



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 29, 2017

Day 58

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

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New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 2 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 2

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of bright young students from Belmont elementary school in my riding of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. They are joined today by two of their teachers, Selynn Buchan and Marissa Chankasingh. As well, they have four chaperones with them today: Lynn Allison, Breanne Dagnone, Nikki Ringma, and Melissa Squarek. I'm thrilled that they are joining us here today. I apologize to them. I wasn't able to make it down in the rotunda for a photo with the school, but I do look forward to coming and visiting them some time throughout the year. Now I'd ask them to rise and please receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly today 52 students from Hilwie Hamdon school. They're here with Mrs. Amy Badger, Mr. Perry Allan, Lena Berjawi, and Cindy Frewin. This is a very special occasion because this is the first school group from Hilwie Hamdon in the history of the school because, of course, it just opened this fall, so I'm super proud. It's in Edmonton-Calder, and they deserve the very best. Let's give them a warm welcome, everyone, please.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups today?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you a group representing the Canadian Finals Rodeo and Northlands. Here today are Tyler Riopel of the Canadian Finals Rodeo committee; Geoff Oberg and Tony Payne from the Northlands board of directors; Northlands vice-presidents Kevin Gunderman and Shiva Dean; and last but definitely not least, Tim Reid, president and CEO of Northlands. I sit on the Northlands board of directors as a provincial appointee, and I am proud to introduce this group to you today. I would ask that my guests please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gottfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Mr. Iggy Domagalski, CEO of Tundra Process Solutions, an Alberta-based supplier of innovative process technologies that employs 150 Albertans. Tundra provides the mechanical, electrical, measurement, and automation solutions that help make the energy world safer, cleaner, and more productive and is recognized as one of Canada's 50 best managed companies.

Tundra also recently opened a new 15,000 square foot facility in Grande Prairie.

Iggy is passionate about innovation, leadership, and his community. Last year he launched the acceleration centre for entrepreneurs, which helps green tech entrepreneurs to get their products rapidly to market. He also launched Tundra University, which helps young leaders advance their careers, and he sits on the board of the Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta as fundraising chair. Iggy has recently been featured on CBC, in the *Calgary Herald*, *Oilweek*, *Alberta Oil*, is one of Calgary's top 40 under 40, and was featured on CTV's *The Entrepreneurs*, which is filming its second season. Tundra will once again be featured nationally, showcasing Alberta's innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. I would ask Mr. Domagalski to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly this year's 4-H Premier's award recipient. This young woman from Bashaw, Alberta, has been a member of the Central Lacombe 4-H Beef Club for a decade. She has held executive positions in her club and in her district and has attended numerous forums and trainings. This young leader is currently a first-year student at the University of Alberta, where she's enrolled in a preveterinary program. I would like to ask Alyssa Henderson, her parents, Arleen and Greg Henderson, and her grandparents Donna and Stan Johnson to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Dr. Debbie McKenzie, who is one of the coleaders of the Genome Alberta research project focused on chronic wasting disease among Alberta's deer, elk, moose, and caribou population, which we'll be hearing more about in my member's statement today. I would ask that Dr. McKenzie please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my incredible honour to rise and introduce to you and through you some members of the Jewish community. Today we have leaders from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and Calgary Jewish Federation, the Alberta Jewish federations. I'm proud to introduce to you Adam Silver, Judy Shapiro, Jeff Smith, Jared Shore, Debby Shoctor, Ellery Lew, Matt Godwin, and Ariella Kimmel. I want to thank my guests for their work in fighting anti-Semitism and discrimination in our province. I ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Bonnie Gostola, Val Whelen, Barbara Brolly, and Somboon Eggen. They are here today representing the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees' Pay and Social Equity Committee. The committee has been working hard on the issues of wage inequality, gender income

gaps, and the underlying systems in place that put women at a disadvantage. I will speak more to this in my member's statement later today. I ask now that my guests rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other introductions of guests? Seeing and hearing none.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to highlight a major failure of this NDP government, specifically the so-called social licence the carbon tax was supposed to buy us. Since the NDP rolled out the tax in 2015, a tax which they did not campaign on during that year's general election, the justification used by the members opposite has been that it will get us the social licence we need to get pipelines built. This, they argued, is the trade-off we have to make to gain acceptance for our oil and gas industry from environmental zealots and eco-warriors that have vowed to shut Alberta oil down.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no disputing that Alberta is one of the most responsible energy-producing jurisdictions in the entire world, and this has been true for decades. Moreover, Canada's human rights record speaks for itself, especially when compared with the likes of Saudi Arabia or Nigeria, who are more than happy to take our market share. There's no question we are doing more than our part and have been for a very, very long time.

But enter the NDP, who called Alberta and our industry the embarrassing cousins of Confederation for our supposedly poor environmental record. That's when they sold Albertans the false bill of goods that is the carbon tax. Yet more than two years after that announcement and almost one year since the carbon tax was implemented, not one shovel is in the ground on a pipeline to tidewater, and the very same eco-warriors that the NDP said it would bring onside with this carbon tax are fighting tooth and nail to block the one pipeline that has been approved. The carbon tax has not deterred them one bit, nor has it softened B.C. NDP Premier John Horgan or the mayor of Burnaby, who both also vow to use every tool at their disposal to block this project.

I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I don't see any more social licence today than we did before the NDP was elected. That's because social licence is a myth, a fairy tale perpetuated by the NDP for the sole purpose of justifying the imposition of a new tax on Albertans.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

1:40

Chronic Wasting Disease

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On to something factual.

Right now Alberta researchers are on the land collecting data and samples while consulting with First Nations people. They are part of an ongoing research project to deal with chronic wasting disease, or CWD. CWD is a fatal disease affecting deer, elk, moose, and caribou.

Since it was first discovered in 1967 in Colorado, it has spread into 24 U.S. states, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. B.C., Manitoba, and Yukon are also at risk. This disease could spread through 2 million animals in Canada that are susceptible to CWD. A sustained outbreak would affect those that rely on animals for food or for

traditional practices such as First Nations people, and it would threaten biodiversity and ecosystems and have an impact on Alberta's reputation as a wildlife destination.

The 11 and a half million dollar project was made possible with cofunding from the Alberta Prion Research Institute, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, the University of Alberta, and the University of Calgary. The work is being led by University of Alberta researcher Dr. Debbie McKenzie and Genome Alberta. The research team is developing tools that can be used to identify strains of CWD and predict the spread of the disease. The project has been ongoing for a year, and while there is still no direct evidence that CWD can transmit to humans, early results reveal that further research is needed to investigate the potential for CWD transmission across species. The team will also assemble kits for use by First Nations, hunters, and managers to help identify disease and prevent its spread.

Genome Alberta funded projects such as this one make a point of involving end-users of the research and those most likely to be affected by the project results. This model ensures that funding dollars have the best chance of having real-world impact.

This is just one more example of how collaboration and science are making life better for all Albertans. Thank you.

High River Flood Disaster Recovery Program Claim

Mr. W. Anderson: June 23 was a devastating time for the town of High River, yet today there still lingers the remains of several who have yet to have fair compensation for their loss. Orvella Small is a pillar of the community, someone who works with disabled people, volunteers countless hours, and organizes fundraising and community events so those affected by the 2013 flood may recover in a graceful way. She is a wonderful lady who is a victim of this government's bureaucracy. She has had personal financial loss and has yet to receive fair and adequate compensation from disaster recovery program administration.

Orvella owned and operated a small business in High River. When it was wiped out by the flood, a DRP application was filed and rejected. When she appealed, it was denied because they took the total household income, but her business was incorporated, so that should never have happened.

Recently DRP changed their policy regarding how small businesses are compensated. The DRP stated that the changes would be retroactive, but for Orvella this was too little too late, and she was told that she was never going to be allowed to file another appeal. Another reason for denial was that they stated that she did not invest any of her own money. Ridiculous. Orvella tried to show them her bank statements, but they clearly didn't listen.

Small-business owners in the town were given poor advice, saying that if they wanted DRP to assist them, they would need to invest in starting up their businesses all over again. Well, Orvella maxed out her credit cards and line of credit to start up her business again. At this rate she will not be able to retire any time soon. She continues to work at other jobs to pay her debt.

Orvella believes that her individual circumstances were not even considered. She received this message, and I quote. In regard to your small-business file it has proceeded through the complete appeals process after independent review by both the managing director of AEMA and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The minister has final decision-making authority on our legislation. I regret to inform you that there are no more avenues to appeal. Your file is closed.

The DRP bureaucrats need to just simply follow their own policies and guidelines and do what's fair for Orvella. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton–Castle Downs.

Northlands

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk to you with pride about an institution that has served Edmonton, northern and central Alberta for close to 140 years. On October 15, 1879, 275 people gathered in Fort Edmonton to exhibit their best livestock, grain, vegetables, and crafts. They were a collection of farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists eager to volunteer their time for the greater good, to serve the community in a way that would benefit everyone. This is what we now know as Northlands.

As a provincial appointee to the Northlands board I've had the privilege of being part of this fantastic group, who carry on the legacy of community service every day.

The Canadian Finals Rodeo and Farmfair International are hosted by Northlands every November, and both events are very important to Edmonton. The 2017 Canadian Finals Rodeo boasted an attendance of 90,268 people over five days and six performances and showcased over 108 professional rodeo athletes, all competing for a whopping \$1.5 million in prize money. In 1989 they established the Edmonton Rodeo Cowboy's Benevolent Foundation, and in 2003 they established the Bill Kehler memorial scholarships. Together these initiatives have helped more than 300 members of the rodeo community deal with financial hardship or continue their postsecondary studies.

Farmfair International is one of the premier agricultural events in Canada, with over 101,000 people in attendance as well as 140 international buyers from 14 different countries.

Combined, these two events bring in an estimated \$50 million in economic impact to the city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta every year.

I want to congratulate the CFR committee, the executive of Northlands, and the Northlands board for 44 years of the Canadian Finals Rodeo and their continued hosting of Farmfair International. This organization has a profound impact in making lives better for Albertans, and we should all thank them for their hard work.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray–Castle Downs. Excuse me. Wood Buffalo. [interjections] A pretty big constituency.

Mr. Yao: Those lines changed more than I thought.

Opioid Use Prevention and Treatment

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, we have a strategy and we need to execute a plan to deal with this opioid crisis. There have been enough studies done on this, not only here in Canada but around the world. We need to do something that encompasses all supports available and enables people to engage, intervene, and help. It starts at home. We need to empower families by helping them identify the issue, then help and guide them in dealing with it through counselling and other supports.

Police, our courts, and social workers have very unique, practical views on these victims of addiction. They need to be part of the conversation. They can provide guidance on the critical times between detox and rehabilitation, as an example, when so many overdoses do occur. Law enforcement in other jurisdictions has supported drug courts for more immediate remediation of abusers, with sentences consisting of stays in rehabilitation facilities. It helps clear up our court system and allows for more immediate interventions with our drug-stricken population.

Rehabilitation isn't just about beds. It's about an environment that supports these victims with art, job training, and home economics. It's also about taking cultural attributes into consideration when designing these facilities and programs.

Education is at the forefront, and from elementary school right up to universities and colleges we need access to accurate information on opioids. Education also includes the health professionals. It's not just the family doctors. It's the sports practitioners and physicians, the orthopaedic surgeons, the nurse practitioners, and the physician assistants. It's the dentists and the pharmacists. They all need to step up, provide reasonable advice and guidance as well as education, especially for the patients.

This education must also recognize that over the last few decades doctors have been misinformed by the pharma companies, who claim that their product is the best for pain management with none of the addictive qualities. Re-education for all providers should be mandatory, and this education must be continued as pharma continues to develop the next best thing.

Ultimately, we need to hold these victims of addiction accountable and support them accordingly every step of the way. We need a multifaceted attack on this very real crisis, so I hope this . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton–Meadowlark.

Women's Income Equality

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later this afternoon I will be tabling documents that contain over 9,000 signatures from across the province as part of a campaign by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees' Pay and Social Equity Committee. The public urgently needs to be aware of this issue. Alberta has been leading the nation in wage inequality, with a gender income gap of 41 per cent compared to the national average of 33 per cent.

Over the years income equality for women has become worse. In 2000, when the previous government replaced graduated personal income taxes with a single rate, this shifted disproportionate amounts of the province's annual tax share to women and lower income Albertans in order to fund tax breaks for corporations and high-income individuals. Our NDP government reversed this regressive system and since then has taken a number of important steps to continue addressing inequality in our province.

By creating the country's first gender-balanced cabinet and establishing Alberta's first-ever Status of Women ministry, we are putting women's equality at the forefront of our work.

By increasing access to affordable child care, we are supporting women in gaining a better foothold in the job market to be able to meet the needs of their families. Resources from Alberta's Status of Women and Economic Development and Trade are supporting women entrepreneurs to advance their careers and improve their economic security.

We know that the majority of part-time and minimum wage jobs are held by women and that increasing the minimum wage has a direct, positive impact on our lives and on their lives. Through continued investment in postsecondary education and the establishment of the Alberta child benefit, our government is helping Alberta families to succeed, but we also know that the problem of gender inequality is rooted in cultural expectations and that it's going to take much more work to end women's inequality and the wage gaps that exist.

I want to thank the AUPE's Pay and Social Equity Committee members for all the important work that they are doing to bring this issue to light.

Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

Carbon Levy Questions to the Premier

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised the case of Norm, who confronted the Premier on how the NDP's carbon tax is costing his business \$40,000 per year. Sadly, the Premier was dismissive of Norm. In fact, she went as far as to say that he was mistaken and that the carbon tax did not apply to his business. Only an NDP politician would tell a businessman that they knew more about his business than he did. The question is very simple. Will the Premier and the NDP acknowledge that their job-killing carbon tax is having a negative impact on all sorts of different businesses and nonprofits, from simple shops to homeless shelters to kids' swimming pools? Acknowledge it.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite probably does know, Alberta continues to be the lowest taxed jurisdiction in the country, by a country mile in fact, and the differential is between around \$7 billion and \$8 billion a year on a per capita basis. Now, our climate leadership plan was part of a very clear decision to help support the energy industry as we move towards creating a more sustainable and more environmentally responsible product for a world that is looking for just that kind of product. We work together with the energy industry. We believe very strongly that it's going to result in growth, and so do members of the energy industry, and we're proud of it.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Premier, through you, a very simple question. The Premier went down a whole different road, which she does quite often here in this House, and Albertans, quite frankly, are tired of it.

The question is this. She dismissed a businessman's, a job creator's concerns on the radio with her yesterday. She dismissed him. She told him he was mistaken. She refused to acknowledge the impact that her job-killing carbon tax, the NDP's job-killing carbon tax, was having on him. Will she take the time, recontact Norm – I'm sure it'll be easy to do – and find out what is going on and finally acknowledge what she is doing to everyday Albertans, what is happening because of the consequences of her carbon tax, stop denying it, and stand up and tell the truth?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I will say that the member opposite again is making things up in terms of his characterization with respect to the interview in question.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, in terms of business leaders and their view of our climate leadership plan, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers had this to say:

Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan provides direction that will allow the oil and natural gas industry to grow, further enhance its environmental performance through technological innovation,

and is expected to improve market access to allow Canadian oil to reach more markets.

That's what some business leaders actually think about the program, and we think they're right.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again the Premier will not answer the question. She will not acknowledge what her job-killing carbon tax is doing to everyday Albertans. She doesn't want to talk about it. I don't blame her. I wouldn't want to talk about it if it was my tax either, but it's not. It is her number one policy, something she's brought through that she says she's proud of, but when asked about the consequences to the people of Alberta as a result of this ideological tax, she won't answer the question. She completely dodges it and goes in a completely different direction. The fact is that this is a tax on everything. It's hurting nonprofits. It's hurting homeless shelters. It's hurting swimming pools. It's hurting you at the grocery store. It's hurting you at the gas pump. It's killing jobs, and she needs to stand up and acknowledge it.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, the carbon levy came into effect January 1, 2017. Since June 2016, actually, the alleged job-killing carbon tax has been around while we've created 70,000 new full-time jobs for the people of Alberta. So the evidence doesn't seem to support the assertions. That's hardly anything new. It never really does with these folks.

The Speaker: The second main question.

Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals

Mr. Nixon: Again the Premier does not want to talk about her job-killing carbon tax. She told us that she was going to get social licence and that this was going to help us. She told us that this was what's going to create pipelines and that all of this was going to happen. But we know what's going on in B.C. We see politicians and people lining up to be able to fight against the Trans Mountain pipeline, that this Premier touts as being built – it's not built – touts as going to be built. Here's the question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier stand up and tell us of one politician on the other side there, in B.C., that has had their mind changed as a result of Alberta's carbon tax?

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Interestingly, the politician that ultimately had to approve the pipeline did so because of our climate leadership plan, and that's the politician that matters.

I'll tell you that I'm not going to take advice from the UCP on this pipeline. Their new leader spent 10 years in Ottawa and did nothing, and now his plan is to yell, much like the guys over there, and to make trade threats to British Columbia. Every day Mr. Kenney sounds more and more like Donald Trump. That's not how you get pipelines built. You get them built by having adult conversations. I'm pleased to report that earlier today the federal government announced that it is supporting Trans Mountain . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: I can tell you what Albertans are sick of, Mr. Speaker. They're sick of the NDP and their Premier calling people names in answers to questions.

This is what the NDP told us would happen: they told us that we would get social licence and that things would change. Here we

have a carbon tax that's impacting my constituents and your constituents. This is the plan: we're going to get social licence. But the Premier can't stand up and show us anybody who has changed their mind in B.C., where they need to change their mind for this pipeline to happen, as a result of that carbon tax. Here's another question. Can the Premier name one environmentalist that has changed their mind on Trans Mountain as a result of her job-killing carbon tax? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I had a chance to quite finish my answer to the last question, so I will do that now. I'm very pleased to report to all members of the House that earlier today the federal government announced that it is supporting Trans Mountain and the government of Alberta in the appeal at the NEB around the decisions being taken by the city of Burnaby. That is the kind of thing that happens when you have adult conversations with your colleagues across the country. Mr. Kenney's brand of economic isolationism will not work. It will cost jobs, it will cost our reputation, and it will get us the same kind of results that they already got . . .

The Speaker: Third question.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again the Premier avoids the question. The question was about B.C. She has no answer to it because nobody has changed their mind in B.C. This is the problem. This is the serious problem that we have. Will the Premier acknowledge that problem, acknowledge that her carbon tax has not made any changes, as a result, to the west of us, that we are still in a serious situation where many people, including her friends, former advisers of hers, former people that she put on government panels that are extreme environmental activists, are trying to block these pipelines, and will she acknowledge that her carbon tax has not actually got us any social licence and is not building any pipelines?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm pleased to be able to talk about what I am going to be doing tomorrow, which is going to B.C. and making the case for our strong energy industry and making the case that working people must be included in all efforts to combat climate change, something that is absolutely fundamental to this government, that we need to do both. We need to combat climate change, we need to join with the rest of the country and not turn our backs on them and pretend that they don't have real concerns, and we need to stand up for working people, and the pipeline is part of that plan. That is the case I will make on behalf of the people of Alberta. I'm working for something, not against it.

Rural Crime

Mr. Nixon: On Monday the United Conservatives requested an emergency debate on the rural crime crisis. It's just been a few days, but we've heard more stories justifying that emergency debate, that was blocked by the NDP. The mayor of Alix sat in this very Chamber on Monday defending his community. When he returned home, he learned of another shocking case. A gas station owner, a Korean immigrant, was robbed again. The front of his store was rammed with a truck, a worker was assaulted, and thousands of dollars were stolen. Sadly, this is the new normal where I live in rural Alberta. This is an emergency. This must be debated. Will the

Premier finally stand up for rural Albertans and stand up against this crime crisis?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, any time any Albertan is a victim of crime, we are concerned. We know that it creates stress and anxiety for the communities, and we know that people want to feel safe. That is why our government has remained committed to maintaining funding for our police services, why we have increased funding for our court services so that we can be more effective in terms of getting these things through the courts and ensuring that people are held accountable for the crimes that they commit. We will continue to work on these things. We will not grandstand, nor will we cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the justice system.

Mr. Nixon: What this NDP has done is to say, "It's not urgent" to the people that are being victimized.

This hard-working business owner has been victimized multiple times. He actually had an employee sleeping in his business at night because of the threat of repeated robbery. Nobody should have to live like this. Criminals, sadly, know that rural Alberta is ripe for the picking. The problem is just getting worse, and this government won't even have a debate on this matter. They won't even acknowledge the urgency. In fact, they continue to deny the urgency. They won't stand up and acknowledge what's happening to the people that they represent. They won't stand up for people that are being robbed and abused. Instead, they say that it's not urgent, and they deny them the ability to get justice here. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

An Hon. Member: He's got to ask a question.

The Speaker: Hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, yes, there wasn't really a question in that. But what I will definitely say is that we know that Albertans do deserve to feel safe in their communities and in their own homes. That's why, as I've said before, we are committed to ensuring stable funding. In fact, in many respects we've increased funding to support action to combat crime across the province. One of the things most recently that the RCMP has put together is the integrated crime fighting unit, which actually looks at specific communities where there's a spike in crime and then looks at the ways in which they can work with other communities to look at the big crime motivators. Anyway, they're doing . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I guess at some point there's almost no point asking the Premier the question. She's just sitting here laughing at rural Albertans and not answering the question.

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

Mr. Nixon: That's what she was just doing there, Mr. Speaker, actually laughing. Let's be clear. This is not a partisan issue.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Mr. Nixon: I know my rural colleagues in the government are getting the exact same phone calls that I am getting. I know that their constituents are being abused the same as mine, and I know

that they are just as disappointed that their Premier and their leadership have fought against an emergency debate in this House and have fought against being able to stand up for rural Albertans that are being abused. Again I will call on the Premier to do the right thing, listen to the people in this House that know that their constituents are being abused, stand up, give us a debate.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've lost count of the number of things within that last tirade that were made up, but there were many. That being said, however, we will continue to do the work that we have been doing. We will continue to support our police, and we will continue to ensure that our courts can move as fast as they can to make sure that when criminals are apprehended, we can prosecute them appropriately. This is what Albertans expect from us. What I will say is that you cannot cut 20 per cent from the provincial budget and not see those kinds of programs jeopardized. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Notley: And the members opposite . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier. [interjections]
Order.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Provincial Fiscal Deficit

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was almost exactly one year ago today that I asked the Premier what the government was doing to get off the resource revenue roller coaster. Here's what she had to say: "We are getting off the roller coaster, we are not tying our spending to the price of oil, and we are carefully bringing our spending into line." But here we are today with a budget that relies more on resource revenues than it did when this government took office. To the Premier I will ask the same question that I asked last year. Do you have any plan to get off the resource revenue roller coaster, or will you simply cross your fingers and hope that the price of oil goes up? [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. member. [interjections] Hon. member.
The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, I think it's important to note that our credit rating remains the second highest in the country. [interjections] It also comes on the heels of the biggest recession seen since the 1930s. Alberta, notwithstanding that, is recovering, and things are starting to look up, even though we know there's more to do. Sales are up, wages are up, and we are forecasting growth of 4 per cent. [interjections] This is good news. The members . . .

The Speaker: Hon. members, I can't hear the information being shared. Would you keep the tone down, please?
The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite clearly want to drag us down. They also hate facts, but here's a big one. Since last June our economy has created 70,000 full-time . . .

Mr. Clark: Lots of things are up except our credit rating, Mr. Speaker. It's going down, and the numbers don't lie.

When this government took office Alberta needed 19 per cent of its revenues to come from resource royalties to balance. Today that

number is 27 per cent. Economist Trevor Tombe said, "We have to be honest that policy choices led us here and that we are still very much along for the ride." DBRS agrees. They're concerned that a return to balance relies on recovery and resource revenues rather than a fundamental adjustment of the budget. Again to the Premier: what is your plan? How many teachers, nurses, and front-line employees will we not have because of the money now needed to pay the interest on the . . .

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

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Interestingly, our plan is focused on ensuring that we protect our teachers and our nurses and our front-line workers. That's exactly the choice that our government made when we got elected and discovered the mess that had been left, so we are carefully working on that plan. You know, a couple of these credit agencies: what they actually want us to do is to raise taxes by \$3 billion to \$4 billion or cut spending by \$3 billion or \$4 billion. Neither of those things are going to help us get out of the recession. Those are not the things that are going to create jobs and stimulate economic growth; what we're doing is.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, unlike the NDP or the UCP, the Alberta Party has an actual plan. Our plan curbs government spending without hurting front-line services, reduces reliance on nonrenewable resource revenue, and not only balances but actually gets to a place where we get to pay back debt. Now, that is quite a concept, I know, but as part of our analysis in our shadow budget we modelled the NDP budget plan, and guess what? It never, ever balances. To the Minister of Finance. You claim that you'll balance the budget by 2023. Will you prove it by showing your work, including a detailed year-by-year plan to balance? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, please. Quiet.
The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are engaged right now in the beginning of Budget 2018 preparations. There will be a web line. All Albertans can have an opportunity to tell us where more savings can be found at budget.alberta.ca. There are also going to be telephone town halls. There are also going to be opportunities for Albertans around the province to hear me, and I'll hear them. Budget 2018 is under way, and we have a path to balance. We'll be releasing it then.

Affordable Housing

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, Sherwood Park is a growing community. This population growth often means that certain groups of people have trouble finding safe, affordable, and accessible housing in their neighbourhoods, especially Albertans on a low income and seniors. To the Minister of Seniors and Housing: what are you doing to support residents of Sherwood Park who need access to affordable housing?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I'm proud to say that in June we launch the provincial affordable housing strategy, and this strategy is making life better for Albertans by improving how affordable housing is delivered and addressing the needs of current

and future tenants in our province. The strategy includes our government's historic commitment of \$1.2 billion over five years for housing capital needs. This summer I committed \$32.4 million to replace the Clover Bar Lodge in Sherwood Park, increasing capacity for seniors to age in their community by 65 units. This project will be complete by the spring of 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, I was glad to hear of the provincial affordable housing strategy, that was launched this summer. A comprehensive and sustainable housing strategy was long overdue for this province. However, many stakeholders in my riding are still wondering what the next steps will be. To the Minister of Seniors and Housing: can the minister give us an update on what concrete actions have been put in place since the launch of the strategy?

