



**Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey  
Speaker*



**Vol. LXXX No. 49B – 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 5, 2026**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Red Dress Day

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity):** May 5 is Red Dress Day, a day to remember the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit, and to show love and support to their families not only here in Manitoba but across our territories in Canada.

Last week, I was on a Zoom call discussing why this day matters, and someone asked me, and I quote: What would you tell Indigenous women so they don't end up in a landfill? End quote.

That pushed—that question hit me hard because it shows how the burden to be safe and not get murdered is placed on Indigenous women when the real issue is men and the violence that they choose to extract on our bodies. Stopping this violence is always the responsibility of men.

Among other things, I also told folks on the call to be mindful about who we allow in our sacred circle and to stay away from dangerous, harmful men. I used a little bit more colourful language, and some people on the call were shocked.

But let's take a moment to consider what happened last month in Germany. Detective Dirk Peglow said, and I quote: Better not to get into a relationship with a man. If you do, the risk is much higher of becoming a victim of psychological or physical violence. End quote.

People were outraged, not at the violence that he described, but because he named it. They called him extreme, absurd. But he was speaking a truth based on real crime statistics.

Male violence is real. And, yet, we spend more energy policing words than addressing the actual harm.

We have a system that prioritizes comfort over truth. We protect men's reputations, soften language so men don't feel uncomfortable. And we silence and punish women who speak plainly about male violence. And while we tiptoe around the issue of male violence, Indigenous women disappear, get murdered or are left in landfills.

I'm so proud to be part of a government who doesn't just talk about change. We're backing it with real investment and action.

Through our Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag provincial strategy, we have invested \$60 million so far and into some of these things just now: we've invested into the Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag Lodge, a 24-7 safe space, in partnership with Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin; we've invested in the Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag Mothering Centre, in partnership with Blue Thunderbird, reducing newborn apprehensions; we've invested in the Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag housing program, in partnership with Manitoba Tipi Mitawa, supporting First Nations women towards home ownership so that they are safe; we supported transitional housing with Infinity Women Secretariat for Indigenous women and families escaping violence; we've invested in Franny's Place and Chelsea's House, 24 safe spaces in Brandon.

And I'm so honoured and pleased to report that, since the establishment of Franny's Place and Chelsea's House, the number of missing persons reported for Indigenous women have gone down in Brandon.

My colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), and his team proclaimed Clare's Law and built, from the ground up, a trauma-informed, survivor-led system to prevent violence before it happens. He's also introduced Bill 30, re-establishing the intimate partner violence review committee after it was dissolved by the Manitoba PCs.

Indigenous women are sacred. We're powerful. We deserve to be safe from male violence. And on Red Dress Day, our government reaffirms our commitment to ending male violence against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited. And my ministerial statement today is in honour of all MMIWG2S families across the country.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Today we stand with all those victimized by the terrible MMIWG crisis. For decades, Manitoba has been the epicentre of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people crisis.

Between 2010 and April 2024, Manitoba accounted for 21 per cent of all MMIWG cases nationally. This is a legacy that we, as legislators, and as Manitobans, must do everything in our power to tear down.

In just these last few years alone, Manitoba has witnessed far too many Indigenous women and young girls taken at the hands of domestic violence and systemic failures: 18-year-old Avontai Hartleib was failed by the CFS system and tragically murdered this past February; Leah Keeper was a mother of two who'd gone missing three years ago, only for her partial remains to be found this past November; 18-year-old Mariah [*phonetic*] Simard from Hollow Water First Nation was allegedly murdered by her own brother, who was out on bail.

The search site for Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran's remains was decommissioned last week. Along with Rebecca Contois and Ashlee Shingoose, their lives were stolen by a serial killer in 2022. Amanda Clearwater, her small children and her 17-year-old cousin, Myah-Lee Gratton, were allegedly murdered in 2024 by Amanda's boyfriend, who was to stand trial last month.

Whether it's Phoenix Sinclair, Tina Fontaine or Helen Betty Osborne, Manitoba has witnessed such outcomes for far too long. These women and girls had their whole lives ahead of them. They deserved more than words can ever say. These are families whose Mother's Day this month will not be celebrated the way it should be: children without their mothers, mothers without their daughters. Red Dress Day is a vow to not forget them and to ensure that no woman or girl is left behind ever again.

In this regard, we recognize that the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) has a heavy responsibility to shoulder. Let us all strive to do better, work together and protect Manitoba women and girls as they so deserve.

Thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Brenda Osborne

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** I rise today with a heart full of love and respect to honour a remarkable warrior woman: my stepmother, Brenda Osborne.

Brenda passed away this November from breast cancer. She was a pillar of strength, not just for our family, but for a whole movement of missing and murdered families searching for justice. For nearly two decades, her life was defined by a singular, fierce devotion: finding her daughter, my sister, Claudette Osborne-Tyo, who went missing from Winnipeg's North End on July 25, 2008.

Brenda never stopped searching. She walked thousands of miles with Walk4Justice across Canada. She led her own courageous walks across Manitoba, pleading for answers that every mother deserves. She helped foster awareness movement for missing and murdered Indigenous women across Canada and co-founded the No Stone Unturned benefit concert that has brought thousands of people together across Manitoba for one common purpose: to end violence against women.

\* (13:40)

As we mark Red Dress Day, Brenda's legacy feels more profound than ever. The red dress calls back the spirits of these women, allows them a chance to be among us, to have their voices heard through their families.

Brenda was a voice for Claudette. She carried my sister's spirit in every step, ensuring her name was whispered in the halls of power and shouted in the streets. While Brenda has now found peace and reunited with those who went before, she leaves behind a path resilience for us to follow.

Brenda, I want to thank you for your gifts of strength and your unwavering heart. You took the heaviest of burdens and turned it into a beacon of light and hope.

I ask all members to join me, as my family are watching online, in recognizing my stepmom Brenda for her life of service and love that she spread to so many families who, you know, are seeking justice for their loved ones.

Rest in power, Brenda. I love you.

**The Speaker:** It may be somewhat unusual, but I would ask for a moment of silence.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### Marcel Lemire

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Today I'm very happy to rise and introduce this Chamber to my good friend, Marcel Lemire. Marcel is joined here today with his wife Janet, son Jean, family Bernice and Paul Scaling, and friends Rick and Bill Rivers.

Marcel is another one of Selkirk's unsung heroes. Marcel is always thinking of others and always giving of himself for the sake of others.

Marcel was a volunteer firefighter for 14 years in the RM of St. Andrews, working as their fire chief. He served that hall's fire chief for 12 years, another two years as fire chief for all three halls in the municipality.

And after a devastating fire destroyed the Petersfield Curling Rink, Marcel stepped up once again, spending six years as club president. He worked tirelessly with the club to bring the community back its beloved hall. The new Petersfield Curling Club is a vital part of the community, and we have members like Marcel to thank for it.

In 2000, he brought another one of his passions to the community. His love of antique cars and hot rods drove him to create the Lily Pad Cruisers car club. Now in his 26th year as president, and with 137 members, there is no shortage of beautiful rides to look at when this group gets together.

The Lily Pad Cruisers have raised thousands of dollars each year giving back to the community. Each year, they provide two \$1,000 scholarships to the high school, a \$2,000 donation to palliative care, a \$1,000 donation to the daily bread soup kitchen as well as raising over \$45,000 in the last four years for the community foundation in Selkirk.

Honourable Speaker, Marcel's contributions in Selkirk and St. Andrews are truly inspiring. Please join me in recognizing the wonderful efforts of this incredible man.

Thank you, Marcel.

### Boys and Girls Club of Thompson

**MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson):** Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize the important work of the Thompson Boys and Girls Club, an

organization that continues to make meaningful difference in the lives of young people across our North.

For many families in Thompson, the club is a place of consistency and support and offers a range of programs designed to support young people at different stages of their lives.

After-school programs help children aged five to 12 take part in hands-on activities such as science experiments, crafts, physical recreation and gardening while also receiving daily healthy snacks and supper.

For youth ages 12 to 17, the Late-Night Program operates as a drop-in space on Friday evenings, provides supervised settings where young people can spend time in a safe, inclusive environment, taking part in organized activities that build practical life skills such as leadership, cooking and job readiness.

For older youth and young adults, their Youth Build Program offers long-term pathways focused on education and empowerment. Participants often work towards completing high school credits or equivalency, while gaining hands-on job training and support with housing and other services as they transition into the workforce.

Honourable Speaker, the Boys and Girls Club of Thompson plays a crucial role in addressing challenges that many young people face, including substance use, crime and social isolation. By providing mentorship and a safe environment, they can help young people build the skills and confidence they need to succeed.

This work reflects the strength of our community and the commitment we share in supporting the next generation.

I ask that all members in this House join me in recognizing the Boys and Girls Club of Thompson for their dedication and their continued impact on northern Manitoba.

Thanks, Honourable Speaker.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before recognizing the next speaker, there are some guests in the public gallery that probably have to leave before we're done members' statements.

So, we have seated in the public gallery, from Gonzaga Middle School, 50 grade 6 to 8 students, under the direction of Rex Ferguson-Baird. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith).

We welcome you here today.

### Rotary Club of Portage la Prairie

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Today I rise to recognize the incredible accomplishments and lasting legacy of the Rotary Club of Portage la Prairie and the many volunteers who have helped shape our community through decades of service.

Since its inception, the Rotary Club has embodied the principle of service above self, leaving a lasting impact on Portage la Prairie and the surrounding region through projects that continue to benefit families, youth and visitors every single day.

From the beautiful duck pond project that has become a gathering place for families and visitors, to support for recreation and community infrastructure, Rotary has helped make Portage a stronger and more vibrant place. The club has also played an important role in projects connected to Stride Place, helping support recreation, community events and opportunities for young people to grow through sport and community involvement.

Rotarians have also supported the preservation and enhancement of places like Republic of Manitobah Park, ensuring future generations can enjoy green spaces, local history and community pride. And, of course, many residents remember and continue to support Rotary vegetable sales, a tradition that brings people together but also helps raise funds that are reinvested directly back into the community.

The success of the Rotary Club is not measured only in projects completed or dollars raised, but in the lasting difference they have made in people's lives.

To all the past and present members of the Rotary Club of Portage la Prairie, thank you so much for your dedication, generosity and wavering—unwavering commitment to our community. Portage la Prairie is stronger because of your service.

Please join me in congratulating the Rotary Club of Portage la Prairie.

### Dr. Robert Schurko

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** Honourable Speaker, I rise today to remember and honour the life of Dobert [*phonetic*]-Dr. Robert Schurko, a proud Winnipegger and a former McPhillips constituent whose impact was felt far beyond our community.

