



Second 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. LXXIX No. 28B - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 18, 2025**

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

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
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
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	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	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
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>	Transcona	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

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

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

Routine proceedings, orders of the day—no.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 44—The Matriarch Circle Act and Amendments to The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act (Ribbon Skirt Day)**

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister for Women and Gender Equity):** I move, seconded by the Housing, Addictions and Homelessness Minister, that Bill 44, The Matriarch Circle Act and Amendments to The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act (Ribbon Skirt Day), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**MLA Fontaine:** Bill 44 will form a—formalize the role of the Matriarch Circle in legislation, ensuring women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse Manitobans from every geographic region, 2SLGBTQ2IA+ communities and various cultural backgrounds are represented. The Matriarch Circle comprises individuals with a wide range of lived and professional experiences, sharing knowledge and advice aligned with the expanded mandate of Women and Gender Equity Manitoba.

Additionally, Bill 44 will empower Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse relatives to exercise our right to cultural expression and celebrate our empowerment, strength and resilience, by proclaiming January 4 as ribbon skirt day here in Manitoba. Respecting the inherent dignity and worth of all Manitoba women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse individuals is a sacred responsibility we honour; Bill 44 affirms this.

Honourable Speaker, I'm happy to present Bill 44 for consideration and look forward to it passing unanimously.

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

**Bill 43—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act**

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 43, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wiebe:** Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 43 to the Legislature. The bill amends The Human Rights Code to expand the list of protected characteristics to include gender expression. Within Canada, the human rights laws in almost all provinces and territories prohibit discrimination based on gender expression. The proposed amendment would align the protected characteristics in Manitoba's Human Rights Code with the laws of other jurisdictions and with the federal human rights act.

This bill is about supporting all Manitobans, especially members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community who can be confident that their gender expression will be protected in our province. I look forward to the consideration of this bill by the House.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

**Bill 205—The Budget Impact Reporting Act**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 205, The Budget Impact Reporting Act; Loi sur la publication de rapports concernant les répercussions des mesures budgétaires, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wasyliv:** I'm proud to introduce The Budget Impact Reporting Act, a bill that increases government accountability by ensuring Manitobans can see how budget decisions affect economic and social inclusion, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.

Our tax system isn't fair to everyone, and tax changes can and have very different effects on different demographics. What benefits one group may disadvantage another.

This act requires the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) to publicly report on how our new taxes, government spending and financial policies impact gender equality, racial equity, poverty reduction and Manitoba's climate goals. It also asks them to highlight who is and isn't benefiting from tax changes, ensuring that no community is left behind in the decision-making process.

With this bill, we are committing to a future where economic prosperity and sustainability go hand in hand, ensuring that every Manitoban has the opportunity to thrive.

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

Committee reports?

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order.

### Point of Order

**The Speaker:** The Honourable First Minister.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Yes, just on a point of order.

Referring to rule 1(2), when the rules are silent, the parliamentary traditions prevail. And we do have a tradition in this Legislature of celebrating the career milestones of our colleagues.

So with that in mind, I wanted to say and congratulate our colleague from Elmwood who, on this very day, is celebrating the 39th anniversary of his first election to the Manitoba Legislature.

I ask all members to join me in celebrating him for this remarkable achievement.

**The Speaker:** A remarkable achievement indeed, but it's not a point of order.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** Now, where was I?

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Weiming Zhao

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations):** Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize a living legend of Brandon and the Westman area, Weiming Zhao.

Anyone who's spent time in Brandon has likely encountered him numerous times, standing at his easel, capturing the captivating views of our community through painting.

I had the privilege to hear from Weiming himself, the story how he started. By taking up art as a hobby, first drawing simple pencil sketches of downtown Brandon—scenes of people, landmarks and everyday life—he committed to completing a painting a day since 2003. So to put that into perspective, for 22 years, 365 days a year, he has painted a painting every single day. This streak remains unbroken.

Last spring, Weiming was conferred an honorary doctorate of literature from the faculty of arts at Brandon University.