2:10

Ms Sigurdson: We're making life better for Albertans by investing in safe and affordable housing. We're building over 4,100 homes for Albertans who are low-income through our capital investment in affordable housing. We have also invested \$88 million in much-needed repairs to fix furnaces, windows, and roofs. New projects like the Sakaw lodge in Edmonton, Bow River lodge in Canmore, Gilchrist Gardens phase 2 in Calgary are under way. Our government believes that everyone should have access to safe and affordable housing, and we continue to protect the services families count on.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for her work. The economy is, however, still recovering, and many families and organizations in my riding are still struggling. What are some of the challenges and opportunities facing communities as they work towards establishing responsive and affordable housing systems?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've travelled across the province, and I've heard directly from Albertans regarding community needs. Many communities are struggling with significant outstanding repairs inherited from the previous government. As the economy recovers, I'm focused on Albertans' priorities, strengthening the public services families rely on. That's why we increased operating funding to housing providers last year to ensure they continue to help Albertans. Our \$1.2 billion investment in affordable housing supports an effective and sustainable housing system that makes life better for Albertans.

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

Addiction and Mental Health Strategy

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With each passing quarterly opioid report it becomes painfully obvious that this government does not have a handle on the opioid crisis. A 9 per cent increase in fentanyl overdose deaths from last quarter and a 40 per cent increase over last year are a disaster. Despite these troubling facts our mental health and addictions system still lacks specialized leadership, early intervention in mental health and addictions. It lacks integration, navigation, and essential communication across the sectors. To the minister: when will Albertans see an integrated, comprehensive strategy to deal with this emergency?

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The number of Albertans that we've lost to the opioid crisis is high, and it should remind us how serious this crisis is. It requires a government that is taking action. The Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission has brought forward 12 recommendations so far, and our government has accepted and moved forward on them all.

Dr. Swann: Albertans are dying at a rate of almost two a day. Clearly, the approach is not working. We need mental health and addictions specialist leadership. We need a more integrated and comprehensive action plan on mental health and addictions, and we need it now. We are four years into this ongoing crisis. How long will you allow this rising toll until you change your strategy?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that we've been working very diligently on is ensuring that there is access to treatment for Albertans when they need that. To that end, we have expanded access across the province so that Albertans, when they reach out for help, have a place to go. We've opened thousands of treatment spaces at communities across the province, ranging from Grande Prairie to Strathcona county, and expanded telehealth access so that there's that support there for Albertans no matter where they live.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Health Services third-quarter report suggests otherwise, especially in relation to mental health issues as they go along with addictions. Addressing the rapid increase in mental health concerns in youth and children, especially anxiety, depression, and traumatic experience, is crucial to getting ahead of this opioid crisis. It takes over two weeks for adults to get access to addiction services in the major service centres and over a month for children, especially in Edmonton and north. What are doing to increase access for childhood mental health and prevent . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working with our partners in Education to expand supports for students at school. We've also done some great work with the Ministry of Advanced Education in terms of expanding supports for mental health services on campuses. I'm also really pleased that we were able to expand the Rutherford mental health clinic, which serves particularly children and youth in the southern Edmonton area as well as the surrounding communities. There is more work to do, and our government is going to continue to work to support Albertans living with substance use.

Support for Unemployed and Underemployed Albertans

Mr. Fildebrandt: Let me tell you a story about a young man I know in Strathmore. He came from a place in Nova Scotia where he worked for half the year and collected EI for the other half. He didn't want to be dependent on government or anybody else, so like so many other young men and women, he packed up and moved to Alberta. Here he could earn his bread and raise a family, but in 2015 he lost his job. What is this government doing to ensure that people like this young man are still able to enjoy the Alberta dream?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question, a very good question. We recognize that the last couple of years have been very challenging for Albertans all across this province with the sharp decline in the price of oil. This has impacted every community, every business owner, and every family across the country. What I can tell you is that we had a choice, and our government chose to not only protect public services but invest in infrastructure and introduce a number of initiatives under our Alberta jobs plan. I can tell you today that that plan is working, with over 70,000 new full-time jobs in the past year. I'll tell you more in the next . . .

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, this man from Strathmore is back to work, but he's struggling to make ends meet for his young family as he is earning just a fraction of what he used to make before he was laid off. As we learned in the fiscal update, his story is not unique. Some Albertans are back to work, but for far too many these jobs just don't pay as much as they used to. Some Albertans have recovered, but for much of the working and middle class this has been an asymmetrical recovery. What is this government doing to ensure that this is a recovery for everyone?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have been working very hard to connect unemployed Albertans and Albertans looking to retrain with training opportunities. We have increased funding to programs that allow Albertans to learn new skills as well as made sure that we understand the labour market so that we can provide the best advice to an Albertan trying to understand what's happening within the labour market and where their best place may be.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Given, Mr. Speaker, that there is no greater social ill than unemployment – if we have two men with the same income but one of them works and the other does not, which one will be more likely to succumb to depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence? There is value and dignity in all work. There are no dead-end jobs, just an end to hope, and too many Albertans have run out of hope. What is this government doing to give every Albertan the hope that they can still live and work with dignity?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Staff at Labour and Community and Social Services work with employers and laid-off employees to make sure that they have career counselling, resumé preparation, job search assistance, and information on retraining opportunities. These resources are out there for Albertans. I encourage all Albertans to contact their Alberta Works centre, to contact the resources that the government of Alberta makes available so that we can get them reconnected within the job market and get them back to work.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Credit Rating

Mr. Barnes: What a difference a day makes. Yesterday, when announcing the province's second-quarter fiscal update, the Finance minister couldn't stop gushing about how great a job the NDP were doing. Twenty-four hours later credit-monitoring agency DBRS downgraded, saying, quote: up until now they've been signalling that their intention is to return to balance, but we have not seen credible action or we have not seen a real meaningful plan

to do so. End quote. When will the minister put away the smoke and mirrors and start making decisions that are in the best interest of Alberta families?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much. You know, this side is dedicated every day to make life better for Albertans, make life more affordable for Albertans, and we'll continue to do that. Talk about a credit-rating agency. We heard from credit-rating agencies before, and they said that we would have to cut billions out of our budget or raise taxes for billions. That's what Saskatchewan did under the misguided direction of Brad Wall, the opposition members' buddy there. They cut postsecondary funding. They imposed a 6 per cent tax on construction. That's right: a sales tax they imposed. That's not leadership. We're not going to do that.

2:20

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Barnes: Given that yesterday the minister gleefully announced that the NDP had reduced deficit spending by \$300 million and are on pace to not spend \$400 million by year-end and given that our debt is projected to be \$71 billion by 2019 and at \$400 million a year it would take this government 177 years to eliminate Alberta's debt – with a plan that bad it's no wonder the government has been down, down, downgraded six times. To the minister: are you aware that you will be 237 years old before Alberta's kids are out of debt?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, we could all be so lucky.

I can tell you that our plan is working. Jobs are up in this province. We've created more than 70,000 new full-time jobs since last summer. Mr. Speaker, we're going to be sharing more about our path to balance with Albertans in the near future for sure. But this work takes time. We must be careful and compassionate about the spending that we do, and we're turning that down.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that every time the Finance minister makes an announcement or holds a press conference, it results in a costly credit downgrade for Albertans, to the minister: will you stop wasting taxpayers' money with wasteful ideological decisions like public ownership of linen services? Stop scaring away billions in investments with misguided attempts to manage the decline of our economy and make some tough decisions so Albertans are out of debt before the year 2194.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of the work of all of these front-bench individuals. I am so proud that our plan shows 4 per cent growth this year. I am so proud that we're leading the nation this year and next year in GDP growth. That side would stunt GDP growth. That side would throw us back into a recession. That side has no plan at all. They have no budget plan.

Oil and Gas Transportation to the West Coast

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, we lost a historic opportunity last night to name Calgary-Greenway after Manmeet Singh Bhullar. Now the NDP government has another historic opportunity to make up for two pipelines, Energy East and Northern Gateway, by supporting the Eagle Spirit Energy corridor in partnership with all the First Nations who are backing this \$16 billion project. To the Minister of Energy: are you prepared to have a debate under Standing Order 30 on this new pipeline? Yes or no?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, to respond to the hon. member's question, that there are ongoing conversations as far as other opportunities to get our product to tidewater. We recognize that this is absolutely critical, and that's why the Minister of Energy along with the Premier have been championing pipelines to tidewater. We know it's the safest way to move our products. We know we need to get it to tidewater. We're going to continue to make that our number one priority, and we will engage with all communities and look at all different possible routes.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that federal Parliament now has Bill C-48, the tanker ban bill, at the committee stage and the government of Alberta did not show up in person to defend Alberta's interest and given that all the First Nations backing the Eagle Spirit pipeline oppose the tanker ban, to the Minister of Energy again: instead of paying lip service to the indigenous people, will you stand up and defend Alberta's interest and support this all First Nations backed Eagle Spirit pipeline?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, our government will never back down from fighting for Alberta jobs and Alberta's energy sector. We've been clear with Ottawa that economic development can coexist with environmental protection. One does not need to sacrifice the other. In fact, I believe it was the Minister of Energy that wrote to Minister Garneau to express our specific concerns with the federal tanker ban bill earlier this month.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that our government is working collaboratively with other provinces and the federal government . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Keep it down.

Mr. Bilous: . . . unlike the opposition over there, that would jump up and down and scream and get no results.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that within 24 hours after returning from Europe I submitted a letter to the parliamentary committee arguing on the Canadian free trade agreement on constitutional grounds against the tanker ban and given that the Premier is the minister responsible for intergovernmental relations, can the Premier explain to this House what her back channels to the PMO are saying about the tanker ban and the social licence, and when will this discriminatory tanker ban bill be stopped?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what, I'm not about to take advice from those guys over there. Their leader was in Ottawa 16 years, and you know how many pipelines to tidewater he got built? Zero.

What we are doing is – not only did we put forward a robust climate leadership plan to show that our energy sector is the most environmental and takes all precautions necessary to protect our environment, we're showing that energy and environment go hand in hand, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that we will continue to work with the federal government to deliver results, unlike the opposition, which will continue to deliver hot air.

The Speaker: Thank you.

North American Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, I recently asked the minister of economic development a question on NAFTA, and his written follow-up is most sincerely appreciated. In that response he stated that his officials "ensure the federal government is fully aware of Alberta's position" and that they are "actively promoting our interests in the negotiations" and policy positions despite introducing Bill 30, which we are hearing may not be NAFTA compliant. To the minister of economic development: what is Alberta's official position on NAFTA, how is that exactly being articulated to the federal government, and will you share your position with Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. We've been engaged with the federal government from the beginning. In fact, if I can just briefly walk us through time. Back when the NAFTA negotiations started and actually six months prior, the Premier brought together four different industry round-tables: with energy, with agriculture, with forestry, with manufacturing. From those round-tables we've been engaging with industry and ensuring that they're engaging on the other side of the border. We've also been working very, very collaboratively with the federal government to ensure that they know Alberta's position.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, given the minister has publicly stated that the collapse of NAFTA is a very real possibility and given that we have a federal government which seems more intent on bolstering the Trudeau celebrity brand than actually negotiating a trade deal, at the expense of Alberta's interests, which he is not renowned for defending, again to the minister: how are you holding the federal government to account for recklessly jeopardizing NAFTA negotiations by leading with virtue signalling, image politics, which the American administration is highly likely to reject?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I would caution the member for making accusations on that which he does not know. To say that the federal government is not standing up for Canada is false. The federal government working with the provinces is ensuring things like chapter 16 and the dispute resolution chapter are not removed from NAFTA. I can tell you that the federal government has been very engaged with us. Our number one position is to do no harm and to increase trade and improve trade. I find it interesting that the other side keeps nattering, while our side is actually trying to govern.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about standing up for Albertans, not federal politics.

Given that the minister has indicated that Alberta is preparing for the very real possibility that the NAFTA negotiations could collapse and given that this would have extremely widespread negative ramifications across Alberta's boundaries and given that having a fully functional backup plan is now an absolute necessity, again to the minister. Worst-case scenario: NAFTA falls apart. What is your backup plan, and how will your government support affected Alberta businesses in the event of such a collapse?

2:30

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to sit down with the member to explain what happens should NAFTA go off the rails, but I'll tell

you this much. Our government is continuing to work to ensure that the federal government is aware of Alberta's position and our interest in continuing this trade. Whether or not the members opposite know this, the U.S. is our largest trading partner and is absolutely significant. Although we are looking at increasing trade in other parts of the world, we are continuing to work with the Trump administration as well as the Mexican administration to ensure that this trade deal continues to move forward. We want to see borders reduced. [interjection]

The Speaker: Hon. member.

Rural Crime (continued)

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, on Monday it was good to see the UCP join me in calling for greater action on rural crime. One might say that I lead, they follow. Now, this issue, though, is more important than politics. The Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General website states that the primary goal of its first core business is that Alberta's communities are safe. On this goal the ministry has had an epic failure. Since my constituents don't feel safe, what will it take for the minister to get engaged and actually deliver on this core promise?

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the important question. Our government believes that all Albertans deserve to live safely and in strong communities. That is why we have worked with our law enforcement partners. We have started a new integrated crime reduction unit, which is focusing on the crimes in rural Alberta. We are also providing supports to law enforcement by providing them with \$500 million every year to make sure that they can keep our communities safe.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister has fallen into the same trap as all of his other colleagues, equating spending with results. Given that the time-honoured NDP recipe to just add money and stir isn't working and given that Albertans in both rural and urban areas are not seeing decreases in crime from the money that is being spent, to the minister. I am not advocating cuts to policing, but Albertans want to see results. When is this government going to show results?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are absolutely committed to making sure that Albertans are safe in their communities. That is why we are supporting our law enforcement. We are supporting police, we have increased funding for ALERT, we are working with the provincial rural crime watch, and we are working with community partners to make sure that we have communities which are safe. People can be assured that government is taking steps to make sure that safety of the individual is ensured.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the challenge of increased criminal activity is not confined to Alberta and given that the province of Saskatchewan recently announced a redeployment of over 250 police officers from other areas of enforcement specifically to battle rural crime and given that if this government would set aside its animosity against our neighbours to the east and actually do something to combat crime – here's my question for the day. Whoever is in charge of that file today, will someone over there

pick up the phone, call the Saskatchewan Justice minister, or has the Premier's office told you not to? [interjection]

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: Hold on. Just wait.

