality of life.

I urge all members of this Assembly to support this legislation and to put the power back in the hands of the residents of our long-term care facilities. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to this bill? The hon. Member for Stony Plain . . .

Mr. Horne: Spruce Grove-St. Albert, Madam Speaker. Still across Boundary Road but a totally different community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, when I first saw this bill, I was very intrigued. It reminded me a bit of my visits with the

residents' councils in my own riding and the feedback that I hear from these people. Some of them have come to me with everything from, you know, that they've heard about a community event and they want to see me at it. My office is within a couple of blocks of several facilities, so they're by for coffee every once in a while. But we've also heard about residents being concerned about other residents' health as they're aging and whether or not the facility is still an appropriate place for them. So I think that the level of engagement that I've seen from these councils is very hopeful.

I was also reminded of somebody very important in my life, my great-grandmother, who, unfortunately, just passed away this summer. Any of the members across the aisle who have been active politically for a long time might know her. She was at one point the president of the now outgoing Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta. I know she was aware that I was elected. She was always keenly interested in my education. I'm still not sure if she ever knew what party I was elected for, but this was a woman who was always engaged in her community. For the Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, she at one point served on the town council of Westlock. She was one of the forces behind the founding of the museum there. There's a story that my grandma likes to tell where they were on vacation in Banff. They went to the Banff Springs Hotel, and the staff there said: "Oh, ma'am, you are far too elegant to be at the normal tables in the restaurant. We must give you the presidential table."

She was so involved in her community that this is something that I know she would have been involved in. In her old age she wasn't in a designated facility until much later, when it would have been beyond her to engage in something like this, but she was so engaged in her community that I am positive that had she been, she would have been on a residents' council. There are so many people in communities like this, you know, people who serve on their ag association, or they're active with 4-H and volunteer at the library, often former principals. Then, as they age, they move into more supportive housing, but they still want to be involved in their community. This gives them a very great opportunity to engage in that community with their fellow residents.

This also gives them an opportunity to continue to work to make life better for their fellow Albertans through ensuring quality of life for the entire community, for the residents, and to really help provide that communication channel between the operators, even in some cases the owners, and the residents. You know, that's something that's very important in any situation. Even in our elementary schools we have feedback systems between the students and the administration, and certainly there is currently the Education Minister's Youth Council out. I had an opportunity to meet with them, and they provided excellent feedback. I think of examples like this, where we have feedback between, really, the people who are receiving the service and the front-line people who are providing the service as well as the upper management, effectively, managing the service. Having those feedback systems is something that is very positive and really helps to build a better quality of life for everybody involved.

I noticed, as I was looking over this bill and thinking about it, that AHS estimates that the majority of facilities already have a council like this. The only reason I can think of for so many facilities to be adopting this is that it's something that has been proven to work, that has been proven to show results for the residents and for the operators themselves. You know, sometimes for management, any management, really, whether it's myself and my office staff or the CEO of a large corporation, it's really easy to see an issue, think you know the answer, pursue it, and completely not address the actual issue. Having that communication with the people receiving

your services as well as the people providing the services themselves is something that is really important.

3:50

I am really happy to see this bill come forward. I'd like to thank both of our ministers of Health for all of their work on this. I know that the Minister of, if I can remember the name of it, Community and Social Services also put in some work engaging with the PDD community on this bill. My understanding is that most of them already have very similar structures in place, but the PDD community wanted to be included in this. I think that that is, again, a sign that these are systems that work, that have been proven to help provide better services for our communities.

I am very happy to see this go forward. I hope all members in this Legislature support it, and I look forward to the ongoing debate.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, another member to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on Bill 22. In the last two and a half years I've been a Member of this Legislative Assembly, and I've had the opportunity to be the critic of both Seniors and Housing as well as Health. In these roles I've heard complaints from all sides, including continuing care facilities and families, on a number of different issues. Hopefully, this bill will identify and help resolve some of these concerns that parents or families have, and it will give them some sort of a formalized influence on what happens in where they live. Let's face it. We all do want to have the ability to have a measure of influence and control over our lives and surroundings. That doesn't end when a person enters into a long-term care facility or supportive living. The difference is that you and I have greater ability to advocate for ourselves. Establishing these councils could create a better quality of life for residents and could help them retain a sense of independence while also enabling them to achieve and receive things that will increase their happiness.

But before you think this is a blanket approval for your bill, please understand that I should mention that I think there are a handful of things that could be addressed here to ensure that the bill actually does what I think the minister wants it to do. We need to ensure that the facility representatives are able to attend the meetings required, and we need to ensure that the facility representatives have the ability to carry out all their duties as an extension and integrated part of their duties and not as an impediment.

I mention these examples because we need to be prepared for the very possibility of very eager councils made up of very eager individuals. While we want to empower these councils and the individuals that serve on them, I'm sure that many of us can think of boards or councils that become unreasonably or overly demanding in their requests. Such a council could unduly and unintentionally put a strain on the facility representative.

In addition, what about membership? While each council does have the ability to determine its own governance structure and procedures, could that lead to unfair representation either by a proportion of people from the same background or family or to some groups of people being left on the sidelines for whatever reason?