Weiming moved to Brandon as an international student in 1991 where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology. He was joined by his wife, Ping, five years later and since then has been calling Brandon their home.

Before retiring three years ago, he was an educational assistant at Crocus Plains regional high school for 20 years, and a support staff at Brandon Community Options for over 20 years.

In his daily painting sessions, Weiming has captured iconic scenes of the city of Brandon, as well as many other sites in Westman and Manitoba, on more than 7,000 canvases. Fourteen of his paintings are in Manitoba provincial art collection and are among my favorites in the showcase.

Weiming, thank you for giving us an opportunity to look at familiar places which—a fresh point of view. You have provided a significant service to society, and like so many, I am proud to have an original Zhao hang in my constituency office.

I'd like to ask the members to rise to recognize Weiming, who is joining us in the gallery today.

\* (13:40)

#### Gerdau Manitoba Steel Mill

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I rise today to discuss an issue of critical importance to our province: the future of Gerdau Manitoba Steel Mill, located in Selkirk.

For decades, this facility has been a cornerstone of Manitoba's manufacturing sector, providing good-paying jobs and contributing to our local economy. However, the recent tariffs imposed by Donald Trump on Canadian steel threaten the stability of this vital industry. These unfair trade barriers are not just numbers on a page; they impact real workers, real families and the future of our province's economy.

Now more than ever, we must have a plan for hard-working men and women at the Gerdau steel

mill. That means working with industry partners, advocating for fair trade policies and ensuring our steel sector gets the support it needs to remain competitive.

Manitoba steel is among the best in the world, and we must do everything to protect this industry from economic harm.

I urge the government of Manitoba to create an actual plan and not just empty words or promises. Words alone do not keep the lights on. We need a real plan from this NDP government to ensure that Selkirk's steel industry not only weathers these challenges, but continues to grow and thrive for generations to come.

Thank you.

#### **Oh Doughnuts and Planet Pantry**

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I rise today to recognize two incredible local businesses that contribute so much to our communities, our economy and our shared commitment to sustainability. Oh Doughnuts and Planet Pantry are shining examples of what makes Manitoba special.

In 2014, Amanda Kinden opened Oh Doughnuts, a proudly queer women-owned bakery that has since redefined indulgence. Using high-quality ingredients and sustainable practices, they serve up some of the best doughnuts in the city.

With signature creations like the Dubai doughnut, chocolate doughnut or my personal favourite, the crème brûlée, each confection is crafted with care and a deep love for the art of baking and the community they serve. Oh Doughnuts has proven that ethics and quality can go hand in hand, showing that great food can also do great things.

Likewise, Planet Pantry has been leading the change and leading the charge in reducing waste and promoting sustainable living. Founded by Sam Soloway in 2020, she launched their package-free, refillable grocery store in the midst of a global pandemic, rising to the challenge to provide Manitobans with a more sustainable way to shop. Their commitment to environmental responsibility is not just a business model; it's a call to action for all of us to rethink how we consume.

Local businesses are the backbone of our economy. They create jobs, invest in our communities and reflect the values that make Manitoba such a great place to call home. When we support local, we're not just making a purchase, Honourable Speaker, we're

investing in our neighbours, our local economy, our environment and a more sustainable future for all. I encourage all Manitobans to continue supporting local and buying Canadian.

I want to thank the hard-working entrepreneurs behind all of these businesses for their passion, resilience and commitment to our communities, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating and welcoming Amanda Kinden and her team member from Oh Doughnuts and partner, Robyn Salguero; and Sam Soloway from Planet Pantry, who's also joined by her parents, Robert and Dawn Soloway.

Welcome, thank you and congratulations.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** Prior to the next member's statement, I have some guests that I would like to introduce who are leaving shortly.

I would like to acknowledge the following guests who are here on behalf of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) and Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care.

We have with us in the public gallery Melissa Dvorak, Levi Foy, Noreen Main, Jill Stockwell, Charlie Eau, Lake Osted, Ethan Belcourt, Stephanie Adamov, Ashley Bieniarz, Jackson Unger, Rae Gunn, Reece Malone, Daryl Malone and Lynn Frost.