Calm it down, folks.
Mr. Minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are proud of our law enforcement. We have full confidence in their capacity to deal with that. As a government we are providing them with the needed supports so they can handle that issue. The Alberta law enforcement response team is a key part of our integrated province-wide response to serious crimes. ALERT, which was previously funded by the federal government, was cut by that side under Jason Kenney's watch . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Affordable Child Care

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Families in this province have experienced the challenge of finding quality, affordable child care. Jason Kenney's Conservatives are out of touch with that reality. They've called it a waste of money. They said that our \$25-a-day child care pilot is putting dollars at risk. Could the Minister of Children's Services please provide the House with evidence that suggests that spending tax dollars on child care is a good investment?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can say that moms and dads across Alberta know that making child care affordable is not a waste, and experts agree. The Conference Board of Canada recently released a report showing that every dollar invested in early childhood leads to \$6 of economic benefits in later years. Investing in our children now leads to better development outcomes and reduces income inequality. That's why we're going to continue working to make child care more affordable, because an investment in a bright future for our kids is an investment in a bright future for Alberta.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister has invested \$10 million into these early learning and child care centres and given that the other side of the House has said that that investment is ideological, what are Albertans saying about access to affordable, high-quality child care in their communities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jason Kenney's Conservatives may want top-down quality child care, but that's not what everyday Albertans are saying. Moms and dads across this province tell me that affordable child care has been life changing for their families. One mom told me that she cried when she found out that her child care fees were reduced by more than half. Alberta families want to see more affordable child care in their communities, and our government is working to make that a reality.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake said that \$25-a-day child care in his constituency shows that the government is looking out for northeastern Alberta, when can the opposition expect to hear more good news about the government's commitment to making lives better for families in their constituencies?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was truly a pleasure to attend the grand opening of a \$25-a-day child care centre in Bonnyville with the member opposite, and I'm excited to visit more affordable child care centres as we work towards universal \$25-a-day child care in Alberta. We're working with the federal government on a bilateral agreement on child care, and I'm excited to share details about that work with Albertans in the coming weeks. I hope that Jason Kenney's Conservatives will share our excitement for making child care more affordable for Alberta families.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Rural Crime (continued)

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Monday over a hundred Albertans from rural Alberta drove to attend session to have their concerns heard about the rise in rural crime. We heard many stories about the escalating violence, theft, and even murder in rural Alberta. To the minister: what is it going to take for you to open up debate in this House so that we can all work together to come up with solutions to address this problem?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government believes that Albertans deserve to live in safe and strong communities. What Albertans want is action from this government, not debate. That is why we are providing half a billion dollars to law enforcement to make sure that our communities are safe. That is why the RCMP have started a new integrated crime reduction unit to make sure that we can provide safety to our communities, and that is why we have increased funding for ALERT.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Hanson: Given, Mr. Speaker, that Crown prosecutors in rural Alberta are known to have upwards of 2,400 cases each while the same prosecutor in Edmonton may have 600 cases and given that any of these numbers are unmanageable for any location but the Finance minister has seen fit to implement a hiring freeze for these folks, to the minister again. Crown prosecutors are begging for relief. What do you think is a reasonable caseload, and how are you going to achieve that number?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to Crown prosecutors we are proud of our record. We have increased Crown prosecutors so that their workload is reasonable and they can do their job. We have also created new positions for judges so that the judiciary can do their job. Last week the Justice minister joined ALERT to announce Alberta's largest drug bust in Project Offshore. ALERT laid more than 120 charges against 11 suspects. They seized two vehicles, one mansion, and more than 15,000 fentanyl pills.

2:40

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the state of the justice system has Crown prosecutors burning out, insufficient judges to hear cases, Legal Aid out of money, not enough police on the beat, and a rural crime epidemic fuelled in part by opioid addictions and fuelled by the NDP's bad economy and given that the Jordan decision is going to ensure that justice will be denied to people who have been robbed or held at gunpoint in front of their own children, Minister, how bad does the NDP's soft-on-crime approach have to get before the government takes action, cracks down, and gets the criminals behind bars, where they belong?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a priority for our government to ensure that our justice system functions in the most efficient way possible and protects the rights and interests of Albertans. That is why we have added new positions to the justice system. We do know that because of the Supreme Court decision, the Jordan decision, it's a marked change in the justice system, and some delays are expected. That is the reason we are increasing Crown prosecutors, we are increasing judges' positions, and we are making resources available to make sure that the interests and rights of Albertans are protected.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Presenting Petitions

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

Mr. Ellis: Great. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do have a petition here in relation to a question I asked yesterday in regard to the southwest Calgary ring road. I have a petition here from 526 residents of the Springbank Hill community. They certainly have concerns that there will be an adverse physical and psychological impact on the quality of life of the residents in that neighbourhood, including unbearable levels of noise, vehicle emissions, and light pollution. As well, the proximity of the on- and off-ramps creates a risk of vehicles careening into residents' backyards, which, of course, is a safety issue. I'm proud to submit this on behalf of the people of Calgary-West and the Springbank Hill Community Association.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 31

A Better Deal for Consumers and Businesses Act

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta and the Minister of Status of Women.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to request leave to introduce Bill 31, A Better Deal for Consumers and Businesses Act.

Mr. Speaker, over the summer months thousands of Albertans told us that they want to be protected when shopping or signing contracts, and businesses told us that they want to compete on a level playing field. Albertans deserve a government that protects their interests. That's why we're improving consumer protection laws. Stronger rules boost consumer confidence, and that's good for the bottom line. Bill 31 represents our government's commitment

to protecting Albertans' pocketbooks and making life more affordable. We are also helping businesses succeed and grow our economy. I look forward to debating Bill 31 in the House.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 31 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to table five copies of a document that I mentioned earlier in my member's statement prepared by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees' Pay and Social Equity Committee. This document represents the names of over 9,000 Albertans concerned about pay equity in our province. As a government and as a province we must work towards justice and equity for all Albertans. We must work together to address the wage gap.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite five copies of a graph by economist Dr. Trevor Tombe entitled *Alberta Still Firmly on the Royalty Rollercoaster*, which displays the resource revenues required to balance the budget as a percentage of total government revenue. That number is going up.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings. The first is Alberta Health Services' performance report on wait times for addictions and mental health by zone. That was for quarter 1, 2017/18.

The second is from the Alberta Liberal Party, a brochure on political action committees, *What is a PAC & Why Should I Care?*

Thank you.

The Speaker: Edmonton-McClung, do you have a tabling?

Mr. Dach: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a document I referenced earlier in question period today. I have the five requisite copies of the *Bonnyville Nouvelle* from which I quoted the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake when he said that \$25-a-day child care in his constituency showed that "the government is looking out for northeastern Alberta."

The Speaker: Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter that I received from Allan in my riding, from the town of Innisfail, stating that "in the last 90 days there have been 7 locations [around] my farm which have suffered break and enters," one of them on three separate occasions. Those were home invasions and break and enters.

Another one here from Glinys in my riding. She says that "we are very fortunate to have a caring and active group of neighbours" that have thwarted break-ins in their home.

Another one here from Ruth, the director of the Raven Crime Watch, stating: "With all the crime in rural areas why would [people] want to stay?"

And, finally, when this individual called in regarding this particular incident at their place, the people on the other end of the phone at the police station told them to go "get a dog." [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of annual reports for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, and the Alberta Sport Connection.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I believe we have a point of order. The hon. Government House Leader.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 23(i) specifically. A member will be called to order if he or she "imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member."

Sometime around 2 o'clock this afternoon during question period the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition accused the Premier of, quote, laughing at rural Alberta. Now, Mr. Speaker, I was sitting next to the Premier, and I was paying close attention. She did not in any way laugh or show amusement about the plight of people in rural Alberta with respect to the subject of the question, which was crime in rural Alberta.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, when another member stands in the House and makes a statement about another member that is not true and that has the effect when it's heard by the public and perhaps other members in the House of then damaging the reputation of the person about whom the false statements are made, it's a very serious matter. I think in future should that happen, it may give rise to a point of privilege, but in this case I'm prepared to raise this under 23(f).

It may be that the hon. member opposite does not like the answer that the Premier has given. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if that was the case. He may even believe that the approach that the government is taking is insufficient and represents some sense of lacking in terms of what needs to be done. But the Premier did not laugh at rural Alberta. She takes this matter extremely seriously, as do all of us on this side, as does everyone in the House.

Mr. Nixon: Now I'll laugh at you.

Mr. Mason: Now, there the hon. member is laughing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure all members of the House that while we may disagree on how to proceed, the government has taken this seriously and does take it seriously and wants to ensure that we do everything possible to assist with this problem. However, to suggest that the Premier is laughing in this House when those questions are put to her is completely false, it is most unfair to the hon. Premier, and does a disservice to all members of this House.

So I would ask, then, that you find that the member's statement is out of order and that it be withdrawn. We should not have this kind of thing going on in the House, where people are standing up and saying that a member did something that they did not do, especially if that statement is believed outside this House, which then damages the other member's reputation. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I just want to clarify. Did I hear correctly? I thought I heard two subsections of 23 that you cited. You mentioned (f), I believe.

Mr. Mason: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. It's subsection (i), "Imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member." I think I got it right the first time and not the second time.

Thank you.

Mr. Nixon: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, this is quite clearly a matter of debate. I would suggest that the Government House Leader should be very careful considering that most of the comments that come from that side of the House are usually saying things that are putting words into our mouths or indicating that this side of the House is doing something that they are not. But that's what they continue to do, and that's fine. It is a matter of debate. You've ruled that way many times.

The fact is this, Mr. Speaker. I was asking a question on behalf of Albertans – just the other day hundreds of them were here – about something that is very, very serious, very serious for the communities that I represent and the people on this side of the House and some of the people on the other side of the House represent, that is causing devastation in those areas. I asked that question, and during the time that I asked that question, the Premier was laughing. That's a fact.

Now, I will respect that the Government House Leader may interpret her laughter in a different way than I did, but then, again, that would be a matter of debate. He was laughing himself at the time, Mr. Speaker, so maybe he didn't understand what she was laughing at. The reality is that when I asked that question, he was laughing. It was certainly our interpretation of that that he was laughing at our constituents and the people who we were asking the question about and without a doubt is a matter of debate. I respect that he disagrees with the way that we interpreted that, but from this side of the House they were laughing at Albertans. They were laughing at people that are suffering from the crime epidemic that we are asking questions about.

I think that's disappointing. You know, I think the Government House Leader even standing on this point of order to try to defend that behaviour is quite ridiculous.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I'll choose to think about this one. I can only tell you at a general level that I shift it back to all of you about the degree to which you reflect on each other in this House and how those statements are interpreted. For that matter, I will defer . . .

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, can I say one more thing? Not an argument on the matter or anything, just a comment before you move on.

The Speaker: I think we're past that point.

Mr. Nixon: Well, I think I'll just save you some time.

The Speaker: You'll save me some time?

Mr. Nixon: Sure, Mr. Speaker. I think that this House has much more valuable work to do, and if the opposite side is extremely sensitive to us pointing out when they laugh and that that hurt the Premier, I will happily withdraw that comment so that we can move on with our day on behalf of Albertans.

Mr. Mason: Another point of order under the same section. The hon. member continues to . . .

Mr. Nixon: You can't do a point of order on a point of order.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nixon: Well, then, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I'm listening to another point of order here, hon. member. You'll get a chance.

You have another point of order, is that correct?

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Mason: The Opposition House Leader continues to sneer at the rules of this House, Mr. Speaker, to disrespect this House, to stand up and engage in all kinds of disruptive and disrespectful behaviour with respect to important matters that are before the House. I did not laugh nor did the Premier today during his questions. That is absolutely false.

The Speaker: Do you have – are you speaking to a . . .

Mr. Nixon: Well, I'm responding to the Government House Leader's point of order. I will note that he didn't cite anything. I'm not really sure. I sense that you're probably confused, Mr. Speaker, about what the government's point of order is. But now who is declaring motives to somebody in the House? It's ridiculous that the Government House Leader is doing this. What is happening here is that the government is upset because they've been called . . .

The Speaker: I think I will retain my right to review the matter. This exchange is illustrative in my mind of requiring effort from everyone.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 29

An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased and proud to rise today to move third reading of Bill 29, An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving.

This bill was proposed based on consultation with Albertans as well as with our traffic safety and law enforcement partners concerned about what the legalization of cannabis will mean for impaired driving in our province. This bill honours our commitment to maintaining safe roads and to deterring impaired driving through a robust program of provincial administrative sanctions.