What if multiple councils are set up within the same facility? This could happen if you have members who don't work well together or want to work for separate or opposing things.

These are items that should be considered, and these are certainly items that we will bring forward. We have life experience. We have work experience. We've dealt with a lot of these things before, and we're here to guide and promote.

But there's something else I was wondering about, Madam Speaker, and hopefully I can get answers on this. The government mentioned that "a toolkit and information guide would be developed by Alberta Health in consultation with residents, families, and operators." Now, that quote is from the government's news release on the Resident and Family Councils Act, but it does raise a question for me. You see, I was able to find online, dated September 30, 2017, a resident family council tool kit. Of course, I will table this later. My concern stems from the fact that it appears that the department is already trying to duplicate work that has already been done by Covenant Health, Covenant Care, Covenant Living, and Alberta Health Services.

Not only that, but the news release talks about conducting future consultations, yet it looks like they've already created the document. This represents a troubling scenario, that the government continues to do work first and consult later. Like I said, Madam Speaker, I know that this wording was found in the news release, but it's troubling to me because it once again looks like the government is jumping ahead without first consulting despite the fact that they say the opposite. This highlights some key things about bureaucracy and the parallel features of Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services. One doesn't know what the other is doing. They are working towards the same goal, but there's a lot of repetitive work that gets done. We're here to help clean that up.

I'll move back specifically to the bill, Madam Speaker, and I'm looking forward to further conversation on this. I think we need to polish it up a little bit, and of course the Official Opposition is happy to help with that. You've seen us in action trying to clean up and improve bits of legislation before, and we'll do it again this time.

I don't want to take up too much time this afternoon, so I'll run through a quick summary with you, Madam Speaker. Overall, this bill in its core intent is decent. It has some good ideas behind it, ideas that could help improve the lives of some of our residents in long-term and supportive living facilities if executed correctly. It's important that residents and their families have a venue where they can raise concerns and work towards improving circumstances and situations. It's important that we ensure the voices of residents and their families are heard, that council will not operate in isolation but will include facility representatives so that there is a direct link between residents and operators.

Like I mentioned earlier, we might need to make a couple of changes to this. We want to ensure it's done correctly, and we don't want to open up operators to the possibility of being dragged down by an overly bureaucratic council.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will take my seat in anticipation of further conversation to come later. Thank you so much.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's amazing sometimes how the disrespect and the tone from some hon. members in this House can really impact you personally when you're thinking about your own personal experiences that many of us have lived through and that many of us have experienced, whether it's been working as front-line care providers in care facilities, whether it's been caring for somebody who also needed to move to a care facility and engaging, indeed, in these kinds of councils. I want to honour the life experience of all of my

colleagues, and I think that's very important for us to know, that there is a great deal of lived experience in this Chamber.

That being said, it's also important that we help all operators meet this rising tide, and while there are a number of tool kit documents that have been designed by service providers, it is certainly not a consistent standard that is being achieved throughout our province. That's why we're bringing this legislation forward, Madam Speaker. About 30 per cent do not have any kind of council that would actually create an environment for this type of work to happen, and of those 70 per cent that do, approximately, the standard is not consistent in terms of the engagement, in terms of the involvement of council members, in terms of the staff engagement, in terms of ensuring that the people who are living there have a voice themselves. They have some type of council, but not always is it even inviting the residents themselves to participate.

While some people speak in a very disrespectful tone and attitude, I think it's important for us all to reflect on the fact that we are here to serve Albertans. That includes making sure that the kits that are available through individual operators are aligned and that they are brought to the highest possible standard to ensure the highest possible level of engagement. That is my commitment, Madam Speaker. My commitment is to ensuring that we take the very best pieces that are available from other organizations and help them engage their residents and the family members to ensure that their voices are heard and actively considered.

4:00

I hope that my colleague who just spoke takes some of that under advisement and reflection. I would say that there are many people on this side of the House who have sat with somebody in a care facility either as a family member or as somebody who has worked in one of those care facilities, and I honour that experience. I honour their expertise. I know that if any of us were to relive those experiences, we would want to ensure that we were supporting each other and the other residents and family members in having those opportunities to engage.

I can't help but think about my own experience with my grandmother, who lived for over three years in a care facility. One day we were talking, and she said: "You know, it's so sad for me to see my clothes that I care about so much being folded and put in a drawer when I always took such painstaking measures to ensure that they were nicely ironed and hung neatly in my closet. That's why I have clothes that are as old as they are and they still look good." And I said, "You know, is that something you want to talk about with the operator here because I think that's something that they can probably accommodate?" and they did, because we had a structured environment to be able to bring that up.

I think this is actually going to make life easier for operators as well because they will have a co-ordinated flow of information to be able to access opinions of their residents and their family members. I think that that is important as well, as opposed to getting a bunch of one-off, individualized feedback.

One of the reasons why we very intentionally, in collaboration with service providers and residents and their family members, kept the organizational structure for the individual councils open is because we know that they have expertise of their own. We know that somebody who's living in a facility that provides care for people with developmental disabilities has expertise in how best they want to communicate and with whom best they want to communicate. Ensuring that we have the flexibility for the residents to be true agents for themselves is a value that we are bringing forward in this legislation, Madam Speaker.