Rob was born and raised here in Winnipeg. He began his academic journey at the University of Manitoba, where he completed both his bachelors and

masters in chemistry, before earning his Ph.D. at Dalhousie University.

\* (13:50)

Over the course of his distinguished career, Rob became an internationally recognized leader in the field of magnetic resonance. He spent nearly two decades as a professor at the University of Windsor and later joined Florida State University and the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory. His work helped advance scientific understanding in areas ranging from pharmaceuticals to advanced materials.

Rob's contributions earned him numerous honours, including the Regitze Vold prize and his induction into the Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine of Florida, but what made his legacy especially meaningful was his dedication to teaching and mentorship. He inspired generations of students and supported young scientists as they built their own careers.

Even as he faced a battle with pancreatic cancer, Rob remained committed to his work, his students and his passion for discovery. That determination and love of learning left a lasting impression on all who knew him.

Rob will be remembered for his curiosity, his sense of humour and his deep connections to family and friends, including those who still call McPhillips home today.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in a moment of silence in recognizing the life and legacy of Dr. Robert Schurko, and in extending our condolences to his family and loved ones.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before we move on, there's some guests in the gallery I would like to take a moment to introduce.

I'd draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Marjan Schippers, Consul General of the Netherlands; Virginie De Visscher, Honorary Consul of the Netherlands in Winnipeg; Sabrina [*phonetic*] Tejani, Consulate Senior Advisor.

May 5 is the Liberation Day in the Netherlands, marking the 1945 surrender of German forces to Canadian troops, who led the effort to free the country, forging a deep and lasting bond. Canadians played a central role in sacrificing over 7,600 lives to liberate the Dutch from Nazi occupation, which included feeding starving civilians and protecting the Dutch royal family.

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

And we have another important guest in the public gallery: Jocelyn [*phonetic*] Baker, granddaughter of the honourable member for Point Douglas, the Minister of Housing, Addiction and Homelessness (Ms. Smith).

And we welcome you here today as well.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Manitoba's Agri-Food Processors Single-Window Project Approval Model

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Honourable Speaker, this Premier continues to try to sell Manitobans on a hypothetical LNG project in Churchill, a project with no confirmed investment, no approvals, no realistic timeline.

Meanwhile, back here in the real economy, Manitoba families are facing the highest food inflation in the country, and the producers who actually grow and process that food are being held back by red tape.

Why is this government forced—focused on chasing headlines instead of supporting the industries that actually feed Manitobans?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, I'm so happy. Every day, I get a chance to talk about the generational opportunity that is the Port of Churchill. It's going to power our economy for the future generations. It is going to unlock wealth in Saskatchewan and Alberta too. Western Canada has so much of the economic engine for our country's success. As we push back against Donald Trump and we build up our country, making sure the Port of Churchill is a part of that is a huge priority for this government.

And you know who else supports the Port of Churchill? Farmers. We're going to ship so much grain. We're going to import so much fertilizer. New marketing opportunities including the global ag tech exchange investment that our government has made. [*interjection*]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Good times are here for farmers. And yes, there are more farmers on the NDP side of the House than there are on the PC side of the House.

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

**Mr. Narth:** There you have it, Honourable Speaker: chasing headlines. No confirmed investment, no approvals and no realistic timeline.

But what is realistic is what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has to say, that 90 per cent of agribusinesses say that red tape is hurting productivity and 70 per cent wouldn't recommend that sector to the next generation.

That's concerning, Honourable Speaker. That's not a future economy; that's an industry in decline. Other provinces are streamlining approvals with a single-window model that builds projects faster.

Why won't this government implement a single-business service desk that actually supports Manitoba's agri-food processors instead of driving them out of—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Kinew:** I love Churchill. I have no hesitation to mention Churchill. It's probably one of the most consequential infrastructure projects that we can imagine for the Prairies. It's a generational opportunity. It's the kind of infrastructure we'll be talking about for decades to come because it's opening up a new trade route. So much opportunity for Manitoba.

I see a role quite clearly in my mind for Manitoba when we say that we want to build Canada strong. But don't take it from me, Honourable Speaker. These are the words, verbatim, spoken just yesterday by Canada's federal finance minister in support of our Port of Churchill.

I'll table the articles from the newspaper of record so that he and his staff can hear more about the good news.

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

**Mr. Narth:** Honourable Speaker, quotes from a finance minister that's running our entire country into the ground, not just this Finance Minister that's driving the province into the ground. [*interjection*]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Narth:** Food prices don't rise by accident; they rise because this government has made it harder to produce, process and move the food. Beef prices are up double digits. Herd sizes are shrinking. Value-added processors are leaving our province. Not only is this happening under this government's watch; this is happening because of this government's action.

When will this government realize that when they don't support producers or processors, they make food more expensive for all Manitobans?

**Mr. Kinew:** I'm honoured to take a question about food prices to remind everyone that on Canada Day of this year we're taking all the tax off of all food and drinks for all grocery stores, corner stores, mom-and-pop stores everywhere in Manitoba.

And when we're talking about the price of beef—you know, we're getting to grilling season; slowly, but surely, we're getting to grilling season—we know that one of the ways that we can help beef producers generally, but help them keep beef affordable for you, is by freezing Crown land lease rates. This budget does it for the third year in the row. What did they do? They raised the price of Crown land leases for 300 per cent.

It's a good thing we have the king of Crown lands, the minister, the MLA for Dauphin, freezing it, making life more affordable and lowering food prices.

\* (14:00)

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

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Question period is a time for opposition to bring up questions, concerns and struggles Manitoban families are facing under this NDP government, and 99.9 per cent of the time, this NDP government refuses to answer the question and simply dodges it, just like the Premier did right now.

But there is that 0.1 per cent of the time that this government listens to us, listens to Manitobans. Manitobans are struggling right now.

Will the Premier listen to them? There is time for the Premier to make a real difference when it comes to affordability for Manitoban families. Families are struggling to put food on their table, to put their kids in school and play sports, to do anything that a family wants to do in Manitoba.

So, will the Premier commit today to supporting our amendment that calls for the basic personal tax

exemption to be increased to give families \$3,000 back in their pockets?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** What happened to the other guy? He was more entertaining.

When we're talking about food prices, we're taking action. We're taking all the tax off of food and drinks at all the grocery stores. That's everywhere in Manitoba.

And this is something that they never did. And you hear him trying to attack and saying that grocery prices aren't a top priority? Well, that tells you exactly what the PCs have in mind. If they ever get anywhere near power again, they're going to put the taxes back on groceries; they're going to make the trip to grocery stores more expensive.

We're cutting gas taxes. Guess what they're going to do? They're going to raise the gas tax. They charged 14 cents a litre every single day that they were in office. And if you're talking about your housing costs, mortgages, paying rent, we've got the biggest rebates Manitobans have ever seen. What are they going to do? They're going to roll them back and pay their rich friends, just like they always do.

Seven and half years of you falling behind—we had enough. We're working together; we're saving you money; we're building a stronger tomorrow.

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

**Mr. Khan:** By that answer there, it's clear that this Premier has no idea what Manitoba families are going through. How could he? He gets driven around all day in an Escalade, he has RCMP guarding him 24-7, he lives in a \$1-million house, he flies—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —on private planes and someone else does his grocery shopping. So how could the Premier understand what you're going through? He simply doesn't.

Saving a family 7 cents on a can of pop or a bag of chips is not helping Manitoba families. Saving someone 2 cents on a litre of milk is not making a real difference to Manitoba families.

You know what is? Getting a family back \$3,000. The Premier can stand up in his place today and support our resolution to increase your basic personal tax exemption to \$30,000 and give families \$3,000 back.

Will he take that opportunity to do it today?

**Mr. Kinew:** I want to thank the member for mentioning another thing that we're doing to save you money, because I almost forgot. That's right; we froze the price of milk in Manitoba this year. What are your priorities? Well, I would think saving money at the grocery store is right up there with fixing health care. That's why we're fixing health care and we're taking all the tax off of groceries everywhere that food is sold in Manitoba.

But there's more. We're saving you money on your housing costs with the renters' refund. It's not going to just come at tax time; we're going to mail out cheques to save you money when you need it, when you have to pay month—when you have to pay rent every month throughout the year. We're focused on saving you money.

On that side of the House, they're focused on themselves and the dwindling seat count that they have with the remaining PC MLAs who could stick with them.

We say never mind to that; let's focus on the bright future. Let's focus on a more affordable economy with better health care. Let's keep working together.

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

#### **Manitoba's LNG Export Project Operational Timeline Concerns**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Let's recap what the Premier said. Health care is worse under his NDP government. Education property taxes are higher under this NDP government. Inflation is the highest in Canada under this NDP government. And Manitoba's economy is ranked dead last under this NDP government.

Now the Premier has magically promised a LNG will be shipping out of Churchill in the next three years—in the next three years. Manitobans and Canadians know that's at least a 10- to 15-year project. There's no firm commitment from the federal government, there's no private component and there is no guaranteed customers to purchase the products.

So, the Premier, again, is selling Manitobans something that is not going to happen for 10 to 15 years.

So, what will the Premier do when he can't ship LNG out of the province in the next three years to grow Manitoba's economy, or will it continue to crumble under his leadership?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Well, the so-called Leader of the PCs might want to turn two spots to his left and get the document that just molly wopped his colleague from La Vérendrye.

The federal government is on board. Manitobans are on board. The private sector loves the opportunity that we're bringing forward.

Here's what we're focused on: saving you money at the pump, saving you money at the grocery store, opening emergency rooms—that's right; there's more ERs today than there were under the PCs—hiring health-care staff; there's more health-care staff in Manitoba today than there was under the PCs. And you know what else we got in Manitoba today? The lowest deficit in all the land.

So we're making progress when it comes to the economy and it comes to health care. All they have is doom and gloom. Let's let them wallow in their misery while we build up this wonderful province together.

#### **Support for Small Business in Manitoba Call for Tax Relief and Reduced Regulations**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Manitoba small businesses are suffering under this NDP government.

Let's take a look at their record. The NDP drove up property taxes for small businesses by eliminating all property tax rebates on commercial properties. They gutted regulatory accountability legislation and have allowed costly red tape to grow unchecked. They even excluded small businesses from the only half-baked affordability measure they could come up with in their last budget.

Why does this NDP government continue to show such disdain for Manitoba's small businesses, the very people who employ Manitobans and drive the province's economy?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Honourable Speaker, we continue to invest in growing our economy, which we know small businesses are the lifeblood of. That's why we brought forward our small business security tax rebate, which is a program to help them address their concerns.