And we welcome you all here today.

#### **Winter Activities in Lac du Bonnet**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I am pleased to rise today and update the House on the many and varied winter activities that took place in the great constituency of Lac du Bonnet. While there are just a few more days of winter in Manitoba, let me highlight to all members what a great winter we had throughout all parts of my constituency.

The many winter activities that took place would not have occurred without the detailed planning, organization and dedication of the numerous volunteers and individuals who made it possible for the events to occur and for all to enjoy.

As a result of their extraordinary efforts, we saw record attendance by locals and visitors throughout Manitoba including those from other parts of Canada, the United States and, yes, even the world; all the while supporting local and supporting Canadian. Once again, I had the opportunity to participate in many of these winter activities and met so many in attendance.

Whether it was the ice fishing derby in Lac du Bonnet, the Beaver Days in Whiteshell, the Christmas on Park Avenue in Beausejour, the hamper drive and pancake breakfast in Victoria Beach, the annual Brokenhead River Ag Conference or the Canadian Power Toboggan Championships races in Beausejour, there was no shortage of excitement and activity options for all to enjoy.

Amazing parks and trails throughout the constituency with groomed snowmobile trails, cross-country skiing or just going for a walk or hiking in the beautiful outdoors.

I also had the opportunity to participate in I Love to Read Month. I'd like to thank the amazing school administrators, teachers and, of course, the hundreds of students who engaged with me as I read to them and shared in the love of reading and learning. The Lac du Bonnet constituency consists of two school divisions with 14 schools.

Increasingly, the many winter activities and things to do continue to grow in the Lac du Bonnet constituency and the experiences continue to be enjoyed by many.

While other Manitoba winter—while another Manitoba winter comes to a close in the coming days, we can all look forward to the dawn of spring and more of what is offered in and around the great constituency of Lac du Bonnet.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity.

#### **Good Neighbours Active Living Centre**

**Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East):** Honourable Speaker, community hubs are a lifeline for so many adults in Kildonan-River East. Everyone deserves to have a place where they feel like they belong, and many seniors in northeast Winnipeg, that place is Good Neighbours Active Living Centre.

Good Neighbours is a national leader in enriching lives of older adults through programs, services and opportunities for social interaction that contributes to the overall well-being and a sense of community.

From exercise classes for all mobility levels to taxation tips, there are countless activities and community events offered by the centre. Recently, Good Neighbours had a guest speaker provide tips on downsizing from the family home to an apartment or condo. On Fridays, neighbours can gather and have popcorn and drinks, and watch a movie together.

Just this morning at our Kildonan-River East office, a neighbour who recently had his wife panelled and moved into a long-term care centre came for a visit. Good Neighbours has been a new and rewarding place for him to go to meet new people and find connection as he transitions into this next chapter of his life.

On May 30, Good Neighbours is having their 32nd annual anniversary luncheon with returning special guest emcee from CTV News, Colleen Bready. This event is always a sellout, and I know myself, as a former Good Neighbours volunteer, and other northeast Winnipeg elected officials from this Chamber and from all levels of government in northeast Winnipeg are often in attendance.

Good Neighbours is still looking for event sponsorship, donations and more neighbours to buy individual tickets to enjoy fellowship and celebrate this huge milestone together for our amazing active living centre here in northeast Winnipeg.

Hope to see you there, neighbours.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, there's some more guests in the gallery I would like to introduce.

I'd draw members' attention to the loge to my right where we have with us today Adam Lightstone, who is a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Nunavut, representing the constituency of Iqaluit-Manirajak. Adam actually holds a Manitoba birth certificate as he was born in our province, but has not been back since then.

Accompanying Adam today is Nastania Mullin from the Manitoba Inuit Association who joins us in the Speaker's Gallery.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you both to our Assembly, and welcome you back.