I have to say that I brought this forward hoping that we would have respectful, productive conversations that would result in

actions that will indeed make life better not just for the 30 per cent of facilities that have no resident or family councils right now but also for those that do to ensure that they are working in a way that meets the very best standard.

Madam Speaker, I guess my question would be: does the hon. member want to work collaboratively to make this happen, or does he want . . . [Ms Hoffman's speaking time expired]

The Deputy Speaker: Speaking to the bill, the hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and speak in support of Bill 22, the Resident and Family Councils Act. Many of my colleagues have discussed that this legislation, if passed, will establish resident and family councils in long-term care and licensed supportive living facilities. It also covers the residences that support persons with developmental disabilities that have four or more residents which are licensed under the Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act, also known as SLALA. That falls within my ministry's purview, so I thought I would speak to that part specifically and add my support to this bill.

Ever since we've been in government, one thing we've heard very loud and clear from persons with disabilities, their advocates, and their service providers is: nothing about us without us. What that means is that any decision that impacts their lives and their services needs to be taken with careful consideration to and in consultation with those who that decision will affect. We are committed to listening to Albertans with disabilities, their families, and advocates on the issues that matter to them.

All licensed facilities under the Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act are currently included in the bill – they are all included – and we will be reaching out to all of them and will have a robust conversation with them on how best we can move forward with these councils. Those Albertans who live in licensed facilities, their service providers, their guardians, their advocates will all be consulted prior to establishing those councils. We have not and we will not impose any changes on Albertans with disabilities like the previous government used to do, and our track record proves that.

We listened to the community and repealed the previous government's supports intensity scale policy, a policy that was imposed by the previous government on the persons with developmental disabilities program. No one in the province liked it, but they were all subjected to that. We listened to the community, and we repealed that scale. As we move forward with these councils, we will certainly engage with them prior to establishing these councils.

We also repealed the persons with developmental disabilities safety standard, another example where the previous government just imposed a standard on persons with developmental disabilities without adequately consulting them or at all consulting them. When we became government, that was the number one issue. We worked with them, we listened to them, and we repealed that.

In this case we will listen to the community and work with the individuals with developmental disabilities to figure out the best approach to move forward with these councils. We will be sharing further details in the coming weeks about our engagement plan and how the individuals, families, agencies, and advocates in health care can participate in that process.

As this work proceeds, we will continue with our other work to make life better for Albertans with disabilities as we have increased funding for the persons with developmental disabilities program so that more Albertans can get the services they need. With increased funding for AISH, we are making improvements to the AISH

program as well. The establishment of these councils will ensure that those individuals have a direct say in the services they are receiving, in the decisions that are impacting their lives, and it will create a collaborative environment within those facilities. The individuals, their service providers, their families, guardians, and all concerned can sit down and address the issues facing individual persons with developmental disabilities.

Unfortunately, from the opposite side we have heard views such as that investment in disabilities are giveaways, and they also suggest that they want to cut it by 20 per cent. I think we are making life better for Albertans. We don't see those as giveaways. We think that vulnerable Albertans deserve the supports they need to be successful and be meaningfully included in our communities. We think that any suggestions that investment in disabilities are giveaways are reckless and wrong and heartless, and under our watch we won't let that happen. We will continue to work hard to make life better for all Albertans, including Albertans with varying abilities, and we will continue to listen and collaborate instead of imposing damaging policies on Albertans with disabilities.

4:10

Having said that, I look forward to working with the community and working with individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, guardians, service providers, and advocates to make sure that we get this right. Our hope is that having these councils in place will provide those individuals with yet another opportunity to get involved in decisions that impact their lives.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and respond to the hon. minister's remarks, which I thought were a little bit fantastic, particularly when he bragged about getting rid of the SIS standards, which he did, but he left a few important details out. He left the detail out that he was asked by the opposition for weeks and months on end to do this while he sat on his hands and did nothing. In fact, he sat on his hands for so long, he got fired from half of his ministry, between botching that and botching the children in care file. So when the minister stands up now and talks about what a great job he did, he actually ought to be pleased that he still has the half of a ministry left that he has before he loses it. If there was ever a minister that can't handle his ministry, that was the one that was pointing his finger just now, one of the least competent in the House. I just thought I would set the record straight since the minister seems unable to do so on his own.

Now, back to Bill 22, Madam Speaker. I think the idea in general of having residents of long-term and supportive care facilities take an active role in the care they receive is probably well intentioned and probably a good idea. Of course, the residents living there are the ones that experience the facilities day in and day out, which, actually, by definition, in my opinion, makes them experts at those facilities, just as, in my opinion, each of us are experts at the home, the block, and the neighbourhood in which we live. No one would be more experienced at those facilities than the people that actually live there and deal with the good service and not-so-good service and the good food and not-so-good food and whatever variations there are. Consequently, their voices could be valuable and important. This indeed extends to the families of the residents.