We also brought forward a payroll tax cut to actually bring small businesses off of the payroll taxes, allowing them to keep more money to reinvest in their small businesses.

And that's why we're taking the big swings with a vision to Churchill, to make sure that all small businesses have more opportunities to export out of the great Port of Churchill.

This is our plan for small business to thrive, workers to thrive and for us to grow our economy ahead. They don't understand that vision. They speak against it. They speak against affordability and the Port of Churchill.

Instead, we'll keep delivering for the—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Cook:** Small businesses are voting with their feet. For six consecutive quarters in Manitoba, business exits have outpaced new business starts. Small businesses are fleeing Manitoba because this NDP government is actively working against them, and that's bad news for Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, 98 per cent of businesses in Manitoba are considered small, and they employ nearly half of Manitoba's workforce. They are a top economic driver in our province, and the disregard that this NDP government has shown them is beyond troubling.

Will the NDP finally stop ignoring small businesses and do something to stop the flow of small businesses who are leaving Manitoba under their watch?

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker, I'm happy to make sure we extend a hearty handshake to all small-business owners here, especially because it is Small Business Month—the bill brought in by our wonderful member and colleague for Seine River—happy to be celebrating and working with all small businesses. And to that end, I'm happy to also say that we added nearly 11,000 new jobs into our economy, many of whom are working in small businesses and right across Manitoba.

We're there for workers, we're there for small businesses, and our government will continue to work to build up a strong economy along all small businesses right across Manitoba. We'll do this for this generation and the next generation of workers and small-business leaders.

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

**Mrs. Cook:** The solutions are there; small businesses have presented them to this NDP government. If only the NDP government would listen and act. They're asking for real cost relief, reduced red tape and supporting workforce development.

\* (14:10)

And what do they get instead from the NDP? They get increased costs to their businesses, new red tape at record rates and cuts to post-secondary programs designed to grow Manitoba's workforce.

Instead of making it more difficult for small businesses to survive and thrive, will the NDP finally listen to the solutions put forward by small businesses themselves and commit to providing small businesses with real cost relief and reducing red tape today?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, Honourable Speaker, I'm happy to continue to work alongside small businesses and make sure that they know and all Manitobans know we're reducing red tape for small businesses, we are providing more supports for small businesses, we continue to invest in our small-business community.

In fact, we have more workers this month than last month, 11,000 new workers in our system. And I think, Honourable Speaker, one of the most telling signs is that members opposite can't even bring forward a small-business example of rejection or any sort of red tape. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Moses:** Members opposite refuse to do so.

Instead, we'll work with small businesses every single day, making sure they have the supports they need, making sure that we grow our economy in a way that's effective for them, listening to them—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

### **Support for Small Business in Manitoba Call for Tax Relief and Reduced Regulations**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, we can give the members opposite a list of what small businesses are presenting to our caucus: that the NDP has actually increased red tape and taxation on those businesses. So if the members opposite want to know those numbers, we can certainly provide them because they're out there.

And in fact, CFIB has indicated that Manitoba has had six—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:**—consecutive quarters where more businesses are exiting than entering. That is a fact from the Canadian Federation for Independent Business. Costs are increasing while stability is decreasing. Fuel costs, hydro costs, property taxes have all increased under this NDP government. That is what is hurting Manitoba businesses.

Why has this Premier (Mr. Kinew) failed? Manitoba's business economy—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Honourable Speaker, the reality is we've already reduced taxes for small businesses by eliminating many of them off of our payroll tax. That's a huge step. We're working with small businesses to actually deal with the significant threat that they actually face, which is the tariff threat from the United States of America—the same tariff threat that members opposite thanked Donald Trump for bringing.

It's shocking that members opposite in the PC Party would be thanking Donald Trump for his tariffs, the tariffs that threaten small businesses right here.

Instead, what's our plan? We're helping them diversify to reach global markets, investing in the Port of Churchill so they can export more of their goods across the globe and supporting them each step of the way. That's how we grow an economy that works for small businesses, large businesses and workers right across Manitoba.

**Mrs. Stone:** And yet, when our team brought up what this government's plan was for tariffs last year, the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) said on the record that they would not talk in hypotheticals. And yet this Premier has again been silent about Trump's increasing tariffs on many more products that happened yesterday.

Instead of creating an environment for businesses to grow, this NDP is hiking taxes and red tape for small businesses. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:** Education property taxes are the highest in Canada and the highest Manitoba residents—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:**—and businesses have ever seen.

This Premier has been completely silent on support for small businesses. The CFIB and the Chambers of Commerce all indicated the lack of support in this government's budget.

Why is this Premier ignoring the—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Moses:** Well, Honourable Speaker, we've clearly called out Trump and the tariff threats. They impact small businesses here in Manitoba. We don't like him. We don't want to see him.

But members opposite, they're silent on Donald Trump. Where do they stand? We have the member opposite, leader of the official, thanking Donald Trump. We have members from the party wishing to become the 51st state or saying that they should be part of Trump's team.

Now—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Moses:**—let the member opposite clearly state for the record in her next opportunity that, where does she stand when it comes to Donald Trump? Is she on team Trump or is she on team Manitoba Business? She has an opportunity to do that in her next statement. I encourage her to be clear for Manitobans on her record.

While she's figuring it out, we'll continue to work for small businesses right here—the business community—and growing our economy every single day.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** Unlike this minister, we are standing up for businesses in Manitoba. We're standing against the tax hikes that this NDP government has created. We're standing against the increase in red tape that small businesses are currently facing.

So I ask the minister: Trump just announced an increase of tariffs on many more industrial products. Where is their plan and what can Manitoba businesses expect from this NDP government?

**Mr. Moses:** Well, we clearly didn't hear her denounce Trump and his policies on tariffs.

On our side of the House, we'll clearly say that the tariffs are no good for our economy. We don't like them, we don't support them. We're supporting our businesses here in—to grow in spite of those terrible tariffs which, apparently, they on the other side support.

Our plan is to continue to diversify our business community. That's why we've doubled our export support program. We removed the equipment—PST from all equipment for manufacturing. That's why we're investing our \$50-million trade growth investment fund. And that's why we're investing in the Port of Churchill: to help all of our businesses in Manitoba reach global markets.

This is our plan, Honourable Speaker. Manitobans should know this by now. Obviously—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

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

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Let's get something very clear here. This NDP government is taking more taxes from you. Every time you put in a hard day's work, this NDP government is there with their hands out, taking more money out of your back pocket.

And what are they getting for it? Nothing. Health-care wait times are worse, taxes are up, and our economy is dead last in Canada under this NDP government.

But this government, this NDP government, will pat themselves on the back for saving you 7 cents on a bag of chips or a can of pop. We on this side of the House have proposed real measures to make your life more affordable by giving you back \$3,000 of your hard-earned money.

Will the Premier do the right thing today and stand up and support our resolution to call for an increase in your basic personal tax exemption to \$30,000, giving you back \$3,000 in your pockets?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** It's right there in black and white in this year's budget: Taxes are going down across the board by tens of millions of dollars. We're saving you money.

And just watch, the PCs will vote against it, unveiling their plan. After we cut the taxes on groceries, they're going to put it back in place. After we've cut the gas tax, they're going to put it back in place. After we've brought real tax relief to homeowners and renters, they're going to hike the taxes on you, the blue-collar and the middle class.

They're with the rich. They're with Donald Trump. We're with you. Let's keep working together to build up a strong Canada.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Every Manitoban pays taxes on their income. Every Manitoban under this NDP government now pays more taxes on their income. The first \$15,780 you earn is not taxed, but under this NDP government, they've frozen that rate. And with the increase of inflation, you are now paying more taxes under this NDP government.

We on this side of the House have called for moving that basic personal tax exemption amount up to \$30,000, meaning that the first \$30,000 you make, you will not get taxed on, saving you and your family \$3,000—not 7 cents on a can of pop, not 2 cents on a litre of milk—\$3,000 you will save on your income.

Will the Premier do the right thing and support families that are struggling the most by giving them back \$3,000, or will he just stand up and grin and smile and laugh at you like he's done all along?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, we're saving you money at the grocery store. We're saving you money at the pump. We're giving you a refund on your rent payments. And we're helping you when it comes to your housing costs. It's right there in black and white. You look at the tax measures page in the budget this year. Taxes have gone down tens of millions of dollars.

\* (14:20)

How about with their plan? They have no idea. No idea. They're just making it up and asking folks to trust them. But can you trust them when it comes to candidates like the recently nominated Michael Zwaagstra in Steinbach? He wrote on February 26, quote, that he stands firm against those promoting the narrative that abortion is simply health care. He also wrote a column saying that Roe v. Wade should be overturned.

Well, it seems like the Leader of the PCs is not the only one who supports Donald Trump. Their new Steinbach candidate wants to roll back Roe v. Wade. I'd like the member in his next question to state on the record whether he supports abortion or not.

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

**Mr. Khan:** No one believes the Premier. He is deflecting and dodging every single question when it comes to this economy and making life more affordable for Manitobans. I'm asking the Premier if he will support a resolution to make your life easier, and he won't

answer that question. Instead, he wants to talk about 2 cents of savings on one litre of milk.

Manitoban families, at a record number, are within \$200 of insolvency. Manitobans are visiting food banks at record numbers. Manitobans are struggling under this NDP government. He wants to stand up and make jokes and not answer the question, Honourable Speaker.

The question, again, is simple for the Premier: will he commit today to putting \$3,000 back into your pocket? Or will he continue to sprinkle pennies across the floor, making you think that this NDP government is entitled to tax you more, make your life harder, health care worse, destroy our economy and destroy the future of this—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, Honourable Speaker, we're saving you money at the grocery store. We're saving you money at the gas pump. We're also saving you money with your housing costs, and we're going to keep doing it.

We're also going to keep standing up for a woman's right to choose. This is non-negotiable. Every single candidate on our side of the House agrees with this, but not on their side of the House. This leader approved a candidate in Steinbach who wrote a column in the Carillon.

I'll share it for the member for Fort Whyte. That's actually the paper in Steinbach, in southeast Manitoba. He's probably never seen it. But the title said *Roe v. Wade* should be overturned. He argued in that column, and I quote, *Roe v. Wade* fails to withstand moral or legal scrutiny.

Well, there you go. With the PCs, it's a slow walk towards the policies of Donald Trump. Unless, of course, the member wants to rise and condemn the comments of his candidate for Steinbach.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

#### **Manitoba's Apprenticeship Ratios Concerns About Limited Opportunities for Workers**

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** Since the Kinew government cut the apprenticeship ratio, the data is clear. New apprentice registrations fell from 3,128 to 2,730, a drop of nearly 400 in a single year. And active apprentices declined from 11,878 to 11,628.