\* (13:50)

Further, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today from Beausejour, Charlie Genaille, Pedro Chaves, who are the guests of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet and the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Individuals Charged with Drug Trafficking Concern Regarding Release of Offenders

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Before the election, the Premier talked tough about the people supplying drugs in our communities. After the election, he encouraged people to grow cannabis at home. He ordered his minister to create a lethal drug-injection site. And just three days ago, his failed Justice Minister released a drug trafficker, who had 253 grams of cocaine, back into our community. The tactical support team works to detain, while this minister is set on releasing them.

Why are the NDP taking it easy on this drug trafficker, and was being arrested with a quarter kilo of cocaine not enough to keep him off the streets?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Gene Bowers on being appointed the new chief of police for the Winnipeg Police Service.

Of course, the members opposite are remiss from not raising this at the earliest opportunity. But we are clearly working strongly together with law enforcement, both inside the city of Winnipeg and across the province.

We have given law enforcement more resources after years of cuts under the PCs. We actually lost 50 Winnipeg police officers during their two terms in office. We also gave them new tools to investigate drug traffickers and bring the hammer down on them, including the unexplained wealth act, which of course, the members opposite delayed for absolutely no reason.

They continue to stand up with these Trump-like attacks on the judiciary. We won't stand for it. We'll stand for you, the people of Manitoba, and keep you safe in your community.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** 'Honoural'—Honourable Speaker, this is actually attacks on the Premier's job as Premier and his failings to keep drug traffickers off the streets.

Recently, guns and gangs investigators executed a search warrant in the constituency of Notre Dame with support from the tactical team, east district and downtown community support units and the canine and drone units. That's significant amount of police resources and I thank them for their efforts to keep our

communities safer. If only the Premier would put in equal effort.

The person charged with trafficking drugs and 'poseshing'—possessing property obtained by crime was released by this Justice Minister. Remember, Honourable Speaker, the Premier said he had the power to make the changes he desired. He didn't need the feds, he said, and that's end quote.

Can the Premier explain to Manitobans how this Justice Minister releasing someone trafficking crack cocaine is being hard on drug dealers?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, I want to thank law enforcement.

With the appointment of a new Chief of Police here in the city of Winnipeg, I think the investments that we've been making under the leadership of our Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) have a real opportunity to bring together both law enforcement intelligence from the Department of Justice, as well as that ground-level community policing sort of collaboration that people have been calling on for years.

The members opposite had the opportunity during two terms in government to move the needle when it came to public safety, but they never did because they never took it seriously, nor did they take your intelligence as the people of Manitoba seriously. They always talked down to you, resorting to trivial sloganeering and divisive politics whenever elections came around.

Well, quite substantially, the people of Manitoba showed them the door, and they asked for a mature approach to tackling public safety and making communities safer. The results? There are big-time drug busts happening in Manitoba because of the new resources being provided to law enforcement. More—

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

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** So the Premier's mature way of dealing with anybody is mocking the President of the United States on TikTok. Very mature, Honourable Speaker.

The Premier's tough on—and he goes there again, Honourable Speaker—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** The Premier's tough-on-drug-dealers stance is fleeting; as fleeting as the time his dangerous

criminals are being held in custody, thanks to this NDP failed government.

Honourable Speaker, 2.8 kilograms of meth, 4.6 kilograms of cocaine, 500 pills, four ounces of fentanyl, brass knuckles, bulletproof vests, Glock, sawed-off shotgun, money counter. This is just some of the—some of what the guns and gangs unit seized from the two drug dealers last week. And what do these drug dealers have in common? They've all been released by this failed Justice Minister under this failed Premier.

If \$200,000 of illegal drugs and an assortment of weaponry is not enough to hold these criminals and keep drugs off our streets, Honourable Speaker, what is?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know what, our Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) is doing a great job working with law enforcement and keeping Manitobans safe.

And you know what I hear when I go out and I hit the streets in Transcona and in other parts of the province? I hear Manitobans saying they wish that the member opposite, the member for Lac du Boney [*phonetic*]-Lac du Bonnet would stand up for their jobs the same way he comes here and stands up for Donald Trump each and every single day.