I have a couple of parents – one is 85, and one is 90 – and I'm blessed to still have them with me. My father is less able to make decisions for himself than he once was. My mother still lives

independently. For seniors that are in a position where they can't always make decisions for themselves, I think having family available to be involved in these councils could be very valuable, having advocates. Perhaps it should be extended to an advocate beyond the family if indeed a particular senior doesn't have any family prepared to come and advocate for them and they need that advocate. That's just a thought that goes through my mind as I speak to this.

I think that giving the family members that love and care for the seniors in these facilities a venue and an avenue to come in and advocate for and be involved in their loved ones' lives has value. I believe it could actually help the operators of the facilities do a better job, help the people living there have a better quality of life. It's certainly worthy of consideration. I'm sure there are other members of this House that do have or have had loved ones in long-term care facilities that may actually see that value as well.

The other thing, too, while we do this – and I think it's important to hold operators to account – is that it's really important not to demonize them. You know, I'm sure there are different opinions in this Legislature, on all sides, that some homes . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, are you speaking on 29(2)(a)?

Mr. McIver: Yes, I am. I am responding to the minister's comments.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Continue.

Mr. McIver: And I would say to the minister and all members of the House that while it's important to comment and make improvements, I think it's necessary not to demonize the operators, Madam Speaker, because I believe that no one gets into the business of operating a seniors' home without intending to do an amazing job for the seniors that are there. Indeed, it could be said that some will be better or worse than others. While we are striving for improvements, I think we need to avoid the demonization, and I think that that's something to keep in mind.

I think there's some value in this bill, so I would ask the minister to think about that and perhaps comment on that when he gets . . . [Mr. McIver's speaking time expired] Sorry, Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's certainly my pleasure to speak to Bill 22, the Resident and Family Councils Act. I want to commend the Health minister for introducing this measure. Even though, you know, perhaps some 70 to 80 per cent of the existing facilities in the province have these councils, I think it's good that they should all have these councils and that these councils can bring about a great deal of benefit for the residents, and I think that's a very positive thing.

My experience personally – and the minister mentioned it – is that, you know, in terms of the experience you have, whether it's visiting residents or spending time in these facilities or elsewhere, it's something that I think is truly eye-opening because it can provide a real perspective in terms of the compassion and care of the staff that work in these facilities. Universally, I never cease to be amazed at their compassion, their patience, their willingness to do for patients who in some cases aren't able to express their gratitude or in some cases, in fact, are almost reluctant to be helped. That can be a very challenging situation, yet they do this job, and they do it very, very well.

Some of my earliest experiences as an adult with these long-term care facilities actually were visiting these care facilities with

animals. This was something that in the '80s was not very commonplace, and I wonder, as we're debating this particular measure, had there been these councils in place in some of the facilities that I visited in the '80s, whether it would have been, in fact, easier to get access because it was quite a hurdle to get access. The administrators generally hadn't heard about the benefits of pet visitation in these facilities, and sometimes even some of the staff members were unconvinced until we arrived.

We would arrive usually with dogs and cats. Especially in Lloydminster and Vermilion a lot of these facilities housed people who were from rural areas. If there's one thing that had significantly changed in their lives other than, of course, moving from their homes, it was that they no longer had daily contact with animals, and that was a significant change for them. To have the opportunity to once again have contact with animals, that had been an important part of their lives, was something that was in some cases really changing for them.

In fact, my best recollection of that was when we went to one facility. I would always bring our clinic cat. We had a great, big, long-haired, orange tabby cat named Marmalade, and Marm was great for these visits because he was quiet, he was docile, he never scratched, and he was so calm. If you just put him anywhere near someone, he would start to purr. As we know, a purring cat lowers blood pressure and does, you know, a lot of benefit. I remember taking Marm into one patient in particular, and this was a very elderly lady. As soon as I put Marm next to her on the bed, she started talking about cats that she had owned, and she started talking about her recollection of cats that she'd been with. Pretty soon I saw the staff gathering around the door, and I thought this was odd. It wasn't until after I left that one of the staff members said that that particular resident had been there for over year and hadn't spoken the entire time. But she talked to Marm, and she talked to me about her experience with cats.

You know, what does this have to do with the debate? Well, what this has to do with the debate is that I think resident and family councils could provide a mechanism whereby things that are beneficial to residents in long-term care facilities – they would have an avenue to bringing these in. I think it's valuable. I think it has tremendous value.

4:20

I will issue a word of caution to the minister that these things can sometimes be a little bit controversial. My experience in that was actually after I was elected in 2012. Some members will remember that the decision was made to make sure that the food preparation for facilities happened in facilities. There had been an experiment to try bringing in food. It was a mess. It was ended, and that was a good thing, and the food preparation was returned to the facilities.

There was a general meeting of the residents of the Mannville continuing care centre about the food that should be prepared at this facility. Everything was going very, very well, and there were no particular issues until it came to the subject – and I'm looking over at my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, the Minister of Advanced Education – of cabbage rolls. Of course, the issue became what should be stuffed inside the cabbage rolls, whether it should be rice or ground beef. Well, I will tell you that I was waiting for the canes and the walkers to start flying across the room because the battle over cabbage rolls was the first thing that became a significant issue in the discussion. Everything else had gone very smoothly, but we had the hamburger, or the ground beef, faction and the rice faction. Then, to make matters worse, we had the argument as to whether the tomato sauce should be put on before baking the cabbage rolls or only afterwards.