At a time when Canada has declared the trade shortage a national priority, why is this NDP government limiting opportunities for Manitoba workers?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Honourable Speaker, in a time when we are building nation-building projects, when we're doubling down on investment in skilled trades, I want to make sure Manitobans know that the Manitoba government is here to meet the moment.

That's why we had a 40 per cent increase to our funding to apprenticeship training in this year's budget, a 40 per cent increase to technical training. That means more Manitobans can get trained in the skilled trades than ever before.

And, actually, we've seen that in our numbers, where we've had a 23 per cent increase in folks attending technical training compared to just two years ago. That's real dollars, real results to make sure that real Manitobans have more opportunities to work here in this great province.

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

**Mr. Guenter:** You know, only an NDP minister would say spending more money to get fewer apprentices is a success. And that's exactly what he did.

But following the tragic workplace accident in 1999, 27 years ago, the response by the PC government of the day was to make electrical trade a compulsory trade. That means that an individual must be either an apprentice or a journeyman to work as electrician. It is that change that has made electrical training safer, not a change in ratios. In fact, Manitoba is one of the few provinces to have a one-to-one apprenticeship ratio. Most provinces have a two-to-one or even three-to-one ratio.

So, if it's not really about safety, why is this NDP government again limiting opportunities for Manitoba workers?

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Moses:** —I want to take a moment to thank Cindy Skanderberg for her advocacy to ensure that there's more safety in the trade of electricians. The death of her—the tragic death of her son, Michael Skanderberg, led to the one-to-one ratio and ensuring that more electricians and more tradespeople can go through safe training.

That's what our government is prioritizing: safe training, enhanced training, so that more people have opportunities for higher quality training when it comes to the trades.

And in terms of the numbers, we're actually seeing them increase with more people going through technical training last year than ever before. It's a 23 per cent increase than the previous year; a 25 per cent increase than two years ago. This is our track record: more people going through the trades, more people going through training, more people getting safer training. And we've got the record—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Guenter:** There's a glut of apprentices going through the system right now thanks to the previous PC government and the opportunities that were made available to Manitoba workers, and so that is what the minister should be acknowledging.

For rural contractors, this isn't an abstract policy debate; it's a daily reality. A small crew with two or three journeypersons can only bring on two or three apprentices under the current rules. Go back to two-to-one and we can double that. These are real jobs, real careers and real futures for young people in communities across Manitoba. The Province should be making it easier for our members to bring young people into the trades, not harder. That's Shawn Wood with the Construction Association of Rural Manitoba.

So will this minister listen to the experts—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Moses:** Well, first, member opposite says there's not enough apprentices, then he says there're too many. While he's trying to figure out what approach he's going with in the next chance he has a chance to question, I'll let him and all Manitobans know that we actually certified more journeypeople last year than ever before, a 9 per cent increase over the last two years.

And if he wants to know the specific trades, I'll let him know: we saw when it comes to aircraft mechanic journeyperson, those numbers went up; construction electrician, they went up; domestic gasfitter, they went up; industrial mechanic, they went up; machinist went up; ironworker went up; plumber went up; power electrician went up; steam fighter—pipefitter went up.

These are all more apprentices in our system today—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

### **Breast Cancer Screening Lowering Screening Age to 40**

**Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East):** Honourable Speaker, when it came to health care under the failed PC miserable government, women in Manitoba were told to wait longer and to settle for less—*[interjection]*—I'm glad the folks behind me think this is funny if—because women's health care is not a laughing matter.

But our government is putting women's health first and acting to improve early detection and save lives.

Can the best Minister of Health and seniors and long-term care in Canada please tell Manitobans more about this important work to expand access to breast screening—breast cancer screening for women across Manitoba?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I want to thank my colleague from Kildonan-River East, my good friend, for that wonderful question.

Honourable Speaker, our government is putting women's health care first. After years of cuts and being attacked by the PCs, we have lowered the self-referral breast cancer screening age to 45, and we are lowering it to 40 by the end of this year because we know that early detection saves lives. And, through Bill 32, we're expanding screening across Manitoba and making it easier for all women across our province to get care sooner.

\* (14:30)

We listen to advocates, we listen to women and we're taking real action to deliver care to Manitobans that they deserve.

Much done. More to do. And too much to lose if we ever go back to the anti-women Manitoba PCs.

### **Waste Water Infrastructure for Morden Funding Request for System Expansion**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Honourable Speaker, this government has failed my constituency. After being in office for two and half years, they have failed to meet the community where they're at and address the biggest concern impacting my constituents: the lack of waste water infrastructure.

In Morden, local waste water capacity has brought development to a standstill. We have a booming population. We have entrepreneurial spirit to develop and for growth. We just need this government to come to the table.

When will the city of Morden receive support for their waste water project from this government?

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations):** That's an easy answer: We started investing in Morden's water and waste water five months ago. We did that. I was proud at AMM for the \$22-million investment in the Pembina Valley Water Co-op, the \$4 million between the—line between Morden and Winkler. I was also really excited and happy to welcome Mayor Penner, Reeve Thiessen and Mayor Siemens into my office to talk about this very project.

I'm very happy with the progress that the town of Morden has undertaken to get this project advanced. We're willing to work with them because that's what we do. We don't shut people out; we bring people in.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** Honourable Speaker, putting a pipe between two cities does not meet the need of a whole city's water needs—waste water needs. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) acknowledged Morden's waste water crisis in December of 2024, even making light of it at a Chamber event that I attended. Sixteen months later, nothing has changed. That shows who's truly not listening to my constituents.

Our local council is still waiting on a decision from the Water Services Board, so when will the minister provide an answer and give them the funding they need for the waste water infrastructure project?

**Mr. Simard:** I want to thank the member opposite for making a number of important points: that the project is at the Manitoba Water Services Board and that we are working on a future for this project.

I mean, it's fairly clear by their statements that we're continuing to work with Morden, with the Pembina Valley region, to make sure that water and waste water in this very important driver of our economy is being taken care of.

And I guess I would just go a step further: We have to look at the offer that we're putting out to Manitobans. The people that you can trust to sit with, to work with, to get projects done—that's us; that's not them. It's very obvious with the work that we're doing

and that we'll continue to do. We are on the side of Manitobans—all Manitobans.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** Honourable Speaker, the lack of waste water infrastructure in Morden cannot be delayed any longer. While the minister treats us as a low priority for our community specifically, for many of the—of my constituencies, it's urgent. We are at full capacity. Homes cannot be built, businesses cannot grow and the community development has stopped.

While the minister commit—will the minister commit to meeting with local leaders today to discuss the actual funding for the project of the waste water project in my constituency?

**Mr. Simard:** I'll meet with them again. I'll continue to meet with them until this project is done. But we will continue to put that offer in front of all of Manitobans, including those in the Morden region, that we sit with you, that we work with you and we get these projects done, just like we did with RSR, just like we'll continue to do at NEWPCC, just like we continue to do at the City of Brandon.

When we sit beside people and we talk about what the future may hold for their communities, we do that as an honest broker working toward a shared vision for this province, one that includes everyone.

I can tell you, Honourable Speaker, that I don't see that from the opposite side. I don't see a shared 'vision' for Manitoba; all I see is division. And we put that offer—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired. *[interjection]*

Order, please.

Time for oral questions has expired.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** But there's some guests in the gallery I'd like to introduce.

We have seated in the public gallery Kiran Hayer, Gagan Veer and Megha, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu).

We welcome you here today.

## PETITIONS

### MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):**

I wish to present the following petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in Portage regional health

facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

\* (14:40)

Honourable Speaker, this has been signed by Nicola Evans, Jo-Ann Ewen, Richard Callamack *[phonetic]* and many, many other Manitobans.

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

*Mr. Diljeet Brar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

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

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

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

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

closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

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

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

Honourable deputy Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Eilis Dunn, Karen Cyrus [*phonetic*], Ian Alford and many, many more Manitobans.

#### **Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The intersection of provincial truck highway 75, PTH 75, and Provincial Road 305, PR 305, at Ste. Agathe, has become an increasingly dangerous for motorists and pedestrians.

(2) Over the past seven years there have been at least 20 accidents at this location, resulting in injuries and fatalities.

(3) This intersection is heavily used by community members, commuters and commercial traffic, making safety improvements critical.

(4) Immediate action is needed to mitigate accidents and prevent further loss of life.

(5) An in-service road safety review was completed in 2022, which included recommended improvements but no action plan.

(6) Immediate action and implementation on the maintenance issues and short-term strategies identified in the 2022 study are needed.

(7) Development of an action plan with timelines for the medium-term strategies identified in the 2022 study is required.

(8) Installation of traffic lights or a controlled signal system will make the intersection safer.

(9) Additional strategies, such as reduced speed limits approaching intersection and the addition of rumble strips to alert drivers of the upcoming intersection, will save lives.

(10) Construction of dedicated turning lanes to reduce collision risk and other traffic calming designs will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities at the intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to undertake safety improvements at the intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305 at Ste. Agathe.

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize measures that will reduce accidents and fatalities, including, but not limited to, those outlined in the 2022 in-service road safety review.

This is signed by Denis Baudry, Kim Baudry, Alain Baudry and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **Placement Vetting for Elderly Persons Housing**

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Yes, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba Housing will be placing homeless people and people with multi-layered mental illnesses and addictions into what we have—or what we have always been known as seniors housing.

(2) Manitoba Housing is placing people in elderly persons housing, EPH buildings, without vetting them.

(3) There is no minimum age limit stated on the Manitoba Housing information page for elderly persons housing buildings.

(4) The tenant service co-ordinator and/or building manager of P-H—or EPH buildings should be given the right to deny applicants based on their first-hand knowledge of the applicant being homeless, having multi-layered mental illnesses and/or addictions or any other reason that they are aware of that could cause potential harm to residents.

(5) Proper vetting should include a criminal record check, a vulnerable persons record check and the consent of the tenant service co-ordinator and/or the building manager of the elderly persons housing building.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

\* (14:50)

(1) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to use seniors housing for what it was intended: the seniors.

(2) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to require a minimum age of 55 years for residents in a elderly persons housing, EPH, building; and

(3) To urge the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness to engage in proper vetting of all applications of people desiring to live in elderly persons housing buildings.

This petition has been signed by Margaret Legendre, Diane Stillborn, Cynthia Bohemier and many, many other fine Manitobans.