Hey, Donald Trump's doing just fine. He doesn't need the leader of the Manitoba PCs to stick up for him.

Every day, we come in here expecting a question about canola, expecting a question about pork. Maybe there'll be a question about the steel industry. But no; the member opposite comes here day after day after day and asks me what? To take it easy on Donald Trump. Never.

I'm standing up for you. I'm standing up for ag, I'm standing up for steel. We'll never be the 51st state, and they'll never be back in government again.

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

#### **Manitoba's Inflation Rate Impact on Cost of Living**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, day in, day out, I ask questions—serious questions—to this Premier without getting any answers on how do we keep drugs off the streets and criminals off the streets.

Honourable Speaker, StatsCan has released the most recent inflation rates for February. Manitoba's

inflation rate was 3.5 per cent, highest among all provinces.

Manitoba, under the NDP, continues to spend more, and again, get less. With more than half of Manitobans living paycheque to paycheque, a need for relief has never been greater.

The economics horse is obviously in trouble. The NDP's last budget increased property taxes by \$150 million. Education taxes have run amok under the NDP.

Why is the Premier driving inflation up to the point families and—are choosing between rent and food, Honourable Speaker?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** So negative. So negative on the opposition side.

What I hear when I go out into the community is a renewed sense of optimism, a welcome change from the dark days of Heather Stefanson and whatever was going on with their last election campaign.

Now, we know that the cost of living is a major challenge for you and for your family. That's why our government has been laser focused on bringing costs down. Our first action in government was to cut the provincial fuel tax entirely. We followed it up this year by bringing in permanent relief when it comes to the price at the pump.

The good news is, this Thursday, many more steps to make your life more affordable will be coming in this year's budget. I can only say that I'm awaiting the great work of our Finance minister with a ton of enthusiasm and anticipation.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, yesterday, the MLA for Seine River shared that last year, Manitoba had the highest level of food inflation in the country. Despite the empty threats by the Premier of consequences for grocery stores, Manitobans are paying more for food and the Premier just added to that. They're paying more for shelter, they're paying more for almost everything, all because of the NDP broken policies and the highest inflation rate in the country.

Thursday's budget offers the Premier an opportunity to change course, an opportunity to show Manitobans that runaway inflation is not here to stay.

Will the Premier rein in school division tax increases and give hard-working Manitobans a break



that they so desperately need at this time, Honourable Speaker?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, our government is taking action on high food prices. We know that when we look at our neighbouring provinces, the update from StatsCan today shows that Manitoba had lower inflation on food purchased from stores than any of the provinces in the west. But we know that that's not good enough. More work needs to be done.

That's why under the Minister of our Public Service Delivery department, we are bringing in a new approach to real estate controls in the grocery sector to ensure that there's more competition and to ensure that there's less predatory pricing from the big grocery chains.

Now, here's the thing I want you and the others following along here to pay attention to, Honourable Speaker. The members opposite want to chirp and heckle while I'm talking about our new controls on groceries in Manitoba, but here's the thing: yesterday afternoon they all voted in favour of our bill.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Each and every day, Honourable Speaker, the Premier stands up, adjusts his tie, smiles to the camera and puts more misinformation out to Manitobans. In fact, Manitoba has the highest food inflation rate all across Canada, and that are the facts.

The NDP has no issue putting out news releases if they like the inflation rates, but when they don't, absolutely crickets, Honourable Speaker. The NDP's efforts to reduce costs have failed. Stats Canada has confirmed as much. Manitobans confirm it every payday when they see their dollars shrinking.

The highest inflation rate in Canada, 3.5 per cent, should be a wake-up call to the NDP.

Will Thursday's budget take action to put more money in Manitoba's pockets, or is this Premier once again going to just hit the snooze button, Honourable Speaker?

**Mr. Kinew:** I hit the snooze button on Heather Stefanson's career, and thank God. Now our government is in office so that we can save you money and put dollars back in your pocket.

Now, we know why the members opposite are so concerned about funds: because their party's not only morally bankrupt, they're also financially bankrupt.