Ms Hoffman: Not at all.

Dr. Starke: Or not at all. My goodness. A third faction.

Madam Speaker, you can see that the concept is excellent, and I would encourage it to go ahead, but, you know, sometimes we talk about unanticipated consequences. Well, I can tell you that the very fact that we would have conversations and discussions about the food, about other issues that affect the residents, I think, is very positive. From that standpoint, I'm in favour of this bill.

I'm in favour of this initiative going forward, but I want to also encourage the Health minister to consider taking this initiative farther, and that is to take it not just to our long-term care facilities but to our active treatment hospitals, to the patient and family council model that has been used for over 20 years in the province of Ontario. I first heard about patient and family councils in active treatment hospitals when one time I was listening to a program, believe it or not, on the CBC. Now, I'm a Progressive Conservative, so I listen to the CBC, especially on weekends, when I find the programming to be especially entertaining. I for one terribly miss Stuart McLean.

I will tell you that on this program, specifically the CBC radio's medical program, *White Coat, Black Art*, which is an excellent program, they talked about the patient and family council that was at the Kingston General hospital and had been in place there for some years. What was especially interesting to me was how that patient and family council had done something that we have been striving for in Alberta for years, but somehow we just can't seem to grasp it, and that is to provide patient-centred care. We talk about patient-centred care. We talk about putting the patient at the centre or, in the case of long-term care facilities, the resident at the centre, but the challenge is that there always seem to be things that get in the way. Well, at the Kingston General hospital the patient and family council, it appears, at least, is helping break down that barrier, making sure that patients' concerns and patients' needs are front and centre and that they are brought on a regular basis to the administration of the hospital.

According to a report that's published online from the Ontario ministry of health – it was a review report of how patient and family councils are working in Ontario at acute treatment hospitals, April 2016, and I can send the minister the link because it's outstanding reading. It talks about the changes that have resulted in some of these facilities because of the presence of a patient and family council. In some cases, you know, you might consider them to be small things like changes to visiting hours or adjustments to the policy with regard to how and when patients can leave the facility. In some cases they're bigger things like allowing parents to be present when pediatric patients going into surgery, going under anaesthesia, are anaesthetized. I will tell you that that's a big change if you're that child or you're the mother or the father or the guardian of that child.

These are things I think that we should look at very carefully because, you know, even to the point whereby in one of the active treatment hospitals in Ontario because of a patient and family council they found that the procedure of making sure that health care givers were washing their hands consistently when moving from room to room, which is the simplest, most basic – you know, you think, "Well, that's obvious," but unfortunately the rates of doing that are much less than they should be in our active treatment hospitals, and what changed it after many, many attempts in some of these hospitals is the recommendation of a patient and family council.

So I'm going to encourage the minister to look at doing that in active treatment hospitals in Alberta. Who knows? There may be

some that already have them, and that's great. But in the meantime, when we're considering Bill 22, whether it's considering cabbage rolls or visits from cats, I think this is something that is positive, and I think it's something that, certainly, I support.

We obviously will watch out. We need to watch for things and make sure that we're not duplicating, you know, the document that the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo mentioned. I think that's important. Let's not try to reinvent the wheel. I know that the Health minister is always looking for ways to save money, and that's one of her concerns. If we don't have to spend that \$150,000 to produce this document, you know, maybe we'll have to spend a third of that or a quarter of that or none of that if, in fact, the document that's already available can be used or largely plagiarized from or tweaked or whatever the verb you want to use.

But I do think that this is a positive development. I think any time that we can take our residents and their families and get them more actively involved with the operation of a facility, whether it's a private facility or a public facility, to me, makes less of a difference. What makes a difference is having residents and their families involved because I think that's very positive. It is a place where grievances and concerns can be aired on a regular basis, and they can be addressed before they snowball into something much larger, that becomes a concern for both the resident and the family.

I think it's incredibly important that we realize that many of our residents in these care facilities are vulnerable and in some cases have either a medical condition or some other situation that means that they are less able to care for themselves and that every mechanism that we can put in place possible to ensure that their needs are met and that their needs are addressed in a timely basis – and I see this is one of them – we embrace and we adopt.

So, Madam Speaker, I'm wholeheartedly in favour of this bill. I'll look forward to the debate in committee, and I'll also look forward to considering, perhaps, some amendments to the bill. But I commend the minister for introducing it, and, again, as I said before, I would certainly encourage her to consider expansion of this program to our active treatment hospitals.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Red Deer-North on behalf of the Minister of Health to close debate.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank all the members in the House today who engaged in the conversation on Bill 22, Resident and Family Councils Act, the act that gives residents and family members of long-term care, licensed supportive living facilities as well as the PDD community a mechanism for healthy dialogue with their facility operators. Truly a win-win for all. Even though I thoroughly enjoyed the debate today – cabbage rolls, cats, and all – at this time I would like to close debate.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a second time]

4:30 Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 19
An Act to Protect Gas and
Convenience Store Workers

The Chair: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise in Committee of the Whole to speak to Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. I'd just like to take a few moments of everyone's time here because I don't think we should delay passing this bill for another minute. Again, I'm very proud to be part of this bill and part of a government that is getting the job done in protecting our gas and convenience store workers.