#### **Provincial Trunk Highway 34**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) PTH 34 runs nor-south in the south-central region of the province. It is the main highway for the towns of Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Holland, serving as a main corridor for semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school bus routes.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by June Evans, Kylon Cesmystruk and Curtis MacKinnon and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba—to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition as is follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Melanie Bayley, Roy Magidurs [*phonetic*], Michelle Warren and many other Manitobans.

### **Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not

used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

\* (15:00)

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This petition has been signed by Alexander Brown, Preston Houle, Isaiah Myron and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

### **Provincial Road 210**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Marlene Charette, Larry Charette, Dino Gaimmarco [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders**

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not

used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

And this petition has been signed by Keely Chiponski, Marilyn Fraser, Tatyana Harder and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

### **Medical Assistance in Dying**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba—oh, sorry, forgot to read this—I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access 'mentical'—medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

\* (15:10)

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for mental health for all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide advice—or assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living and not death.

This petition has been signed by Judy Klassen, Isaac Klassen and Mark Sawatzky and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305**

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

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

(1) The intersection of Provincial Trunk Highway 75 and Provincial Road 305 at Ste. Agathe, has become increasingly dangerous for motorists and pedestrians.

(2) Over the past seven years, there have been at least 20 accidents at this location resulting in injuries and fatalities.

(3) This intersection is heavily used by community members, commuters and commercial traffic, making safety improvements critical.

(4) Immediate action is needed to mitigate accidents and prevent further loss of life.

(5) An in-service road safety review was completed in 2022, which included recommended improvements but no action plan.

(6) Immediate action and implementation on the maintenance issues and short-term strategies identified in the 2022 study are needed.

(7) Development of an action plan with timelines for the medium-term strategies identified in the 2022 study is required.

(8) Installation of traffic lights or a controlled signal system will make the intersection safer.

(9) Additional strategies, such as reduced speed limits approaching the intersection and the addition of rumble strips to alert drivers of the upcoming intersection, will save lives.

(10) Construction of dedicated turning lanes to reduce collision risk and other traffic calming designs will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities at the intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to undertake safety improvements at the intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305 at Ste. Agathe; and

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to prioritize measures that will reduce accidents and fatalities, including but not limited to those outlined in the 2022 in-service road safety review.

This petition has been signed by Kathie Gagnon, Josh Weidman, Pam Cadden and many, many Manitobans.

#### **Teaching Certification**

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

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

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering

well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoban students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early/middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendments removed senior years' credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor, early/middle years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor and early/middle years' credit requirements for specific subjects, including math, physical or biological science, English or French and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the facilities—faculties of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without sufficient training in core academic areas, thereby compromising the education that Manitoba students receive.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation that weaken subject-area requirements for teacher certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early/middle years requirements which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

This is signed by Crystal Malenko, Helen Denhard, Ted Denhard and many, many more Manitobans.

### Provincial Trunk Highway 34

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* (15:20)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Luke Lovejak [*phonetic*], Harlan Perchotte, Reed Sutherland and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Children with disabilities often require child care beyond the age of 12. Children with disabilities aged 12 to 17 face a gap in publicly available care programs.

(2) The current adolescent-care service model creates undue hardship on caregivers.

(3) While developing children may be entering into extracurricular activities, school clubs or spending time with friends independently, children with disabilities have reduced opportunities for such social and recreational opportunities due to the lack of spaces.

(4) The current self-managed adolescent-care models place additional workloads onto already stressed families, requiring parents to seek all alternative options and prove their need for care.

(5) The current adolescent-care system, as part of overall respite and support available to families, is failing families of children with disabilities, as identified in the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth's Bridging the Gaps report.

(6) To date, none of the nine recommendations it contains have been completed beyond 50 per cent.

(7) The recommendations in this report touch on many of the issues facing families, with adolescent care being put-being but a small component of their overall needs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to fully implement recommendations in the building-in the Bridging the Gaps report.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately implement official policies and procedures that are more respectful and collaborative, which also minimize harm faced by families seeking help from Children's disABILITY Services.

(3) To urge the Minister of Families to arrange for a full review of employment supports provided by Children's disABILITY Services for children with disabilities aged 12 to 17, including direct consultation with the impacted families and to explore a full spectrum of options to support families, empowering them to choose solutions that best fit their needs.

This petition is signed by Phil Sampano, Mallory Martyniw, Krystyn Kirkness and many, many more fine Manitobans.

### Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Tom Byrnes, Anita Major, Carol Lavallee and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Provincial Road 352**

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

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

(1) Provincial Road 352, PR 352, is a 87.5 kilometre–54.4 mile–route where it begins at Provincial Trunk Highway 5, PTH 5, near Birnie, Manitoba, and terminates at PTH 34 near Arizona, Manitoba, intersecting with the Trans-Canada Highway.

(2) The route is gravel for most of its length, with two paved sections: one from PTH 5 to Birnie; and the other from PTH 16 to Arden.

(3) PR 352 has had considerable amount of deterioration over the years with little to no regular road maintenance and has seen ruts and damage to the gravel sections, those of which are featured online at CAA's worst roads.

(4) The promotion of PR 352 weight restriction to an RTAC classification of 140,000 pounds weight restriction has caused further damage, as the route was only built to accommodate the original 80,000 pounds and has not seen upgrades to accommodate the increase. The 1.5-mile stretch on PR 352 from the community of Birnie is the main access off PTH 5 to the community.

(5) Residents in the area were advised these weight increases to PR 352 were due to commerce movement, although there is no commerce in Birnie.

(6) Within this stretch, there is a bridge that is damaged structurally and rests only five feet above the creek, causing it to sit in the water and deteriorate. With increased agricultural traffic, such as heavier trucks hauling grain and livestock, the bridge may not have the capacity to sustain further neglect.

(7) Community members have reached out and have spoken to civil servants. The issue must be resolved before it becomes a bigger problem, someone gets injured or an accident happens.

\* (15:30)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to meet RTAC road designation by providing upgrades and regular road maintenance to Provincial Road 352 in Manitoba, specifically the 1.5-mile stretch from Birnie to Provincial Trunk Highway 5 and ensure the road remains paved with asphalt and not reduced to gravel.

(2) To urge the provincial government to reduce load weights on PR 352 until the upgrades can be completed.

(3) To urge the provincial government to replace or repair the bridge located on the 1.5-mile stretch from Birnie to PTH 5 and to provide an integrity assessment.

This petition has been signed by Andrew Somers, Tracy Stewart, Jeff Stewart and many other fine Manitobans.

### **Provincial Trunk Highway 2**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Provincial truck–trunk highway 2 is a 315-kilometre highway that runs from Saskatchewan-Manitoba border to Winnipeg's Perimeter Highway.

A significant portion of PTH 2 runs through the constituency of Spruce Woods, from the border of the rural municipality of Pipestone and the rural municipality of Sifton to the border of the rural municipality of Victoria and the rural municipality of north-of-Norfolk Treherne.

(3) This route is historically significant, as it follows the original path taken in 1874 by the North-West Mounted Police in their march west from Fort Dufferin to Fort Whoop-Up.

(4) PTH 2 is a significant commuting route for Westman families and is also utilized by those in the trade, commerce, tourism, agriculture and agri-food industries.

(5) The condition of PTH 2, from the east side of the town of Souris straight down through the hamlet of Deleau, is in unacceptable state of disrepair.

(6) The newly appointed Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has confirmed for the department has no plan to refurbish this stretch of road until the '28-29 construction season.

(7) The minister outlined that the current '28-29 construction plan does not include the stretch of PTH 2 that runs through the town of Souris, but instead starts on the west side of town.

(8) The communities in the area have been clear that any reconstruction of PTH 2 must include the stretch that runs through the town of Souris.

(9) The minister and Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately prioritize reconstruction of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 in the upcoming construction season.

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 that runs through the town of Souris in its reconstruction plans.

This is signed by Kim Eissner, Mark Remillard, Rick Remillard and many, many more fine Manitobans.

### **Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders**

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that

repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

And, honourable deputy Speaker, this petition was signed by Anine [*phonetic*] Thomas, Ronald Green, Kelly Dupasquer and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** No more petitions? Grievances?

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Can you please call for the start of third reading of Bill 17, Bill 23, Bill 51, Bill 48 and Bill 49?

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** It's been announced that we will now consider concurrence and third reading of bills 17, 23, 51, 48 and 49.

### **CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS**

#### **Bill 17—The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act**

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I move, seconded by the Minister for Education, that Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act, be concurred—sorry—reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

\* (15:40)

**MLA Fontaine:** First, I would like to say miigwech to everyone who has worked to bring forward this important piece of legislation. Bill 17 is an important step in the implementation of recommendations by Justice William Burnett to strengthen protections for persons in care and adults living with an intellectual disability.

I also just want to say miigwech to Justice Burnett for his time and energy and expertise on his recommendations and on the report. It was lovely to be able to sit down with him and have these conversations, and I really do appreciate his hard work that he put into the report.

This is straightforward and common sense amendments to eliminate the first panel in the hearing process of the Adult Abuse Registry Committee while preserving procedural fairness for all involved. Bill 17 will amend the act and the corresponding process so the committee will now determine whether a person abused or neglected by a specified adult after a single hearing.

Alleged offenders will continue to have an opportunity to provide information to the committee, which will be reviewed alongside the investigation reports from the protection of persons in care office or the provincial investigation unit.

Strengthening protection for vulnerable adults is something our government takes very seriously. By streamlining the process of the Adult Abuse Registry Committee, work will be more efficient and will bring closure to victims and their families more quickly.

While this is a first legislative step in a fulsome response to the Burnett recommendation, further policy and legislative changes are already in development for future legislation.

I look forward to the support of this House in passing Bill 17.

Miigwech.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** The floor is now open for debate.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I am happy here to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act, which speaks to a responsibility that we all share here, the protection of vulnerable adults across our province.

And we all know that any effort to strengthen protection and safeguards for individuals who may not be able to advocate for themselves deserves careful and

thoughtful consideration. You know, it's speaking to or speaking for the Manitobans who, in many cases, rely on others to care, support and assist with their daily living and their care needs. And when we see that this trust is broken, there can be serious consequences, and sometimes life-altering, for these individuals.

It's important to understand the role of the Adult Abuse Registry. The Adult Abuse Registry Act establishes a mechanism that records the names of individuals who have abused or neglected vulnerable adults. This registry is used by government departments, employers and service providers to help protect those who may be at risk, particularly individuals receiving care in institutional or supported living environments.