By amending and updating the Traffic Safety Act now, we can ensure that Alberta stands ready to reflect the changes being proposed by the federal government to the Criminal Code of Canada. Bill 29 establishes the laws and procedures that our law enforcement organizations need to deter and to sanction any form of impaired driving as we prepare for cannabis legalization in Canada. This will help keep all road users safe as we move into this uncharted territory as a nation in 2018, not much more than seven months from now, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the members of this House for their support for Bill 29. This bill ensures that we have the provincial sanctions in place to mirror the new federal impaired driving laws when they come into force. The bill responds to the Alberta Court of Appeal decision by providing a 90-day licence suspension rather than an

indefinite licence suspension until the disposition of the court proceedings. What this bills means for Albertans is that our law enforcement organizations have the tools to get impaired drivers off the road immediately and consequences serious enough to deter anyone from getting behind the wheel when impaired by any substance. This legislation is vital to continued public safety in Alberta.

3:00

I want to thank you for the opportunity to take this very important step towards our goal to see zero impairment-related collisions and fatalities on Alberta roads, Mr. Speaker. I would now ask the members of this House to put their support behind this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support Bill 29, An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving. It is unfortunate that this legislation had to come forward so quickly and with so many unknowns about how our police services will actually enforce its provisions at roadside, but we recognize that it is not the fault of our provincial government. Our government has to be prepared for the legalization of marijuana on July 1, 2018, which is now only seven months away.

The Ministry of Transportation through Bill 29 has aligned Alberta's provincial administrative sanctions with the proposed Criminal Code amendments which are currently before Parliament. I support those alignments along with the way Alberta also dealt with the court ruling requiring it to alter its administrative sanctions for impaired driving.

I also want to take a moment to thank the Minister of Transportation for the time he has committed to be present in this Chamber during all the Bill 29 debate. He did a good job answering questions from this side of the Chamber.

Having said that, when I review the short time we have had to consider this bill, the greatest concerns that the UCP caucus has voiced during this debate have not been addressed. These are crucial concerns based on legalization occurring before our police services can be ready for it. We have heard police leaders in Alberta and across the nation express that point time and time again, yet here we are on the cusp of this new recreational drug becoming legalized and our police officers do not yet know how they'll identify drug-impaired drivers at roadside.

We keep hearing that a roadside device is going to be ready for July 1, but even if it is approved in time, it will only identify whether a driver has THC in their system. The roadside device that has been tested will not identify a driver's level of impairment in the way a breathalyzer indicates whether a driver is over .05 or not. So that leaves our officers to perform sobriety tests at roadside, and that requires them to undergo special training. Not all officers have that training, so they will have to call for a colleague who does to respond to the scene.

If it occurs and the driver is brought to the detachment for more investigation, a drug recognition expert would have to perform specialized tests on them. We haven't quite figured out, even with the discussions that occurred in this Chamber, who will be doing the blood testing and subsequent forensic work. But let's return to the drug recognition expert for a moment. These officers are even more specialized than those who can perform the field sobriety test, and right now they have to travel to the U.S. for that training. Does this all sound costly and time consuming? Clearly, it is.

While we are supporting this bill today, it is the implementation of it and in particular the implementation by July 1 that poses the

greatest hurdles, and that creates hazards for all Albertans on our roads. This government has precious little time to train officers and ensure forensic testing facilities are in place in seven months. I strongly believe that Albertans deserve answers to this government's level of preparation for our police services.

I would also have liked to have heard more concern from our government. One 2013 study, which the government itself quoted, found that more than half of all fatally injured drivers had drugs in their system, and 25 per cent of those had consumed cannabis. As you can see, we've not been alarmist. These are the facts, and after a number of days debating this bill here, we do not know how our provincial government will ensure our police services can protect us on the roads postlegalization in the way they would want to.

The Minister of Transportation has talked about a public awareness campaign to address myths about marijuana use and driving and mixing marijuana with alcohol. That is within his purview, and he has promised that the government will do a fulsome job of communicating these dangers. I have no doubt that he'll ensure that his ministry does its best to do so, but I do ask him to make it a priority.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I support third reading of Bill 29, but I urge the government to address the gaps in training and the number of personnel and facilities that will be needed to properly address this new recreational drug. Many Albertans fear that it will make our roads that much more hazardous, and we have lots of evidence to prove that their fears could become a reality.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any other members who wish to speak to third reading of Bill 29? Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Great. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to thank the Transportation minister. I'd like to thank the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti for speaking just now. I, too, of course, will be supporting the bill.

You know, I spoke yesterday. I spoke very passionately, of course, in regard to some of the challenges that police services will be facing, especially when it comes to blood tests, and I talked about that.

One thing that I didn't touch on was what the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti brought up, which is the drug recognition experts. To his point, this is not a service that is actually provided here in Alberta or even Canada at this time in regard to training of these specific officers. This is very specialized training within a specialized unit within police services, which is the traffic unit, whereby somebody has to travel to Arizona in order to get this training. It is very challenging. It is extensive, it is a really, really difficult course – you must get 100 per cent in order to pass this course – and it is very, very costly. So to pretend that all officers are going to be trained as drug recognition experts is completely, absolutely false. That will not be happening.

My concern is not just the challenges of having a drug recognition expert available within a larger municipality. I can tell you as a former alcohol tester within the province of Alberta that there were times when the concern was that we were not always readily available. There were times when we did not have a tester that was available, and there will be times that a drug recognition expert will not be available. But if we go back into rural Alberta and we talk about the challenges that they are currently facing at this time, they will be facing challenges in rural Alberta when an officer pulls somebody over who has been stopped for impaired driving due to marijuana. There may not be a drug recognition expert available. At that point all we have are the signs of indicia.

You know, at this time is that enough to lay a charge under the Criminal Code? Yes, for impaired driving. But I can tell you that it's typically not enough. I mean, there's a reason why when we charge somebody with impaired driving for alcohol, we charge under 253(1)(a) and (b) of the Criminal Code. It's because we're laying two charges. We're laying one charge for impaired driving, and we're laying another charge for being over .08. Then that gives the Crown the opportunity to deal with the defence attorneys when it comes to impaired driving. It becomes very, very challenging if all we have are signs of indicia or the smell of marijuana in order to lay a specific charge of impaired driving when it pertains to marijuana.

Now, that being said, I am truly disappointed. I was very sincere in regard to the zero tolerance amendment that was made yesterday. The decision that was made by this Legislature: I certainly respect that, but I do believe it was a mistake. I believe that zero tolerance was something that we should have put in from a nonpartisan perspective for the safety of the individuals on the roads of Alberta.

3:10

The police are not ready. There are many police services that I have spoken to, many high-ranking members of police services that I have spoken to. They are not ready. They're not prepared right now to deal with this cultural shift.

I believe that there are going to be people at risk. I do believe that the Transportation minister as well as this government did the best that they could given the situation that they were put under by the federal government. However, I believe that we could have made this better. I mean, I know we don't have Committee of the Whole, but I certainly hope that the government, maybe through regulations, you know, takes zero tolerance in this bill very seriously, again from a nonpartisan perspective, in order to save lives of the people of Alberta.

In conclusion, I just want to say that, of course, I do support Bill 29. I support making these roads safer. I do believe that there are good things that are in this bill. However, I do believe that it could've been better.

I'd like to thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak, and I'd like to thank everybody for participating. Thank you.

The Speaker: Any hon. members under 29(2)(a)?

The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will concur with the comments from my colleagues from Grande Prairie-Wapiti as well as Calgary-West and thank the hon. Minister of Transportation for his approach to this bill and for hearing out the arguments and the case made by members on this side. With Bill 29, of course, we find ourselves here, whether we like it or not, both through the Alberta Court of Appeal ruling but also through the legalization of cannabis by the federal government.

I do stand also in support of Bill 29 here at third reading because it attempts to address some of the very serious challenges that our society faces with impaired driving of all kinds. It, of course, as we know, is a major contributor to fatal road crashes in Canada. Unfortunately, even before legalization, drug impaired driving is an increasing safety problem. In 2010, the most recent statistics we were able to find, there were nearly as many road fatalities as a result of using drugs, about 34 per cent, as there had been as a result of alcohol, 39 per cent. Those numbers are striking and a very significant problem in our community.

I want to recognize the work of MADD and many other groups who advocate so strongly against impaired driving of all kinds. Unfortunately, they continue to have their work cut out for them,

and I do worry that that will only get worse as legalization of cannabis is upon us.

Young people, of course, are the largest group of drivers who will test positive for alcohol or drugs, and they'll also be involved in accidents and crashes and fatalities.

The technology isn't the same when dealing with cannabis or other drugs as it is for alcohol in terms of roadside screening. The hope is that there will be a device that is able to be used at the roadside come July 1. Frankly, I suspect that we will be in a situation where that isn't the case, certainly nothing quite exactly equivalent to a breathalyzer, which creates challenges in terms of resourcing for police: the types of resources they need, the types of expertise to draw blood either at the roadside or at a precinct or perhaps in hospital. Those are not only scarce resources and officers that need to be trained up to do so, but of course there's a tremendous cost in doing so as well. Those police forces will require substantial resources. Municipalities around the province will require substantial resources. The RCMP will require substantial resources to roll that out.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, as seems to be the case in our world, the only winners in all of this are likely to be the lawyers. When we talk about the percentage, that 2 to 5 nanograms per millilitre of THC is our threshold, I strongly suspect this is the sort of thing that will be litigated here over the course of many years up to the Supreme Court in terms of figuring out exactly what impairment means. When we're dealing with cannabis and blood testing, that is detectable, as I understand it, for potentially weeks or even months down the road from having actually been consumed.

So determining exactly what impairment means: we've made an attempt to do so in accordance with the federal laws. Unfortunately, we are in a position where we're doing the best we can. While I have some sympathy for the position that zero tolerance would be the desired goal here – and that certainly is what the Alberta Motor Transport Association was pushing for as well – I do understand that that in itself may introduce some legal challenges and that in not adopting a zero tolerance approach, there is more likelihood of this legislation withstanding a legal challenge.

In conclusion, then, I will say that we do support this bill. Again, while there are some challenges with it, it is the best attempt I think that the government could make to address the challenge both with cannabis as well as with alcohol impairment, so we in the Alberta Party caucus stand in support of Bill 29.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any questions or comments to the Member for Calgary-Elbow under 29(2)(a)?

Are there any other members who wish to speak to third reading of Bill 29?

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a third time]

Bill 27

Conflicts of Interest Amendment Act, 2017

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to move third reading of Bill 27, Conflicts of Interest Amendment Act, 2017.

In 2015 we said that we would strengthen Alberta's Conflicts of Interest Act and expand it to the senior staff of our province's agencies, boards, and commissions. With Bill 27 we are fulfilling this commitment, ensuring public agencies are more accountable, protecting Albertans' tax dollars, and being governed transparently.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's public agencies play a pivotal role in regulating, managing, and delivering important programs and services to Albertans on behalf of the government as well as providing oversight and advice on Alberta's issues. Public agencies are a significant part of Alberta's public sector and account for about half of government's total yearly budget. Quite rightly, then, Albertans have the same high expectations of their public agencies that they have of government: that public agencies are relevant, effective, transparent, well governed, and accountable to government and to them.

While some public agencies have conflict-of-interest requirements in place through their codes of conduct or their employment contracts, there is not a consistent and comprehensive set of rules being applied to public agencies. If passed, Bill 27 would create that consistency for the province's agencies, boards, and commissions as well as the confidence of Albertans to ensure positions are not being used to further private interests.

Our public agencies provide valuable services that make life better for Albertans, such as higher education, protecting vulnerable people, and delivering health services. They need to be held to a high ethical standard and governed with integrity. It's vitally important that our public agencies are held to the same high standards that we expect of our elected officials and senior public servants.

Bill 27 is part of numerous key changes that have already taken place for provincial agencies, boards, and commissions, including the ongoing review of all ABCs, executive compensation reform, enhanced compensation transparency, an improved online board application process, and greater transparency and diversity on Alberta's public agency boards.

I ask all members to now support Bill 27 in third reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:20

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am pleased to rise to speak to Bill 27, the Conflicts of Interest Amendment Act, 2017, at third reading. I am pleased to see this government take initiative on improving transparency and accountability in government. As we know, this legislation will bring Alberta in line with Ontario, Manitoba, and the federal government, who have seen the benefits of similar legislation in improving their track records on accountability. I feel strongly that giving representatives of the boards in our province clear rules and guidelines is crucial to ensuring their compliance with those rules.

In the past different agencies and boards have had different rules and regulations, which has led to confusion and a lack of transparency about hard-earned tax dollars. The legislation will hold board and agency members to the same standards as elected officials and senior public service officials. There should never be a question of impartiality or personal gain when it comes to Albertans' hard-earned tax dollars. Albertans need to be assured that the decisions being made by their elected officials in any capacity, whether that be by MLAs, CEOs, or board members, are in their best interests and not personal vested interests.

As an elected official I have to comply with the guidelines and disclosures through the Ethics Commissioner that ensure that any decision I make is above board and that I have nothing to gain personally or financially from any dealings that I may partake in or legislation that I pass or gifts that I receive.

It would be nice if we lived in a world where personal interests were not easily corrupted, but unfortunately, as we all know, that is not always the case. In the last few years we have seen several

examples of bad behaviour and dishonesty on our public boards and agencies that have led to entire boards being dismissed and that have seriously eroded the public's faith in these organizations and their ability to best represent Albertans. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the actions of a few have tainted the great works that so many of our agencies do on behalf of Albertans. My hope is that this legislation will help to rebuild that trust that Albertans have lost in our system.

While I support this legislation and commend the government for their work on this undertaking, I also want to ensure that the government has considered all the possible ramifications of this bill, both positive and negative, given the far-reaching and potentially unforeseen consequences of this bill. This legislation would give an enormous amount of power and influence to the office of the Ethics Commissioner. While I have absolute faith in the integrity and judgment of that office, I think that it is also important to ensure that there are always checks and balances in our democracy. This will also download an enormous amount of work, on top of new responsibilities, to this office.