This bill is necessary. It's a necessary bill and a bill that epitomizes how extensive consultation results in a bill that both protects workers and ensures that employers can be easily compliant with the mandates in this bill. It's also a bill that demonstrates that this government keeps its promises. We promised to move on protecting these workers in 2015 after the tragedy in Calgary, and we started last session doing that with Bill 17, which ensured that workers would not be liable for loss of money due to theft. Here we are with Bill 19, Madam Chair, further protecting Alberta's gas and convenience store workers. That's what this bill is all about, protecting those workers.

Also, just briefly, I know we haven't talked too much about this, but I don't anticipate that consumers will find these new laws to be burdensome at all. Most people already pay at the pump, and many gas stations who don't have that technology have a prepay mandated at their stations anyhow. Frankly, I can't remember the last time I walked into a gas bar and paid. Bill 19 also mandates that gas stations have signage indicating that prepay is in place, so I think that that's another item that will alleviate any confusion for consumers over what's required in order to get gas.

As you know, Madam Chair, on Monday, when this bill was introduced in first reading, Mr. Jo's family was here, the gas station owner who was the recent victim of senseless gas-and-dash violence. His family was in the gallery as well as his son. You know, his son was quoted in the newspaper after that devastating incident, and he said something that really gets to the heart of why we need to push this bill through. It was this, paraphrased. He said that my dad tried to make people prepay before fuelling, but many would say to him: it's not the law, so I'm not going to do it. So they would fuel up, and some would just take off after they fuelled up. But here we are now, and it is going to be the law. Signage will be out in these gas stations, and there will be no confusion that this is the law and that everyone must prepay for their fuel.

I want to thank all the members in this Assembly on both sides for the positive input that's been given on this bill. I really do appreciate it, and I do think that they see the urgency for this bill as well. Madam Chair, every time a death occurs at a gas station or a convenience store, it breaks my heart, and it breaks all Albertans' hearts. It's for this reason that I urge everyone in this committee to stop the heartbreak and support Bill 19.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to Bill 19? The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to speak to this bill in Committee of the Whole this afternoon. I agree with what my colleague from Calgary-Klein said regarding, you know, how our feelings go out to the families that have been affected by these tragedies. This is why I'm really proud of the Minister of Labour for putting this bill forward and protecting these

families so that this kind of thing doesn't happen again. It's common-sense legislation that we have before us. I'm pleased to see the support we have from the opposition as well.

You know, it's interesting that in Alberta sometimes we lead on legislation, and sometimes we don't. I'm really proud that we're stepping up with this bill here today. This is something where I wonder why we didn't have it before, and I wonder about the priorities of the former government and why, perhaps, they hadn't planned ahead and put this kind of thing in place a long time ago. I understand that there are a lot of things that have to be navigated in terms of small businesses and confusion at the pumps, but these are things that we can work out when we sit down at the table with our partners in business. I'm really proud that we're here today and doing this.

I really look forward to hearing what other members of the House have to say on this bill. This is something that affects all of us in each of our constituencies. Like the member said, I think we should pass this as soon as we can. But I think there's more to be said on this bill this afternoon, and I want to make sure that people get a chance to have their say and chime in on how important this is to them and their constituencies.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, or amendments? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

Connolly: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. Just a couple of months after I was first elected, a woman was killed on 16th Avenue. The Member for Calgary-Klein was talking about this. On June 7, 2015, Maryam Rashidi was killed when she was working at the Centex on 16th Avenue. She died just four months after leaving Iran with her husband and child and arriving in Calgary to work as an engineer. However, she was laid off soon after arriving and was working at the Centex just to make ends meet. I believe it was on her fourth shift at that Centex. She died because she was told that if somebody was in a gas and dash while she was on duty, she would be responsible for those funds. [interjection] No? I think I have that wrong. However, she did die because she was trying to protect the business and she was trying to protect those funds. If that person was forced to prepay for their gas, this would not have happened.

I was able to go to her funeral just a couple of weeks later. I told everyone present that her death would not be forgotten, and it hasn't been forgotten because we are here today to put forward legislation, just like we did with Bill 17, to protect these workers, because they truly do need protection. It's precarious work when you work for a gas station. It's not always the most secure job. It's nowhere near the highest paying job, but a lot of people do it because they need to make ends meet. That's what becomes a precarious job.

Just being able to put forward this legislation to show people that their lives matter and that the deaths of these people – I believe it's been five in just the past few years – are not forgotten, and we are making concrete action to make sure that nobody dies in the future because they have to stop a gas and dash, because they need to protect their place of employment and their job on top of that.

I'm really proud to stand here today to support this legislation. I'd really hope that every member of this Assembly supports this legislation as well because it's incredibly important not just to people who are working in convenience stores today but who'll work there in the future. Because these are jobs that will always be needed, we will always need people to work these precarious jobs. So I'm very happy to stand and support this bill.