When allegations of abuse or neglect are investigated, a designated officer prepares a report for the Adult Abuse Registry Committee. The committee then reviews the report and determines whether the individual responsible should be listed on the registry.

And, under the current legislative framework, this process can involve multiple steps or hearings before a final decision can be reached. And this is a process that is essential, often multiple stages, which creates delays in reaching outcomes; and in situations involving vulnerable individuals, delays can mean real consequences and continue to put risk at these people and further harm.

Bill 17 proposes amendments aimed at improving how abuse is reported, reviewed and addressed. In many ways, it also is a step forward. It's essential that these intentions translate into meaningful, respectful outcomes for all. Abuse of vulnerable adults is often hidden from public view. It doesn't always make the headlines, although recent cases reported in the media have reminded us that these situations do exist within our own communities, quite often hidden away in our homes, in care facilities, sometimes in places where individuals should feel the safest.

Adults living with disabilities, seniors and those in dependent caregiving situations are particularly at risk. Abuse can take many forms. It may be physical, leaving visible injuries. It can be emotional or psychological, causing deep and lasting harm that is far less feasible—or visible. It may involve financial exploitation, where individuals are often taken advantage of by those that they trust. And in many cases, this is abuse that is not limited to a single form, but instead a combination.

What makes this issue even more complex is that many victims are unable or unwilling to come forward. There could be fear of retaliation, feelings of isolation or even a lack of awareness that what they are experiencing is abuse, which can prevent individuals from coming forward and reporting. This is precisely why systems like the Adult Abuse Registry are so important. They provide that mechanism for accountability and help to prevent further harms.

Bill 17 introduces key changes that are worth highlighting. Among them is the goal of streamlining the review process for allegations of abuse or neglect. The bill proposes reducing these procedural delays by requiring a single hearing to determine a case, rather than multiple stages. At the same time, it seeks to maintain procedural fairness for individuals named in the reports, ensuring that due process remains intact.

In addition to these legislative changes, Bill 17 would require several operational adjustments, including updating the procedures that are used by the Adult Abuse Registry Committee to align with a single-hearing model; developing or refining regulations that govern how information is presented to the committee; and providing training for committee members and administrative staff on the revised processes. It will also be necessary to clearly communicate these procedural changes to the investigators, designated officers and the relevant departments to ensure consistency and understanding across the system.

If the—if this is implemented effectively, these changes could bring several important benefits, one of which could be a single-hearing process that has—could potentially reduce the delay in getting decisions made. Faster decisions mean that individuals who pose a risk to these vulnerable people can be identified sooner, put on the list sooner. And, again, that would strengthen the protection for these vulnerable individuals.

Secondly, these improved timelines enhance the safety in many care settings by ensuring that those who have committed abuse are identified and prevented from continuing to—continuing in positions of trust and care. Streamlining the procedures improves administrative efficiencies, reducing complexity and workload for those responsible for managing the system.

\* (15:50)

Finally, clearer and updated language within the legislation could improve the legal clarity, making it easier to understand and apply this moving forward.

While these outcomes are promising, it's also important that we approach this with a sense of cautious optimism, because legislation doesn't just always solve the problems. It's about the framework and the real impact that lies on the implementation of such.

One of the most critical questions we have to ask is whether it's necessary resources—will the necessary resources be in place to support the changes? Enhanced reporting systems often require reliable infrastructure. Is that something that is in place or could be in a timely fashion? There's an education and training component that could require both funding and co-ordination. Improving access to the registry depends on systems that are efficient, accessible and, of course, secure. And without the appropriate investment, even the well-designed legislation can fall short of achieving the purpose.

We have to also bring forward the bureaucratic delays that cannot stand in the way of justice. Families who are waiting for outcomes deserve timely resolutions. And when individuals who may pose a risk remain unlisted on the registry due to the procedural delays that lie within the system, there's the possibility that they could continue working in those care environments and posing risk for those that are unaware of this employee's history.

Another critical factor in Bill 17 is the public awareness. For the registry to be effective, Manitobans must not only know that it exists, but also understand how to recognize abuse and how to report it. This requires, again, a co-ordinated effort to educate the public through the awareness campaigns, 'outreach'—outreach initiatives and partnerships with a variety of community organizations and those environments where these people may reside.

And that collaboration, of course, is essential to the safety and the advocacy groups, caregivers, health-care professionals and organizations that work directly with these individuals.

Addressing adult abuse is not solely the responsibility of government. It's the shared responsibility of all people: communities, families, individuals. We all have a role to play in the protection of these people. We must work together to create a culture where dignity and respect are not optional, but they are

expected. A culture where vulnerability is met with compassion, care and not exploitation.

Again, community engagement will play a key role in achieving this. Conversations about adult abuse must extend beyond the legislative Chambers into community centres, workplaces, homes and environments. By bringing these discussions into the open, we can reduce stigma, increase understanding and encourage action.

Empowering individuals to report abuse is equally important. This means creating an environment where people feel safe, confident and that their concerns can be taken seriously. Reporting mechanisms must be accessible, and responses must be timely and effective.

At the same time, we must consider the broader systems that impact vulnerable adults. Access to health care, social services and, of course, housing and community supports all influence the level of vulnerability. When these systems are strong and responsive, individuals are less likely to find themselves in situations where there can be harm and abuse.

Bill 17 is an important step but must be part of a larger, more comprehensive approach. We must ask ourselves difficult questions. Are we doing enough to support caregivers? Are front-line workers receiving the resources that they need? Are we addressing the root causes of why the abuse is happening? What is the appeal process and what is there a mechanism in place for an individual who may have been wrongly accused?

Passing legislation is only the first step. We must ensure that this leads to real, measurable improvements in the lives of those that it's designed to protect. This requires setting clear expectations, monitoring the outcomes and being willing to adapt when necessary. It means maintaining communication with stakeholders and responding to feedback in a meaningful way. It also requires recognizing that this work is ongoing. Protecting vulnerable adults cannot be achieved through a single bill or initiative. It demands sustained commitment, continuous evaluation and a willingness to improve over time.

Bill 17 represents a meaningful step forward, strengthening protections for vulnerable adults in Manitoba. It reflects an understanding of the seriousness of issue and also to address it. The true measure, however, of this legislation will be found in its implementation.

Again, by working collaboratively with community organizations, front-line workers and Manitobans, we can build a system that truly protects those who are most vulnerable. It's about ensuring that every Manitoban, regardless of their circumstances, is treated with respect, care and compassion.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** Any other members wishing to debate?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

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

We would now consider concurrence and third reading—okay. Agreed and so ordered.

The motion is accordingly passed.

#### **Bill 23—The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act**

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** We will now consider concurrence and third reading of Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I move, seconded by the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, that Bill 23, The Advocate for Children and Youth Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Motion presented.**

**MLA Fontaine:** First and foremost, I'd like to say miigwech to Sherry Gott, Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth, as well as all of her colleagues and her leadership team at MACY. They do very important work, and they have a sacred responsibility to hear from families and from children and from youth, ensuring that, you know, children and youth are getting the resources and the supports that they deserve and that they need. And so I do want to lift them up for all of their really good hard work.

And I want to reflect a little bit, particularly on Red Dress Day, as well, that the advocate has a very strong leadership team around her, made up almost entirely of Indigenous women. And I want to highlight them on this day because it's important to have

Indigenous women in those roles—in those leadership roles. And I really do appreciate all of them.

This bill contains amendments that entrench new foundational concepts and the UN instruments in the preamble of the act to guide the advocate's work, also allow the advocate to enter into agreements and provide for ongoing legislative reviews to ensure the act continues to provide the best framework for the advocate to speak for Manitoban—Manitoba's children and youth.

I'm pleased to share with the House the advocate supports these amendments, and work is already under way in her office to make sure they are prepared to incorporate these changes into their work. This is a first legislative step to implement recommendations brought forward in the last legislative review. Work is continuing between my department, Indigenous Reconciliation and the advocate's office to continue to work on the next phase of recommendations.

\* (16:00)

I look forward to the support of this House in passing Bill 23.

Miigwech.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** The floor is now open for debate.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I'm pleased to rise here today to speak to Bill 23, amendments to The Advocate for Children and Youth Act.

While legislation like this often presents itself as progress—excuse me—Manitobans deserve to know whether it will actually change outcomes for children or simply adjust the language around a system that continues to fall short. At its core, the role of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth is not symbolic. It's not advisory in a casual sense. It exists because, unfortunately, even the best-designed systems sometimes fail. And when they fail, children are the ones that pay the price.

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

The real question before us today is not whether we support the advocate. Progressive Conservatives have always supported the advocate since we established the Manitoba advocate for youth—for children and youth as a fully independent officer of the Legislative Assembly in 2017. The question is whether this legislation meaningfully strengthens the system around them or leaves gaps in place.

In Manitoba, we are seeing a rising demand for advocacy services, not because awareness alone is improving, but because more families are struggling to navigate systems that are fragmented, complex and often inaccessible. When thousands of Manitobans are reaching out for help, the signal—that signals pressure within the system. When hundreds of cases require ongoing intervention, that signals complexity that the system is not resolving early enough. When dozens of children's death and serious injury reviews are conducted each year, that signals something else more serious: that prevention is not working that—the way it should.

These are not just trends. They point to a system that's reacting to a crisis instead of preventing it. And this is where I want to shift the focus here, because too often conversations about advocate's office focus on oversight after the fact.

Manitobans should be asking: Why are there so many cases reaching the point where oversight is needed at all? Why are families still struggling to access co-ordinated support before situations escalate? And why do we continue to see the same patterns repeat? Mental health challenges repeat; addictions, family instability, these are all repeated situations, case after case. Legislation fails to address upstream system failures that are incomplete.

Another reality we cannot ignore is the disproportionate impact on Indigenous children. This is not a new finding, it is a persistent one. And it reflects deeper structural challenges that extend beyond any single office or mandate. It must show up in how services are designed, funded and delivered, particularly in partnership with Indigenous communities themselves, because, without that, we are not addressing root causes, we are simply documenting them.

We also cannot talk about the well-being of children without talking about the realities that families are facing every single day outside of government systems. The rising cost of living is not just an economic issue, it's shaping the conditions in which children are now growing up in. When parents are stretched over to cover rent, groceries and basic necessities, that stress does not stay confined to just the household budget. It affects the stability of a home, it affects the mental health of a child and it affects the child's sense of security.

For many families, the margin of error has clearly disappeared. With these unexpected costs with a utility bill, transportation or school-related expenses,

this situation can quickly turn a family into a crisis. And we all know that when families are operating in a constant crisis and financial strain, we see the increased pressure onto the social services, into our schools and, of course, onto the health-care system.