Mr. Speaker, there are also concerns regarding the impacts this legislation may have on CEOs' and board members' abilities to obtain employment in their field of expertise following the expiration of their terms. I hope that talented, bright candidates continue to seek out these positions. We need, Albertans need qualified and honest people to serve in these critical roles, and I know we don't want to be driving away prime candidates that bring valid experience to the table with some of these restrictions.

I understand the reasoning behind the policy to not have board members actively involved in the industries that could create a conflict of interest in their governance. For example, within my portfolio of Treasury Board and Finance are a number of boards that will be affected, including the public service pension plan, which is responsible for ensuring that the plan is properly funded, recommending changes to the plan's rules, and setting general policy guidelines on investment and management of the fund's assets, amongst other duties. The Public Service Pension Board has six members, three nominated by the government of Alberta, representing employers, and three representatives nominated by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, representing employees. I believe all the members of the Public Service Pension Board are highly qualified and morally upstanding citizens, but we need to ensure that we are not limiting these individuals' ability to find work in their related fields after their term of service to Albertans is complete.

Another example is Agriculture and Forestry. In Agriculture and Forestry is the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, which has a number of farmers and agriculture-related businessmen and -women currently on their board. I don't think I'm the only hon. member in this House that believes it is important for the AFSC board to have very qualified individuals who understand farming and ranching, and who better than the farmers and ranchers themselves? I am confident that Bill 27 strikes the right balance between preventing individuals from unduly benefiting from their positions with their ability to find gainful employment once their term of service to Albertans is complete.

That is why I will be supporting Bill 27 at third reading and why I am encouraging all my hon. colleagues on both sides of the floor to support this bill as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. I rise to support Bill 27 at third reading. What is encouraging and I want to give the government credit for, and it's nice to see in this Chamber, is that we're pursuing

what I would consider to be the gold standard of conflict-of-interest legislation in our country. I think that it's nice to see. This afternoon's debate on the first couple of bills has been remarkably civil, and it's been kind of a nice change from what we saw earlier in the afternoon. Long may it continue, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you would agree with that.

What I like about this is that consistency is very important in terms of applying ethical standards. As the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat said, we in this Chamber have certain rules that apply to us in terms of conflict of interest. Those rules are entirely appropriate. We have to comply with them and have a very active Ethics Commissioner's office, which is, I will also say, very responsive to any requests that I have certainly ever had of them and very helpful in clarifying and interpreting the rules and making sure that we stay onside with those rules.

The 140 public agencies that will be affected by this will not only be seen to be more accountable to Albertans but will be more accountable to Albertans. They will and, I think, correctly should be held to a high standard by the people of this province, and this legislation certainly helps them do that.

Mechanically the agencies will now have to submit their codes of conduct to the Ethics Commissioner for review within four months of the bill being proclaimed. My sincere hope is that the Ethics Commissioner's office is provided with the resources they require to process this rather substantial amount of work because, of course, that is a relatively short time frame, but that's going to ensure that this happens relatively quickly. The agencies themselves will be forced to update their own codes of conduct internally, to disclose conflicts of interest, and to have restrictions placed on gifts, for example. Again, that's work for those agencies to do. That work is not entirely new work but certainly worth while.

I will say that a question I did have when I was going through the bill was on what impact it may have on attracting and retaining high-quality candidates for these very important roles, especially at senior levels, and in particular the 12-month period after leaving a job, where future employment is subject to conflict-of-interest rules. In the end, I think that's a good rule. It is very important that no one use their position to benefit personally in an inappropriate way. I grapple and just raise a small concern that perhaps that would mean it would require us to increase the salary that would be required to attract qualified people or perhaps reduce the pool of qualified people, which are two sides of the same coin. I just encourage the government, of course, to keep an eye on that particular challenge, but given the two-year notice period or immediately after reappointment, which allows for people in those positions to make a choice, that seems to be fair.

Again, with really no hesitation, Mr. Speaker, and notwithstanding the small concerns that I have – I wouldn't even call them concerns, really, just questions or points to note in terms of implementation – I and the Alberta Party caucus are proud to stand in support of Bill 27.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a) to the Member for Calgary-Elbow?

Are there any other members who wish to speak to third reading of Bill 27, Conflicts of Interest Amendment Act, 2017?

Seeing and hearing none, then, Edmonton-Ellerslie, would you like to close debate?

Loyola: Yes, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Treasury Board and Finance I now close debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 27 read a third time]

3:30 Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

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

Bill 26 An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis

The Chair: We are currently on amendment A4. Are there any further questions or comments with respect to this amendment?

Dr. Swann: Are you wanting me to close discussion on this amendment, Madam Chair?

The Chair: Just to clear up any confusion that we're in the right spot, this is the information I have here. We're on Bill 26, amendment A4, which is a continuation from this morning's session.

Go ahead, Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Well, I'm just wondering if we're closing discussion on that amendment. I certainly think that in the interests of children's health we should be including parks, public events, festivals and that, again, the onus should be on municipalities to identify events that are not going to include children, to be able to give those entirely permission to go ahead and have open tobacco and for those private events that will not be including children to have open events that include smoking, whether it's marijuana or tobacco. Again, we need to make the two consistent. We need some changes in the tobacco reduction act to ensure that we have some consistency there, and I believe we need this amendment to ensure that children are protected.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any further speakers to amendment A4?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

Dr. Swann: No. I have another one.

The Chair: Oh. My apologies, hon. member. I thought you were getting up to move. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll cede the floor as I seem to have misplaced my amendment copies. I'll be right back.

The Chair: All right. We'll go to Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: If you've never seen a six-foot-two man tap dance, Madam Chair, you're about to see it.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View and I have had long discussions, and one of the topics of discussion as it relates to Bill 26 and the legalization of cannabis is what an appropriate age for consumption ought to be. I know this is something that the federal government has set as a minimum nation-wide, the age of 18, and then has of course allowed the provinces of this country to establish their own age limits for consumption. Every province that I'm aware of that has passed their legislation or proposed legislation has set the consumption age of cannabis at the same age as their

consumption for alcohol and, I would assume, tobacco. I don't know that to be an absolute fact, but I believe it to be the case. This bill, Bill 26, proposes to do the same.

One of the questions that I had when the idea of legalizing cannabis was first presented was whether or not, in fact, that is the appropriate age. There's rather compelling scientific evidence that individuals' brains continue to develop not just through their teenage years but up to age 25. Anyone who's interacted with folks in their teens and early 20s would perhaps agree that brain development continues through their early 20s. We hope it does.

One of the great benefits of my youth, when I was in my early 20s, was that, in fact, there was no social media. Cameras were few and far between. You had to actually take a photograph and take the film out of the camera and then take it to a film laboratory in order to actually produce a photograph. If not, there's a reasonable chance that I would not be standing here before you if all that information was readily available online.

Be that as it may, in all seriousness, the science, I think, is quite clear that human neurological development continues until age 25, and there's a question as to whether or not it is, in fact, appropriate to have legalized cannabis at age 18. I know that's certainly a question I have. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to debate an amendment when it arrives. It's not here yet, so we'll continue to talk about this. I look forward to hearing from the hon. member.

I understand that perhaps the Member for Calgary-West would like to weigh in, so we'll allow him to do so. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. You know, obviously, I was just listening to the Member for Calgary-Elbow. He obviously brings up some excellent points in regard to age. When I was doing my initial investigation in regard to marijuana as well, the age of consumption was a concern. I brought this to our attention yesterday in regard to Bill 29. Again, we cannot compare alcohol to marijuana. It's not the same thing. If I spill some alcohol on you, you're not going to get drunk – right? – but the second-hand smoke, of course, is a different story.

In regard to age, though, there is scientific evidence. There are studies, and every study shows that under the age of 25 it significantly impairs the development of that person, that young person. So it is a concern. It is a concern. It's a deep concern.

3:40

Now, remember. Eighteen: why do we always have this number? In all the studies and all the books that I have read – right? – I mean, 18 was used, really, for criminal purposes. There had to be an age at which somebody can be charged with a particular criminal offence. But we're talking about the development of a young person. For any of you that have children and, especially, older children, it's not that they're the age of 17 and the second they turn 18, bam – you know what? – they're an adult now. No. They're still developing. They're still growing. They're still our young person. They're still our child.

In regard to the age, yeah, I have serious concerns and reservations about the age being 18 for the consumption of marijuana. Do I know what that age is? Is it 21? Is it 25? Talking to MADD, they suggested 22. I don't know. What I do know is that anything under the age of 25 – right? – significantly impairs the cognitive development of that young person.

You know, when we talk about this bill, certainly I want to reiterate that we were handed something from the federal government. I believe that with all the best intentions, with the work

that was done by the government, for the most part they've done their best. I do. I really, truly believe that they've done their best. But we have to be so very careful here. Again, this is a cultural shift in the way that, really, Alberta if not Canada is going to operate.

I think the other thing that concerns me in regard to that age limit has to do with young people. If we are using the age of 18, how many young people are in high school at the age of 18? Quite a few. Can they bring their marijuana to high school? At that point, can they smoke it within five metres of a doorway? Now we're starting to impact children aged 17, 16, 15, 14 in those high schools. That's a concern. That is a deep concern.

We'll see what this amendment is that is certainly going to be coming forward from the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. I really, truly hope that in the best interests of the people of Alberta, especially the children, we actually, really reflect as a Legislature and do what we believe to be in the best interests of the people of Alberta.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to continue to speak on the age issue in Bill 26. You know, I will take this opportunity, now that I have the floor here again for that rare opportunity, to say that I think that, on balance, as much as I believe that – no question – the science is clear that there is likely potential damage from, certainly, heavy cannabis use to developing brains, perhaps even to developed brains, as any intoxicating substance or psychoactive substance would have, having a differential age for a substance like cannabis, frankly, could be problematic. It's quite difficult to tell someone that they can purchase alcohol, they can smoke cigarettes, they can go represent their country in military service but not participate in a legal product like cannabis.

I understand the arguments. In fact, it's one of the things that my staff and I and that my wife and I – my wife is a physician – discussed and debated. Of course, we have one teenage daughter and another, a 10-year-old, who believes she's about 25. We discuss these things as a family in terms of the impact they may have on our lives and what might be an appropriate age for the legal consumption of cannabis. I will say that it is challenging and problematic to make that age different.

Having said that, I do look forward to hearing the arguments from the member because I think it is a concern that many Albertans have, a concern that parents have certainly expressed to me in my constituency as I talk with other parents at school. This is going to be something that we need to address with our children as, in my case, our kids get up towards the ages where these are the sorts of things that are going to be happening at school. To suggest that it isn't already in our schools, junior high even, unfortunately – it's just simply an unfortunate reality in many cases. Having said that, we need to make sure that we're having open discussions and that we have every opportunity to educate students, teachers, parents, and all Albertans about the effects of cannabis, legal or otherwise.

If I'm not mistaken, my hon. colleague from Calgary-Mountain View will now take the floor and present his amendment.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: If I may, Madam Chair, thank you for indulging me and to my colleagues for their willingness to stand and talk intelligently about this whole question. I think this is one of the key issues that we have to discuss around this bill. Everything else is absolutely important to deal with. This amendment, though, has a

chance to make a significant difference and improvement in the bill, in my view.

Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis, would be amended in section 7 by adding the following before section 90.01.

Definition of a minor

90.001 Notwithstanding the definition of “minor” in section 1(1)(w), for the purposes of sections 90.03, 90.04, [et cetera] “minor” means a person under the age of 21.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I’ll begin to speak to it immediately if you wish or await your direction.

The Chair: This will be amendment A5.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wish I’d had a chance to present this evidence to the minister’s office earlier and to the members of the Legislature so that they would have some of the most current research that I have around age and health related to cannabis use.

First of all, let me say that I support the important federal shift in cannabis policy to remove the criminalization of cannabis and ensure quality control in both medicinal and recreational use of cannabis. While the drug has both risks and benefits, as with most everything that we provide in modern society, it’s important, as we saw with alcohol and tobacco, to regulate and use evidence to establish strong guidance for individual and public health. Precautionary principle suggests that, you know, we use whatever evidence we have and, in the absence of evidence, err on the side of caution. That’s part of what I’m proposing today. Where there is reasonable evidence of significant and increased risk in adolescents, let’s err on the side of caution.

With respect to my first argument, if we establish 18 as the age of legal access, we cannot go back if we find evidence to suggest that this is increasing harm and motor vehicle injuries, for example. If we start at age 21, we can go down after we see the evidence. One of my arguments is that since the Paediatric Society has suggested 25 and the government of Canada suggested 18, let’s at least start somewhere in the middle and potentially go down to 18 after a few years of monitoring what the impact is of legalizing.

All of the five U.S. states that have legalized marijuana have established 21 as their legal limit. In Canada we have a mix. Some across the country have gone to 18, and some have gone to 19, but here we would be a little bit of an outlier at 21. We would therefore be able to look at the data over the next few years and look at the provinces and where they have the different ages, and we’d be able to say: well here’s at least some evidence of whether the age was appropriate or inappropriate. By all means, let’s push it down to 18 if the evidence suggests there’s no difference across the country in the impact of this age of legalization. We have some important information and research to do that would influence both federal and international communities by establishing our own age.