I really want to thank the Member for Calgary-Klein for his words and everyone who has spoken because it is very important that we get up, that we support this legislation. I want to, of course, thank the Member for . . .

4:40

Mr. Smith: Drayton Valley-Devon.

Connolly: . . . Drayton Valley-Devon because, I know, just being from a community where somebody has recently died trying to protect his business, it is so important. We've all seen how it affects the families, how it affects the communities. No matter what someone's job is, you shouldn't have to go to work thinking – people go to work thinking that they may die. However, that shouldn't be one of your job descriptors. Everyone needs to come home safe, and everyone has the right to come home safe. I'm really proud to have this legislation and to bring it forward and to support it with all my might.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my privilege to stand up and speak to Bill 19, An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers. It was with great happiness that I heard that this was coming forward. I think that it is a long time coming, and I know that the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police have been in support of this coming forward for a number of years now, which is why they were an incredibly important validator of this. Other leaders such as Husky and 7-Eleven have also said that they are coming onboard to make sure that there is prepay available at their stores.

Of course, one of my biggest concerns in my constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville was that there would not be undue burden put on convenience stores or gas stations that are small, that cannot afford the cost of arming these gas stations with prepay technology, because it can cost \$30,000 or more per pump. That was a big concern of mine, so I was glad that the government did do very, very thorough consultation with the different stakeholders, that they went out and that occupational health and safety did thorough checks of hundreds of operations across Alberta to really see exactly what the story was with different types of operations, different numbers of staffing, different training levels, different models of how businesses have policies for how workers can keep themselves safe. There was a really good amount of working knowledge that the government undertook over the last almost two years to do that, so it's with confidence that I can support this.

I want to recognize and remember the people that have lost their lives over the years, families, including the families of Ki Yun Jo and Surinder Pal Singh, who were here to join us as we introduced this legislation, because, of course, every death is one death too many. It's with a lot of sadness but gratefulness that we were able to have them with us that day in the Legislature.

Of course, there are some questions that people have in terms of the rollout of the legislation. You know, people were asking, "Why have a mandatory violence prevention plan?" and "Is that what's best?" I know from the data that was gathered that having a plan is the most important thing, that the data does not back up having extra staff overnight necessarily. What is proven is having clear steps in place so that workers know that there is a set of standards that they can adhere to when they are at work and a certain set of standards that the business is adhering to make sure that they can be seen, that they can see what's going on outside of the store, that there wouldn't necessarily be more money or more cigarettes, something

like that, overnight that is not secured, that might be a reason why someone would target a business for theft.

Also, people are asking questions about the length of time to introduce this. It is important to make sure that we know what the effects are and would be of implementing legislation like this here in Alberta. We need to know what Alberta businesses' concerns are, that they're not being overly burdened with something like this. So I'm glad to know that if a business is concerned about the costs that will be incurred or their ability to institute what the law is asking them to do, they can work with the Ministry of Labour, with occupational health and safety to look at exactly what their own picture is of what they can and cannot do.

Of course, prepaying doesn't mean a card at the pump. I know that in different co-op stores and Husky stores that I've gone to, it's not necessarily a matter of being able to pay at the pump, but you can go into the store. That, I know, is important to a lot of businesses because they want you to be able to come out of your car, come into the store, and actually buy the things in the store that have a greater profit to the store so that the businesses can stay viable. This was a concern that was voiced here and in Lloydminster when we were talking about the difference of the levy on fuel at gas pumps, that people might travel a distance to go to a different store because the margins that are at the pump are not actually a lot compared to the need for business, for people to come into the store.

That is something that I had asked the ministry about, to see what those effects would be. Apparently, what the research says is that it's possible that there might be some change in people's spending behaviour in the very initial weeks after implementing but that when people kind of get the way that they do business around this new way, a prepay system, they go back into the store. It resolves itself within a few months. I'm glad to hear that because I want to make sure that the stores that are out in our small rural communities are able to still keep their employees employed and are able to stay open in some of our smaller communities, that need to have availability to fuel and of necessities that are at the corner.

There were also questions about supports, and we know that these businesses will be able to work closely with the Ministry of Labour's support staff to be able to ensure that we are working with them every step of the way.

4:50

Some of the other points that I wanted to touch upon are that there would be time-locked safes, that there would be some methods of having that in place or having minimal amounts of cash on hand. Some have already gone to video monitoring.

It's important to make sure that we have workers safe because healthy workers that are safe are the first and most important necessity to a business being successful. Businesses can't be successful without having healthy workers that are safe and can go back home to their family at the end of the night, which is what every worker has an absolute right to do. So it's incumbent upon us to do what we can to make sure that we do everything within our power to make sure that that happens.

You know, I had heard some concerns from gas station workers that they have unfortunately come into contact with customers that have been quite combative and have blamed these sorts of prepay systems on the workers themselves, so it's good that part of the work is to make sure that there'll be signage so that people become more accustomed to the way that things are changing. We know that it's been working in B.C., so I have faith that it will work here in Alberta as well.