In that sense, the challenges we are discussing are not just isolated from affordability, they're directly connected to it. When families are stretched, small problems escalate faster, and that is part of why we're seeing more families turning to advocacy services in crisis.

Our Progressive Conservative team is committed to stomping out child poverty today and every day. I'll always be happy to work with the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) to develop solutions to this crisis. If we're serious about improving outcomes for children, we can't limit our focus to how systems respond after things go wrong, we have to look at the conditions that make families more vulnerable to these crisis situations in the first place.

When those foundations like homes, family units, are all weakened and many families reach their breaking point, children come into contact with the very systems that the advocate is tasked with overseeing. Bill 23 speaks to oversight and accountability. It should also prompt a broader conversation: what is being done to reduce the pressures on families before the intervention is needed. Supporting children ultimately means supporting the environments they grow up in.

During our time in government, Progressive Conservatives took concrete steps to strengthen oversight for Manitoba's most vulnerable people. The passage of The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, we established a modern legislative framework that transformed the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth into an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly.

That change mattered. It meant that the advocate could do their work without interference, shining a light on the issues and holding the government accountable. But we didn't stop there. The PC team significantly expanded the advocate's mandate to go beyond child welfare, recognizing that young people interact with many systems, from mental health, addictions and into the justice system.

We gradually implemented broader investigative powers to match that expanded role, ensuring the advocate could follow cases wherever they led. In 2023, we strengthened oversight even further by

introducing mandatory reporting of serious injuries involving youth, helping ensure that critical incidents are no longer missed or overlooked. Importantly, they established a formal process to track government responses to the advocate's recommendations, creating a clear line of accountability and a mechanism to measure what the progress looked like.

There are elements here that aim to expand in collaboration between advocate and government bodies, and that sounds very reasonable, but collaboration is not the same as accountability. An advocate who's too closely into the systems oversees—risks being less effective at challenging them. They may see changes that blur the line that should be approached with caution.

Manitobans have seen reviews. The issue has never been a lack of recommendations, the issue's been a lack of consistent follow-through. So the real question is not whether a review will happen, it is whether the government will commit to acting on what the review finds and within what timeline. Without that accountability, review processes risk becoming procedural rather than meaningful.

The other issue that I want to address here within bill 17 is the—or, sorry, Bill 23, is the experience of families trying to access help, because many families, the challenge is not whether the services exist but where do they go to find the help. Where do they go to find the resources and how can they access them is important.

When they're told that their family's situation falls outside a mandate or when they're redirected between agencies, the system begins to feel less and less like they are supported. It's not a criticism of any office, it's a reflection, again, of a system that lacks clarity, co-ordination and accessibility. Legislation that touches the advocate's role should also be asking, how do we make the entire system easier to navigate, not just better at reviewing itself?

\* (16:10)

If this bill is to truly move things forward, it should be judged against a higher standard; not whether it updates language, not whether it references international principles, but whether it leads to measurable improvements in intervention—early intervention, service co-ordination, accessibility for families and better outcomes for children, because that's what Manitobans expect.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no further debate, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

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

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

### **Bill 51—The Public Sector Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity Governance Act**

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will move on to Bill 51, The Public Sector Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity Governance Act.

**Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt), that Bill 51, The Public Sector Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity Governance Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

#### *Motion presented.*

**MLA Moroz:** Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to rise today at third reading to speak once again to Bill 51 and to ask all members of this House to support its passage. Manitoba must begin to prepare itself for a wave of technological change that will both liberate and challenge us—not next year, not next month, now. Bill 51 begins that process, and it does so in a thoughtful and nimble manner.

Artificial intelligence is already being used across the public sector to support service delivery, to provide program support and to create administrative efficiency. At the same time, cybersecurity threats continue to increase in frequency and sophistication. Manitobans rightly expect that new technologies adopted by public bodies are used responsibly, transparently and securely, and that their rights as citizens are at the core of every decision government makes.

#### *The Speaker in the Chair*

Bill 51 provides a modern governance framework for both of those realities. It establishes a legislative foundation so that public sector entities can be held to clear and high expectations for the use of artificial intelligence systems. And it ensures strong cyber-

security practices, supported by strong oversight, standards and incident reporting.

Last week, during our legislative break, I had the opportunity to spend time in Thompson at the Linkages Conference and, in so doing, was able to hold the first of what will be many public consultations on Bill 51. I want to thank those who took the time to bring forward their perspectives and expertise. Their feedback reinforces the importance of a nimble and responsive framework, of building public trust, of reducing risk and ensuring a practical implementation across our diverse public sector.

What's more, Honourable Speaker, that consultation made it clear that this is not a case of one and done with regards to digital governance. Bill 51 is the beginning of a thoughtful and careful legislative process to protect our young people from negative impacts of growing up online, to hold powerful tech companies accountable to create safety-by-design platforms and to ensuring that Manitobans' data is protected and sovereign.

So, again, I want to emphasize the central point: Bill 51 sets the framework by which this work will be done. The detailed requirements will be established through regulation and technical standards, and those tools must be built carefully and in partnership with the public sector organizations that will implement them. That means engaging with municipalities, universities and colleges, school divisions, health authorities, agencies and Crown entities, front-line professionals and technical experts. It means a proportional risk-based approach so that expectations match the scale of the organization and the sensitivity of the systems involved. And it means clear guidance, realistic timelines and alignment with existing legal obligations, procurement practices, privacy requirements and sector-specific governance.

I also want to be very clear to those that may suggest that establishing guardrails means applying the brakes to innovation. I fundamentally disagree. Clear guardrails enable responsible adoption. They give public servants confidence, they help vendors understand expectations up front and they give Manitobans assurance that technology is being used fairly and safely. Guardrails are not the brakes to innovation, they are the steering wheel.

On the cybersecurity side, Bill 51 provides the ability to issue directives about—in relation to speed and co-ordination. When a serious vulnerability is identified or an active threat is unfolding, government needs a way to require timely, protective steps from

specific entities. This bill provides that tool while keeping the focus on practical measures that reduce risk and protect service continuity.

Ultimately, Bill 51 is about protecting Manitobans, protecting personal information, protecting the integrity of public programs and protecting the services people rely on each and every day. It's also about building and maintaining public trust, because when government uses new technology, the public must be able to understand the rules, the accountability and the safeguards. By passing Bill 51, this House will be taking a prudent, forward-looking step to modernize how the public sector manages emerging technology and cyber risk, and we will lead the country in doing so.

I encourage all members to support Bill 51 so we can move ahead with implementing a framework that helps public sector entities adopt AI responsibly, strengthen cybersecurity and keep Manitobans' trust at the center of innovation in our province.

Thank you. I look forward to the rest of the debate and the important work that's in front us.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** Transparency is essential to maintaining trust, especially as governments adopt more advanced technologies, and transparency requirements should be clearly defined and consistent across the public sector.

Bill 51 establishes a regulatory framework to guide how public-sector entities such as municipalities, education institutions and health-care authorities manage artificial intelligence and cybersecurity risks. The act enables the creation of regulations requiring these entities to adopt standardized practices for the use of AI systems and the protection of digital infrastructure. Areas that may be regulated include mandatory disclosure of AI systems being used, the development of internal accountability and oversight frameworks and formal reporting processes for cybersecurity incidents.

\* (16:20)

The legislation also allows for the introduction of operational standards to ensure consistency and safety in AI use and cybersecurity practices across the public sector, and the minister is granted authority to issue directives on cybersecurity matters when needed.

I want to be clear, Honourable Speaker: Manitobans deserve to know when and how AI systems are being used to make or inform decisions that affect their lives, and, as Progressive Conservatives, we support transparency in how AI and cybersecurity systems are

being used. Public institutions such as municipalities and educational institutions should be disclosing how they are using such systems.

And, with that, Honourable Speaker, I look forward to supporting this bill.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 51, The Public Sector Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity Governance Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 48—The Real Property Amendment  
and Planning Amendment Act  
(Land Conveyed for Public Purposes)**

**The Speaker:** We will now move on to Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes).

**Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery):** I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes), that Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for the third time and passed.

**Motion presented.**

**MLA Sandhu:** I'm very pleased to rise today for the third reading of Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes).

The Bill 48 addressed a long-standing issue involving public reserve land as statutory easement. Currently, once land is designated as a public reserve, a municipality cannot grant new easement. This limitation creates challenges when communities and developers need to place easement infrastructure, such as utility lines, in the most logical and cost-effective locations.

Stakeholders, including municipalities, the City of Winnipeg and industry partners, have consistently indicated that allowing statutory easement on public reserve land would support more orderly and efficient

development while still preserving the public purpose of these lands. These amendments will provide greater certainty, reduce the risk of accidental infrastructure damage, clearly assign maintenance responsibilities without requiring any new funding.

I look forward to the support of all members in passing this important bill.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I rise today to address Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act. At its essence, this legislation introduces amendments to The Real Property Act and The Planning Act.

While the changes are largely technical in form, they carry real-world implications for municipalities, developers and communities throughout Manitoba. In particular, the bill seeks to better define how land designated for public purposes may be used and introduces a mechanism to allow statutory easements to be placed on those lands for eligible parties. It also broadens the definition of allowable uses to explicitly include works of municipalities with the stated goal of supporting infrastructure development and offering clearer direction to local governments.

It is important to recognize the value in updating and clarifying legislation where uncertainty exists. Municipalities frequently encounter delays and administrative hurdles when rules are outdated, unclear or inconsistent. In that regard, efforts to reduce procedural barriers and improve efficiency can be helpful, especially in a province where infrastructure demands are increasing and timely project completion is closely tied to both economic growth and quality of life.

Municipal governments play a central role in delivering everyday services. They are responsible for maintaining roads, managing water and drainage systems, operating recreation spaces and supporting the infrastructure Manitobans depend on. If Bill 48 helps streamline how municipalities plan and carry out these responsibilities, that would be a constructive outcome. Expanding works of municipalities as an improved use of public reserve land may provide useful flexibility, particularly in communities experiencing growth or facing limited land availability.

Likewise, allowing statutory easements over public reserve lands, once properly registered, could create a more defined legal pathway for projects such as utilities, pipelines and drainage infrastructure. Formalizing these arrangements may help reduce ambiguity,

improve co-ordination between parties and lower the likelihood of disputes or project delays.

That said, while the intent to improve administrative efficiency is understandable, it is equally necessary to examine the broader consequences. Public reserve lands are not simply unused or surplus parcels, they are intentionally set aside for community benefit: parks, green space, buffers, recreational areas and other purposes that enhance neighbourhood livability and overall well-being.