3:50

All five U.S. states, as I indicated, established 21 as the legal access for use. Epidemiologists have found that 9 per cent of those smoking at age 19 or older develop dependency, about 9 per cent of those starting at 19. The dependency rate actually triples under the age of 18, so about 25 per cent of those who start earlier have a higher risk of developing a dependency on cannabis.

The Canadian Paediatric Society made this statement this year.

Cannabis use during adolescence can cause functional and structural changes to the developing brain, leading to [measurable] damage. Marijuana use in this age group is strongly linked to . . . dependence and other substance use disorders; the initiation and maintenance of tobacco smoking; an increased

presence of mental illness, including depression, anxiety and [even] psychosis; impaired neurological development and cognitive decline; and diminished school performance and lifetime achievement. Rates of acute medical care and hospitalization for younger children who have ingested cannabis [accidentally] are [also] increasing. Ongoing debate concerning cannabis regulation in Canada makes paying close attention to the evidence for its health effects and ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place, vital public health priorities.

That’s the Canadian Paediatric Society, who is suggesting an older age for legalization.

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research made the following submission to this government. I quote:

Jurisdictions that have legalized the use of recreational as well as medical cannabis have experienced increased rates of injury due to burns, pediatric accidental ingestion. Drivers testing positive for cannabis and alcohol and drugs have a 9 per cent increase where it’s been legalized and drivers testing positive for only THC a 6 per cent increase. Of greatest concern are traffic outcomes. Fatalities substantially increased after legalization in Colorado and Washington, from 49 in 2010 to 94 in 2015, almost a doubling, in Colorado and from 40 to 85, more than doubling, in Washington after legalization. These outcomes suggest that after legalization more people are driving while impaired by cannabis. Alberta can expect to see similar changes in injuries when the new laws take effect.

End of quote. That’s our own Alberta centre for injury prevention.

Here’s an Ipsos poll from across Canada, that was done in April of this year, polling Canadians on what they think about the appropriate age for cannabis. I quote the Ipsos poll: When it comes to age restrictions around buying pot, the polling data found that about 50 per cent of Canadians believe the minimum age should be 21; 5 per cent believe it should be 20; 18 per cent say it should be 19; and 23 per cent suggest that 18 is the right age for legalization. So most Canadians believe that an older age at legalization is appropriate.

That’s the evidence that I hoped to present and to have a robust debate about. As I said, I don’t think we can go back. If we set it at 18, nobody’s going to say in five years, “Oh, we should raise it,” because it will be totally inconsistent with the rest of our adult restrictions. We have some evidence that it’s going to increase injuries the younger the age, both personal injuries and, potentially, public injury. Let’s stand out a little bit in Canada and establish an older age group and actually have something to compare over time with the rest of the provinces and show the evidence within a few years that we were right in setting it higher, or we can relax the standard if the evidence contradicts that. But we can’t go back.

Those are my arguments. I know the minister’s office is now looking at this information, that I was only able to submit in the last 24 hours. I don’t know the extent to which we are all prepared to have the debate, but I think there’s good evidence for us to take a second look at this and make some minor change that will not have a negative impact on almost anything that we do and that potentially has a significant positive impact on the health of adolescents and the health and safety of our communities.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’d like to thank the member for your amendment. I know that you have the best interests of Albertans at heart.

We know that the federal government introduced the legalization of cannabis, and one of our government’s major concerns was making sure that we’re keeping cannabis out of the hands of children. That’s why we are going to be ticketing offences for youth

under 18 who possess fewer than five grams, much like we do right now with alcohol. This builds on the federal government sanctions in the Criminal Code for possession of five grams or more. Our government set the age of consumption at 18 because it aligns with our age of majority for alcohol and tobacco but also because a substantial number of cannabis users are between the ages of 18 and 21 years old. We would rather have those Albertans access government-regulated cannabis through our government-run online retail system or government-regulated store. This way our kids aren't getting cannabis from their neighbourhood drug dealer. A drug dealer can sell them cannabis laced with other drugs. A drug dealer will also try to push harder and more addictive drugs on their young clients.

That's why we set the age of consumption at 18, something that was supported by the majority of the over 60,000 Albertans that our government surveyed. It was also supported by the Canadian Paediatric Society. Dr. Christine Grant from McMaster University coauthored the Canadian Paediatric Society position paper, and she wrote that young adults frequently experiment with marijuana. By aligning the legal age for cannabis use with that of other legally controlled substances, young adults will have access to a regulated product with a known potency. They'll also be less likely to engage in high-risk illegal activities to access cannabis.

Again, I would like to thank the member for his concerns, his advocacy, and his desire to protect our children. It's a concern that we absolutely all share. However, we will not be accepting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A5? The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. Just to add this to my earlier comments before this amendment, I certainly want to support the Member for Calgary-Mountain View in this amendment. I do believe it is reasonable.

As I expressed earlier, my concerns really have to do with marijuana in the schools. Again, for an adult who is, let's just say, even 21 or older, that's fine. If you want to smoke marijuana, smoke marijuana. You know, even if you think of alcohol. If you're 18 or above, I get it. If you want to consume alcohol, it certainly is your right. It goes back to choices. Sometimes they're poor choices; sometimes they're good choices.

Really my biggest concern here is that there is going to be marijuana in the schools, in the high schools where young people who are 18 years old, in whatever grade they're going to be in, who are going to be legally allowed to carry this marijuana as well as legally allowed to smoke this marijuana as long as it falls within the smoking rules – well, that, to me, puts children at risk, and that's really too much. In regard to 21, you know, the likelihood of somebody being in a high school at the age of 21 is probably very rare. As far as age is concerned, I think that is a reasonable age.

So I would like to stand up and, of course, support the amendment by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. I thank him for submitting it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to this amendment? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

4:00

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to speak to the amendment and to speak in favour of it. I have, as the House knows, spent many years in the education system. I have seen many kids make poor choices. I would speak to both sides of this issue. I've

listened. I've heard the issues that were brought up, yet at the end of the day I have to fall on the side of protecting the young people in our society. I believe that there's merit in the comments that were just being made about how you're going to see marijuana introduced into the high schools, and that's very concerning to me.

I have never smoked marijuana myself, but I can say that I have seen the deleterious effects of drug use on many of the kids that I've taught over the years. I know that I've gone and volunteered at the Mustard Seed church on many occasions, and on almost every occasion that I've gone to this church and served food, I've had former students of mine come through the line, all of them with addictions issues. Because I know their lives and because I was with them in grades 10 and 11 and 12 – and sometimes I even knew them in grades 7, 8, and 9 – I can say that in almost every single case it started with smoking marijuana. [interjections] It's the truth. The other day I realized that four of the individuals in my community that were homeless were former students of mine, and it broke my heart. Again, in talking with them, in trying to help them, we sat down and were talking and reminiscing, talking about how they ended up where they ended up, and in every case it started with some poor choices in high school.

I want to thank the member for bringing some statistics into the House. We've had the conversation about the fact that the brain does not stop developing until around the age of 25. When we make decisions about the age here, I understand the arguments about trying to match it with the age for alcohol, but I'm not sure that this substance is the same as alcohol. I think there are some significant differences, so I don't believe that it is unreasonable to consider an age of 21. As a teacher that believed throughout their entire career that we should not be placing students at risk, I would suggest that the age of 21 is a reasonable compromise, maybe not a perfect one. But it recognizes the medical facts, it's a step towards trying to limit access to vulnerable youth in our high schools, and it will have my support.

The Chair: Any further speakers to this amendment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to clarify something for the Member for Calgary-West regarding schooling and cannabis. I'd like to point out that in section 90.28 of the proposed legislation under Smoking and Vaping Prohibited it specifically says: "on any hospital property, school property or child care facility property." We are suggesting that it absolutely not be allowed to be smoked on school property. Just to clarify.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other speakers? The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. But they will be able to smoke on the perimeter, just on the sidewalks outside of school property. Look, I really, truly believe that both sides of this House are on the same page here. I think we all want to protect kids. Like, come on. We all want to protect kids.

You know, I have to talk about some experience here because there were a few moans and groans in regard to we'll call it the gateway drug, marijuana. [interjections] No, no. Let me just speak to this. I'm going to just speak to my experience in dealing with thousands – and I'm not kidding you – of people who have been in addictions. I had a unique opportunity. For two and a half years I worked in what we called the city jail. I got to speak to people who had mental illness issues, who had addictions problems. I was also the only law enforcement officer as part of the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, in which I, again, spoke to people who

had addictions issues, mental health issues. When I spoke to these people, quite frankly, I took pride in talking to them, getting to know these people. I wanted to know: what was the root cause? What led that person down that particular path of, let's say, addictions in these particular cases?

Now, I never met any person with an addiction that started with heroin. I never met anybody that started with crystal meth. I never met anybody who started with crack cocaine. But what I did meet – and, again, this is just experience talking – were people who started with marijuana, who started with alcohol at a young age. A lot of times as a young person you don't want to let the night end. You want to party all night. Marijuana along with alcohol are depressants. So in order to get that stimulant, what do you do? You go and take ecstasy, or you go and take cocaine, highly addictive substances that lead you down an even worse path.

One thing that people don't know about these drugs – and I'll use cocaine as an example – is that when you get that high, you never achieve that high again, ever. What happens is that all you want to do is try and get that high again, which you never do. It's called the chase. So then you progress to crack cocaine, and then you progress to crystal meth. But in all these cases, sadly – and it really, truly is sad – it all started with marijuana.

Ms Jansen: No. It starts with mental health issues.

Mr. Ellis: You're right. There are mental health issues, a hundred per cent. There are mental health issues. There are addictions issues. You and I don't disagree on that.

But marijuana is not the be-all and end-all. I accept that it's coming. I totally accept that it's coming. I just want to protect the kids, and that's why I believe that this is a very reasonable amendment. With the age at 21 it keeps it away from the kids that are in the schools. It's not going to stop that 18-year-old. Like, if we go back and we have it at the age of 18, that 18-year-old can still go and have it in his or her possession in the school and then step outside of the school property, no different than with smoking. It's still there. But we cannot normalize this for children. We cannot.

I get that young people experiment, that they try. A good friend of mine, the Member for Calgary-Greenway, called me the other day. He said: "Member for Calgary-West, you've got to help me out. I have a good friend of mine whose son went away." I think it was to British Columbia, but where it was in British Columbia is completely irrelevant. The fact is that, while away, he started consuming copious amounts of marijuana, and as he's come back to Calgary, he's experiencing psychological issues, at which point my advice to him was to take him to the doctor to get him treatment.

4:10

He does have some mental health issues. I'm not a doctor. I can't say that that's attributed to marijuana, but I'm sure it didn't help. You know, you talk about mental health, and you combine that now with an addiction problem. I think he indicated to his parents that he just could not stop consuming marijuana, that it was just something he had to do or that he felt he had to do.

Look, I think this is, again, a reasonable amendment. The age of 21 just helps to keep it away from the schools and not put children at risk. Therefore, I will stand up again and I'll continue to stand up and continue to support children.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway.

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the opportunity for me to rise and speak to this important amendment. As my hon. colleague from Calgary-West was mentioning, it's been

almost two months. I did call him for help. Obviously, I don't want to share the name and the details and everything about this young child, full of life, you know, an A-grade student, a very good kid from a good family. Everything just fell into the wrong hands. He was dealing with a little bit of mental health issues. He abused this drug way too much.

Then I approached my colleague and said: "You know, I need your help. I need your advice. You have been exposed to these kinds of situations in your previous career as a police officer." He advised me that we take him to a doctor and hospital immediately. His parents ended up doing that. It's been just about three months now, and he still has not recovered from the withdrawal syndrome. The child still has mental health issues. This is the damage that this drug can do at that young age. The child is still suffering from the damage this drug has done to his brain, his mental capacity.

That's all we're saying. Let's rise above and, you know, put the politics aside and just think about, like: what is the purpose of us being here? It is to do the greater good for Albertans and our future generations, the generations who are going to be taking care of us and this province. Let's not make this a political issue. Let's think about it and do what is right to protect our youth.

I think my colleague the Member for Calgary-Mountain View's amendment is very reasonable, and I think we should all support that.

You know, the example I shared, Madam Chair: thousands of those are available. A lot of people are going through that in this province and probably in this country. The only reason I know is because I had to deal with that on a family basis. I can't even imagine what the family is going through. I can't even imagine what the child is going through. He had a bright future, and now his parents have no clue whether he'll be able to even finish university or not, whether he'll be able to even hold a normal job or not, just because the damage was so extensive to his brain that it may not be able to repair itself.

Please give good consideration to this amendment. I hope all my colleagues can support this.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other speakers to amendment A5?

Dr. Swann: Madam Chair, can I just make one final comment?

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: I appreciate the discussion. I know it's difficult to change from the other side once you've got a bill in place and you've already had directions from the minister. My last pitch is that in health behaviour we know that making the easy choice, the healthy choice results in adoption of more healthy behaviours. We know that making the unhealthy choice, the easy choice, increases the risk of unhealthy behaviours. So the question that we're debating today is: at what age are we more likely to get the healthy choice made? I think it's clear that we'll have healthier choices made at the age of 21 for the majority of young people who decide that they don't want to breach the law, because it is against the law if we made that. Most kids will not want to breach the law, and they will wait to make the decision about the use of cannabis a little later than if they are 18.

That's the final comment that I would make, and I appreciate that the government may choose not to follow that. That's kind of a compromise, it seems to me, between the national government and the health organizations that are suggesting we be a little more prudent in reducing the risk of adverse affects at the age of 18.