I think it's important to not just talk with the companies that represent these businesses and represent these workers but to talk to the workers themselves and really see what the impacts have

been on their lives up until now and what they hope to see going forward so that we can let them know that their voices are important, that their safety is important.

I'm looking forward to seeing this legislation passed, and I appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak on behalf of some of the workers within my constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville because they are incredible people who do a very tough job.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not going to take long. I think things have been covered very thoroughly, but a few things I want to talk about were – the fact is that this is a wonderful move. This is a wonderful bill. I'm so happy to see it.

I remember when they first brought this in in B.C. because I travel to B.C. fairly often. I have family there. I was like: "What? You have to go in to pay first, then get your gas?" I thought that was a little convoluted, but one adjusts. You adjust. After a few times you don't even think about it. Then I started thinking back to a long time ago when we always prepaid our gas. It was what we did, you know, before we commonly used credit cards to pay for gas, and a lot of times when we had full service, you would pay ahead of time.

Dr. Turner: You used to have to pump.

Ms Woollard: Oh, yes. I don't go that far back.

I'm making the point that people adjust. If we want to keep travelling, we buy gas. We adjust.

This is one that is so wonderful to finally bring in. I mean, the fact that B.C. has had no gas-and-dash deaths since 2008, when they brought this legislation in, like, is fantastic. You and I, if we have children or grandchildren going off to do work in all the many areas that they work at while they're going through school or postsecondary education, want them to know that they're going to be coming home at the end of their shifts and not be falling prey to someone who takes advantage of them and often takes advantage of the fact that they think they'll be on the hook for any losses incurred, which they may or may not be.

So, bottom line, I think that the more things we do, within reason of course, to try to help people to do their jobs and be able to come home safely at the end of the day is a good thing. You know, I was thinking, too, that back before we paid at the pump, we'd have to go inside to pay. We'll do the same thing now, just in a different order. This is pay first, pump later.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've really been enjoying the conversation this afternoon. I've actually been scratching my mind, desperately thinking: how could I relate climate change to this act? I know that dealing with climate change is a good thing, but how can I actually get climate change into this? I mean, I realize that burning gasoline actually leads to some adverse effects of climate change, so probably I can't get there, right?

Anyway, I do want to stand and actually congratulate the House on the discussion this afternoon. This is a good act. This needs to be done. I have a personal history that I can relate to this. When I was a university student, one of my summer jobs was actually in a gas station, and this was in the era that was referred to. It was not so long ago that you actually had to pump the gas. That's where the

name "gas pump" comes from, by the way. You actually had to pump by hand like, you know, a pump handle.

Ms Woollard: I've heard stories.

Dr. Turner: Yeah. I'm not that old that I had to do that when I was a university student, but I did have to work in a gas station on a busy highway, similar to the tragedy that occurred in Thorsby. I did have to work by myself in that environment on a busy highway in the evenings, and I did have to manage cash at the time, so I actually can really empathize with this situation and with the workers who are in that situation.

From that perspective, I can tell you that this legislation is good legislation, and it is going to save lives, as it has in British Columbia. It's going to improve the quality of life of the people that work in that environment and, I actually dare say, the small-business owners, that are going to basically have a more secure source of revenue from their operations. As was attested to by the presence of the folks from Husky, which is not a small business, the major chains like Husky and probably the others are going to benefit from this legislation as well, and that's going to add to the corporate taxes that we can collect in this province. I think all of us should be really happy about that.

I'm not all that worried about whether or not we have to go in and leave a credit card or other identification ahead of time. I'm actually doing that presently with the Element card that we have to pay for gasoline and other things as members of the Legislature. It adds about 30 seconds to the whole transaction, and the small businesses perhaps can get some benefit from it by having the customer come into the store and possibly purchase some other quote, necessities, unquote, at the same time. I think there really isn't a problem with that.

I would remind all members, actually, that Costco works on this model right now. They're very successful. You cannot buy gasoline at Costco without having a membership or a credit card or a debit card, and by the looks of it, from the lines that are at the gas bars at Costco, it's a pretty successful proposition. I think that these are things where, basically, we're moving with the times here, and we should get on with it.

5:00

I want to mention not just the gas-and-dash aspects of this bill. The other aspects of this bill are also very important, that cash management that I referred to from my experience when I was a university student. In those days we didn't have lottery tickets, but now there are lottery tickets which are fungible, and with having cash available, potentially, to be robbed, you know, with violence, because of that, I think it is a real major concern. I'm really happy to see that this legislation will go some way to ameliorating that situation. I think there are still other things that may need to be done, but we're going to probably continue with the consultation as we go forward.

This is good legislation. I'm happy to see that it's getting support from both sides of the House, and I'm happy to see that it's going to help with the economy if not with climate change. At least this province will be moving ahead.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill 19 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Mr. Mason: Madam Chair, I move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Piquette: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 19.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

Mr. Mason: Madam Speaker, we have made wonderful progress in a spirit of harmony and co-operation that pervades this place from time to time. On that note, I will move that we adjourn until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:04 p.m.]

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