With Bill 48 is that it may, in practice, make it easier to redirect the use of these lands. Although the bill does not explicitly remove existing protections, it does widen the scope of permitted uses without clearly outlining firm limits or decision-making criteria. This raises legitimate questions about transparency, consultation and how public interest will be safeguarded moving forward.

Communities place high importance on accessible green space and public reserves. These areas contribute to environmental health, support physical and mental well-being and help define the character of neighbourhoods. As urban areas expand, these spaces become even more valuable for long-term sustainability. Any changes affecting their use should therefore be approached with clear safeguards and meaningful public engagement.

The bill also authorizes municipalities, the provincial government and the Crown to grant statutory easements over public reserve lands. While this may improve flexibility, it also highlights the need for consistent standards and clear oversight. Without uniform guidelines there is a risk of uneven application across jurisdictions, potentially leading to confusion or unintended outcomes over time.

From a fiscal standpoint, this legislation appears to carry minimal direct costs for administration. However, the longer term or indirect effects, such as shifts in land use, changes to planning processes or impacts on infrastructure co-ordination, are harder to measure and should not be overlooked.

It is also important to consider the broader context in which this bill is being advanced. Many municipalities are under growing pressure, whether from population increases in some regions or infrastructural shortfalls in others. They are expected to do more with constrained budgets and rising costs. In that environment, any measure that genuinely improves efficiency deserves consideration, but it must still be balanced with careful planning and accountability.

In the case of Bill 48, several questions remain that would benefit from further clarity as the bill proceeds. For example, how will the government ensure that municipal use of public reserve land for infrastructure does not undermine community priorities? Will there be mandatory public consultation when such lands are affected by easements or changes in use? What reporting or oversight mechanisms will be used to track how statutory easements are applied?

It is also important to better understand how eligible grantees will be defined in practices. While the bill references existing frameworks under The Real Property Act, further detail on eligibility criteria would help ensure transparency, fairness and public trust in how access to public lands is granted.

Another issue is the cumulative impact of these decisions over time. While a single project affecting public reserve land may appear minor, repeated or incremental changes could significantly alter the availability and purpose of these spaces within a community. That underscores the importance of long-term planning and consistent oversight.

\* (16:30)

The government has suggested that this legislation will help accelerate development. While improved efficiency can be a valid objective, speed alone should not be the guiding principle. Development must still be grounded in sound planning, community input and sustainability. Expediency should not come at the cost of due process or the interests of residents who rely on shared public spaces.

It will also be important to assess how this bill aligns with the needs of individual municipalities. Some may welcome the additional flexibility while others may have concerns about the implications for land use and community planning. Those perspectives should help shape both implementation and any future amendments.

More broadly, Manitoba continues to face significant infrastructure challenges. Communities across the province require investment in roads, water systems, flood protection and public facilities. Legislative adjustments alone cannot resolve these needs. They must be paired with sustained funding, planning and long-term commitment.

In that sense, Bill 48 is only one component of a much larger framework. It may reduce certain procedural barriers, but it is not a substitute for comprehensive infrastructure strategy or meaningful

investment. It should be viewed as complementary to those broader efforts, not a replacement for them.

Bill 48 represents an administrative update with practical implications for land use and municipal planning. It aims to clarify existing legislation, provide additional flexibility and support infrastructure development. At the same time, the bill raises important considerations regarding the protection and stewardship of public reserve lands. It underscores the need for transparency, clear standards and accountability, as well as a careful balance between efficiency and the long-term interests of communities and the environment.

As this legislation passes today and receives royal assent, it would benefit from continued engagement with municipalities, stakeholders and Manitobans to ensure that its implementation strengthens public confidence while protecting the shared spaces that communities value.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** If there are no other—the honourable—no other—the honourable—if there are no other speakers, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes).

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

### House Business

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader):** On House business.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Agassiz, on House Business.

**Ms. Byram:** Could you please canvass the House for leave to transfer the sponsorship of private member's resolution No. 9, Calling on the Provincial Government to Prioritize the Struggles Facing Manitoba Families, scheduled for debate on Thursday, May 7, 2026, from the member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert) to the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson).

**The Speaker:** Is there leave to transfer the sponsorship of private member's resolution No. 9, calling on the provincial government to prioritize struggles

facing Manitoba families, scheduled for debate on Thursday, May 7, 2026, from the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert) to the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson)?

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

#### **Bill 49—The Business Practices Amendment Act**

**The Speaker:** So now, as previously announced, we'll move on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act.

**Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes), that Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now read for the third time and passed.

#### ***Motion presented.***

**MLA Sandhu:** I'm very pleased to rise today for the third reading of Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act. This bill responds to the growing concern about unfair business practices that use consumers' personal data to charge higher prices for the same goods or services.

At a time when many Manitobans are facing rising costs, especially for essentials like groceries, our government is taking action to improve affordability. Manitobans expect transparency and fairness when they shop. They deserve confidence that when they make everyday purchases they are treated equally and not charged more based on their personal data.

Bill 49 directly addressed this concern that some businesses use personal data to charge higher prices for same product or services. At best, this legislation would make it an unfair business practice for retailers to use personal data to increase prices for individual consumers. While strengthening these protections, the Bill 49 promotes fairness, enhances consumer confidence and supports a more competitive and transparent retail environment.

I ask all members to support this legislation.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I rise today to speak to Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act. This legislation proposes amendments to The Business Practices Act, addressing what is described as personalized algorithmic pricing. In practical terms, it seeks to regulate situations where businesses may use data, algorithms or automated systems to adjust

pricing for individual consumers based on personal information, behaviour or inferred willingness to pay.

The bill expands the definition of unfair business practices to include instances where consumers could be charged different prices due to data-driven profiling. It also introduces new definitions, including online retailers, online distributors and electronic shelf labeling systems.

In addition, it recognizes that unfair practices may occur through artificial intelligence, machine learning or algorithmic tools even when a transaction is not ultimately completed. It further establishes requirements for disclosure and consent where personalized pricing is used.

At its core, the objective of this legislation is consumer protection. Manitobans expect fairness in the marketplace. They expect pricing that is transparent, consistent and not influenced in ways that are hidden or difficult to understand.

It is also reasonable to recognize that technology is changing how commerce functions. Digital platforms, data analytics and automated decision-making are becoming more common in business operations. Governments must therefore consider whether existing consumer protection frameworks remain adequate in light of those developments.

That said, while the intent of Bill 49 is understandable, it is important to carefully examine its necessity, timing and practical impact. A key point that must be emphasized, it—there are currently no reported cases or documented concerns in Canada indicating that personalized algorithmic pricing is being used in a way that harms consumers in everyday transactions. There is no evidence presented of this being a present issue in the province's retail environment. In that sense, the bill is addressing a hypothetical or anticipated scenario, rather than a demonstrated problem that Manitobans are experiencing today. That distinction matters.

Bill 49 is largely preventative in nature. It is designed to regulate a potential future development in pricing practices rather than respond to an existing issue affecting consumers. While forward-looking legislation can have merit, it must still be balanced against current and immediate priorities.

Right now, Manitobans are facing real and ongoing cost-of-living pressures. Families are making difficult choices at grocery stores, at the gas pump and in managing household expenses. Affordability remains one of the most significant concerns across the

province. In that context, is it reasonable to ask what direct benefit this legislation provides today? Will it lower prices? Will it reduce household costs? Will it make everyday goods more affordable for Manitobans?

Based on its structure, the bill does not appear to have an immediate or measurable effect on affordability. Instead, it establishes a regulatory framework that may become relevant only if certain pricing practices emerge in the future. There is a clear difference between legislation that addresses a current and demonstrated issue and legislation that anticipates a possible future one.

\* (16:40)

There are also considerations for Manitoba's business community. The province includes a wide range of businesses from small local retailers to large online platforms. These businesses rely on clear, stable and predictable rules to operate effectively.

Bill 49 introduces new compliance requirements related to data use, pricing transparency and consent. While these provisions aim to protect consumers, they may also introduce additional administrative obligations, particularly for small businesses that may have limited capacity to manage complex regulatory frameworks.

It is also important to ensure that legitimate and widely accepted business practices are not unintentionally captured or discouraged. Many businesses use discounts, loyalty programs and targeted promotions as part of normal competitive strategy. These tools are generally well understood by consumers and contribute to market competition. As such, it will be important to clearly distinguish between harmful discriminatory pricing and standard promotional activity so that businesses are not left uncertain about what is permitted.

Another consideration is enforcement and implementation. Although the bill is described as having minimal fiscal impact, there will still be administrative responsibilities related to oversight, compliance monitoring and potential investigations. Over time, these responsibilities could evolve depending on how the framework is applied.

There is also a technical challenge involved in addressing algorithmic systems. Understanding how pricing decisions are made within artificial-intelligent or machine-learning models requires specialized expertise. Regulators will need the appropriate tools and knowledge to effectively evaluate compliance in this space.

Transparency provisions are another key element of the bill. Requiring disclosure and consent when personalized pricing is used is, in principle, a reasonable safeguard. However, its effectiveness will depend heavily on how clearly that information is communicated to consumers. If disclosures are overly technical or buried in lengthy terms and conditions, their practical value may be limited.

It is also important to recognize that Manitoba would be among the first jurisdictions in Canada to introduce legislation of this kind. While leadership in consumer protection is not inherently negative, it does place additional responsibility on the Province to ensure the approach is evidence-based, proportionate and adaptable as the landscape evolves.

There are several questions that merit further consideration as this bill advances. What specific evidence informed its development given the absence of reported issues in Canada? How will success be measured? What outcomes would indicate that the legislation is functioning as intended?

It is also important to consider public awareness. Consumer protection measures are only effective if Manitobans understand their rights and how those rights can be exercised. That will require clear communication, education and outreach beyond the legislation itself.

Another important factor is the balance between regulation and innovation. Data-driven technologies and digital tools have the potential to improve efficiency, enhance services and reduce costs. Regulatory frameworks should protect consumers without unnecessarily limiting innovation or competition.

Bill 49 is, in many ways, a forward-looking piece of legislation. Its intent to prevent potential unfair pricing practices in emerging digital environments is understandable and rooted in consumer protection principles. However, it does not address the immediate affordability challenges facing Manitobans today. It does not reduce costs, increase purchasing power or provide direct relief to families dealing with rising expenses.

I would encourage continued engagement with businesses, consumer advocates and technical experts to ensure the framework remains clear, practical and evidence-based. It is also important to maintain a strong focus on measures that address the immediate cost pressures Manitobans are experiencing.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak?

If not, the question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock?

**The Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2026**

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**