Thanks, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other speakers to A5?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A5 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:16 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Ellis	Nixon	Strankman
Gill	Smith	Swann
MacIntyre		

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Fitzpatrick	McKitrick
Babcock	Goehring	Miller
Bilous	Gray	Miranda
Carlier	Horne	Nielsen
Carson	Jansen	Payne
Clark	Kazim	Rosendahl
Connolly	Larivee	Sabir
Coolahan	Littlewood	Schreiner
Cortes-Vargas	Loyola	Sigurdson
Dach	Luff	Turner
Drever	Malkinson	Westhead
Eggen	Mason	Woollard
Feehan		

Totals:	For – 7	Against – 37
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[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

The Chair: Back on the bill. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The remaining clauses of Bill 26 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.

Bill 28 School Amendment Act, 2017

The Chair: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to present to you today an amendment to Bill 28.

I'll wait until it is picked up and distributed.

The Chair: You can go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. I speak to my first amendment here on Bill 28. Mr. Smith to move that Bill 28, School Amendment Act, 2017, be amended in section 19 in the proposed section 115(1) by striking out "The Minister may make regulations" and substituting "The Minister may, in consultation with boards, make regulations."

Madam Chair, I would like to first state that this is a good thing to enact this set of professional standards for superintendents and

for principals. We have some of the best teachers and principals and superintendents anywhere in the world here in Alberta. Adding an additional layer of accountability allows the education system to ensure that the best people are in these very important positions of leadership overseeing our children.

My concern and the concern that was raised during my stakeholder outreach is that the current wording of this section of the legislation does not explicitly state that the school boards will be consulted, that they'll be consulted with when the superintendent leadership certificate process is being developed. Now, the relevant stakeholders indicated to me that they would be more comfortable if the wording in the bill was changed just slightly, as this amendment that we're speaking to seeks to do, in order to ensure that the school boards are consulted during this process.

Now, I'm sure that the minister would in all likelihood do this, but my stakeholders and the ones that I was talking to have indicated that they would feel more comfortable if this consultation process was written directly into the act itself. I don't think that this changes anything, really, in some ways. I don't believe it will impede any of the outcomes that the government has with this piece of legislation, what it's attempting to do. I believe that it will indeed strengthen this piece of legislation and will help it to achieve what the minister would want to see at the end of the day. I believe that by making this amendment, it is placing at the forefront of this legislation the thoughts of my stakeholders, of the stakeholders of Alberta, that want to see that the minister will indeed consult with school boards as they begin to put forward these standards for professional conduct.

I would ask this House to consider this amendment and to vote in favour of this amendment. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I rise to speak in favour of this amendment. You know, one of the questions and the concerns that I have with this bill is the substantial authority that it grants to the minister. Much of the legislation as written strengthens the power of the minister or the ministry. Almost every amendment as we go through the bill allocates further authority, discretion, and power to the minister, and in parts that seems to be the only thing that this legislation does.

4:40

Now, in many cases that may very well be appropriate. It clarifies certain things and allows the minister some discretion and latitude to do what the ministry feels is necessary and to do so efficiently. But the question I have, really, actually, ultimately comes to: what exactly is the role of school boards? The powers of school boards have been eroded over the last number of decades, dating back to the changes in removing taxation authority from school boards, and gradually over time authority has been taken away. I think, especially when we're dealing with something like education, where the roles of parents and students and the unique characteristics of a given community are different around the province, it's very important that we have that local representation in some form or fashion.

My hope would be that in making regulations, the minister, when making those regulations, would consult anyway with school boards. I can only assume that the minister would tell us in fact what his intention would be, but we can never trust, unfortunately, future ministers. While I do trust this minister, I would like to trust but also verify that that is in fact the case. So really what this amendment does is that it seeks to require the minister, then, to

consult with school boards. Now, that consultation doesn't need to be an onerous or long process. It could simply be a phone call with the school board. One would hope that that's something that the minister would do. There are also organizations that represent school boards, so it certainly would not be a requirement for the minister to make 61 phone calls. I believe that's the number of school boards in the province, similar if it's not exactly 61.

There are many opportunities. I know that the minister already interacts with the school board associations, public and separate and charter and private and francophone as well. I'm sure that it is something the minister is already doing. I know that that's something that he and his ministry do. They should just, I would hope, capture what is already happening within the ministry and certainly should happen going forward to make sure that school boards are always consulted on changes that impact them, ultimately because those changes would impact students, and that's really the entire objective here, to make sure that students get a good education throughout our province.

I do stand in support of this amendment and would encourage all my legislative colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't believe that this amendment is necessary. I've looked at the documents that have been produced before this legislation was proposed, and it's been obvious to me that the minister has already consulted widely as he sought to make amendments to the School Act. Maybe I should go and list all the people that he has consulted with. I think that one of the groups that is very important to note is the superintendents themselves, who have their own organization. Superintendents also are teachers, so there is already a teaching association, the ATA, that the minister consults widely.

I'm just going to read for the record the people who have been consulted: the Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta, the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta, the association of Alberta charter schools, the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Rupertsland Institute, the Alberta Teachers' Association, Confederacy of Treaty Six, Treaty 8 First Nations, Blackfoot Confederacy, Tsuut'ina, Stoney Nakoda, Strategic Alliance for Alberta Students with Learning Challenges, Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta.

I think that this demonstrates that the minister, as he proposes amendments and seeks to make our schools even better than they are, always consults. Suggesting that the minister may consult with school boards in order to make regulations on superintendents' qualifications is not necessary.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other speakers to amendment A1?

Seeing none, are you ready for the vote?

[The voice vote indicated that amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:45 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Clark	Hanson	Strankman
Ellis	MacIntyre	Yao
Gill	Smith	

5:00

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Fitzpatrick	Mason
Babcock	Goehring	McKittrick
Bilous	Gray	Miller
Carlier	Hinkley	Nielsen
Carson	Horne	Payne
Connolly	Jansen	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Kazim	Sabir
Cortes-Vargas	Larivee	Schreiner
Dach	Littlewood	Sigurdson
Drever	Loyola	Turner
Eggen	Luff	Westhead
Feehan	Malkinson	Woollard
Totals:	For – 8	Against – 36

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Chair: Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to move an amendment to Bill 28, School Amendment Act, 2017. I will wait for the amendment to be distributed before I continue my remarks.

The Chair: This will be amendment A2.

You can go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. My amendment reads: Mr. Smith to move that Bill 28, School Amendment Act, 2017, be amended in section 8(c) in the proposed section 51(3.1) (a) by striking out "boards" wherever it occurs and substituting "boards or operators of private schools" and (b) by adding "with any decisions concerning the sharing of costs to be decided by the boards or operators of private schools that are involved in the transportation arrangement" after "specific transportation arrangements."

Madam Chair, I think everyone in this House agrees with the government that equity of access to education is extremely important and something to be sought after. Every student in Alberta, regardless of where they live or what school they attend, should have the capacity to be transported to their school of choice at a reasonable cost. Overall, we support transportation co-operation as long as local boards are not being forced against their will to make decisions which do not fit the needs of their local community. Working with these boards is extremely important.

No one wants to see empty buses driving past waiting kids, and no one wants to see four buses driving down the same road every day when one bus could transport all of the children, which is why we think that private schools, where it makes sense at the local level, should be included in the transportation co-operation arrangements the minister is looking to implement. These kids are, after all, Alberta students, and that is not to suggest that we think these kids and their parents should be given free transportation. They obviously need to pay their fair share, just like anyone else.

That portion is addressed in the latter portion of this amendment, which seeks to specify that decisions regarding the cost sharing of the school transportation arrangement, which will need to be negotiated by school boards and/or private school operators, should be left to local decision-makers. These boards and these operators are best positioned to make decisions on behalf of their communities, and they are the most connected to the local issues and to the nuances that they face.

I think that this amendment seeks to strengthen Bill 28, and I believe it promotes additional transportation co-operation, which should make busing more affordable for parents across Alberta. That is something I think, I hope, I believe that we can all agree on.

So I would encourage everyone in this Assembly to support this amendment. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Just a reminder, hon. members, that we don't use surnames in this House. We always use constituency names even when reading or quoting. We've had a lot of that going on lately.

Mr. Mason: Even your own name.

The Chair: Even your own name.

Are there any further comments on amendment A2? Calgary-East.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Madam Chair. While I, you know, thank the member for bringing this amendment forward and the consideration of making sure that busing is affordable for all students in the province, currently the transportation regulation within the School Act doesn't cover or apply to private schools. Private schools are wholly their own thing. We also, in coming up with this bill, haven't consulted with private schools or private school boards. As such, we don't feel comfortable at this time accepting this amendment.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to A2?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A2 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:07 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Ellis	MacIntyre	Strankman
Gill	Nixon	Yao
Hanson	Smith	

5:10

Against the motion:

Carson	Horne	Miller
Connolly	Jansen	Nielsen
Coolahan	Kazim	Payne
Dach	Larivee	Rosendahl
Drever	Littlewood	Sabir
Eggen	Loyola	Schreiner
Fitzpatrick	Luff	Turner
Goehring	Malkinson	Westhead
Gray	Mason	Woollard
Hinkley	McKittrick	

Totals:	For – 8	Against – 29
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[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Chair: Are there further questions, comments, or amendments? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, let's see if the third time is lucky here. I would move that Bill 28, School Amendment Act, 2017, be amended in section 10 in the proposed section 78.1 (a) in subsection (1) by striking out “, in accordance with principles

set out by the Minister by order” and (b) by striking out subsection (2).

I have the amendment here. I will wait before I deliver my comments.

The Chair: This will be amendment A3.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that I have said this before during the debate on this bill, but again I am concerned and I believe this side of the House is concerned that this legislation consolidates a great deal of power within the office of the Minister of Education. This is not a slight against this minister or any particular minister. Our caucus just does not agree that the centralization, or the centralizing of power, within the office of any minister at the expense of local decision-making is a wise course of action.

I would also like to state that introducing a trustee code of conduct is a good idea. It is my understanding that many boards already have these codes of conduct. School board trustees are elected officials, and introducing increased accountability for elected officials is always something that I and this party will support. However, the current wording of this bill along with the materials that the minister's staff distributed at the technical briefing indicate that the minister will have the power to include mandatory elements in the trustee code of conduct. We do not agree that this is the best approach to developing a document which will meet the needs of all of the affected parties in the various school boards across this province. This code of conduct, in our opinion, should be developed in a co-operative climate which allows local boards the flexibility to develop a code of conduct which works for them.

That is not to say that the minister should not have oversight or input. We just believe that if the minister has the power to implement mandatory elements that local boards may not want, it poisons the process from the outset by providing the minister with all of the power, and this leaves school boards at the mercy of the minister of the day, whoever that may be. We just don't think that this is the best approach to create the best possible trustee code of conduct.

It is important that all boards across Alberta get this right as this is a very positive step for the education system, and this is why I believe that moving this amendment, which was born out of stakeholder feedback, will make this a better bill. It's important to allow local decision-making and local school boards to be the authors of their codes of conduct. They take it very seriously. Many already have them. We do not believe that it is necessary for any minister to have the power to mandate. To have oversight, to have input: absolutely. To mandate: we believe that takes the power of the minister too far.

So it would be our desire that this House and this Assembly would support this amendment. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A3? The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Chair, and certainly I would thank the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon as well for his efforts here. In regard to the code of conduct provision here in Bill 28, I kind of went back and forth on it. Of course, these are democratically elected people, and it's important to have that autonomy built into the elected officials.

That being said, there was quite a strong provision put into the new Municipal Government Act – the MGA I think it's called – that

had a code of conduct built into it for councillors and so forth, so, you know, to align us with that and the municipal level of government that trustees and councillors are a part of, I went along with the idea of having this.

A code of conduct, of course, doesn't include a provision for some kind of recall or, you know, other members voting somebody else off the board. I think that that's a line that should not be crossed because these are elected officials, and we can't have other elected officials somehow sanctioning, removing other elected officials. That's not on.

Certainly, this just lays out the groundwork for consulting with the various school board associations and individual school boards. You know, it opens submissions as to what the code of conduct would look like. So once we get that information, we put it together, and away we go. I mean, I have no sort of preconception about how or what might be included in such codes of conduct, but I'm kind of responding to surprisingly very favourable feedback of individual school boards and various school board associations actually wanting this, right? That's as simple as that.

I appreciate the member's interest in this, and, you know, we can watch it and help to shape it as it moves forward, building a code of conduct for trustees here in the province of Alberta. Thanks.

So I would reject this as it's written. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other comments on amendment A3?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A3 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:20 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Ellis	MacIntyre	Strankman
Gill	Smith	Yao
Hanson		

Against the motion:

Babcock	Goehring	Mason
Carlier	Gray	McKittrick
Carson	Hinkley	Miller
Connolly	Horne	Nielsen
Coolahan	Jansen	Payne
Cortes-Vargas	Kazim	Rosendahl
Dach	Larivee	Sabir
Drever	Littlewood	Schreiner
Eggen	Loyola	Turner

Feehan	Luff	Westhead
Fitzpatrick	Malkinson	Woollard
Totals:	For – 7	Against – 33

[Motion on amendment A3 lost]

The Chair: Back on the main bill. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

Hon. Members: Question.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 28 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 would move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 26 and Bill 28. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? Say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the opposition in particular for the progress that we've made tonight and for their contributions to the debate.

I want to indicate that pursuant to Government Motion 33 I wish to advise the House that we will not have an evening sitting tonight.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will move that we adjourn the Assembly until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:26 p.m.]

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