The establishment candidate can't get two people to show up for his so-called fundraisers, and so that's why the establishment is holding this week's PC leadership debate in his own constituency.

Guess what? They're calling the constituency assistants because they're still worried about turnout. On the other hand, the other contender in their leadership race, he's having a fundraiser tonight, I believe. He was trying to book it at the zoo, but, well, you know.

### **Education Property Taxes Increase Concerns**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, the NDP government are hiding from—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stone:** —Manitobans on education tax hikes. The NDP failed to plan for the city of Winnipeg 2025 general assessment while cutting funding, and as a result, hard-working families in the city of Winnipeg are paying the price.

In a report submitted to Winnipeg EPC today, there are double-digit increases in every single school division across the city of Winnipeg, up to 18.4 per cent in Louis Riel. Homeowners in the Minister of Finance's own constituency were told they would only see a 2.1 per cent increase, when in reality it's a 10.4 per cent hike. I table that for the House.

When was the Minister of Finance aware by the school division's plans to increase double-digit tax hikes on hard-working Manitoba families?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Our government is focused on making life more affordable for Manitobans. We did that, of course, last year right after we got in, with our fuel tax holiday over the course of an entire year that saved Manitobans hundreds of dollars.

And, of course, our Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit lowered school taxes for Manitobans across the entire province and, in fact, many Manitobans are no longer paying school taxes at all because of that Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit.

Members opposite made life more expensive for seven and a half years, and they worked to make life harder, and that's why Manitobans showed them the door. And they still, from the other side of the Chamber, still want to make life harder by supporting

Trump's tariffs. We ask them, whose side are they on, Manitobans or Donald Trump?

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

**Mrs. Stone:** This NDP needs to come clean with Manitobans: 13.7 per cent increases in Winnipeg School Division; 16.8 per cent in Seven Oaks; 18.4 in Louis Riel; 14.4 in River East Transcona. Finance Chair said in EPC today, I have never seen numbers like this in 18 years on council. This is our direct result of poor financial decisions by this NDP.

The NDP is capitalizing on assessment changes to underfund schools, and families are paying the price in huge tax increases as a result. The NDP removed the cap on school divisions, and now the decision has led to 18.4 tax increases in Louis Riel.

What does the member for Southdale (MLA Cable) have to say to her families in her constituency that will be paying an extra \$316 on their tax bill?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, there's only one team in this House that needs to come clean, and that's the members opposite.

They need to answer to Manitobans why they're standing on the side of Donald Trump and the tariffs. Why do we have members opposite supporting that? We know that members opposite came out the day after Donald Trump won the election and celebrated that, after he threatened tariffs on our country.

We have members opposite, some who are vying to be the leader, that were celebrating an attack on our Canadian sovereignty. That is a serious concern for Manitobans, Honourable Speaker, that we know we got members opposite that seem to be on the side of Donald Trump instead of standing with Manitobans.

On this side of the House, we fight for team Canada, we fight for Manitobans and we will always stand on the side of what's right.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** As property assessments increase, taxes increase. By allowing school divisions to hike taxes this aggressively, the NDP are adding more homes into paying higher taxes.

Honourable Speaker, there are going to be many middle-class Winnipeggers and Manitobans that are going to be paying significantly more as a result of this NDP's decision to remove the 50 per cent property tax rebate and allow education taxes to

skyrocket up to 18.4 per cent when families are stretched as it already is.

Will the member opposite, or any member opposite, stand up for the families across the city of Winnipeg that are seeing double-digit increases as a result of their bad decisions.

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, we're making school taxes more affordable. Our homeowner affordability tax credit is lowering school taxes for Manitobans across the province.

Now, you know, all this talk about affordability has me pulling out my list of 21 ways to save—21. You know what—and those—the number keeps getting higher; I'm losing track. We've got so many ways to save, it's hard to keep track.

We're making home ownership more affordable; we're making energy more affordable; we're making child care more affordable; we're making home security more affordable; we are making life more affordable.

They made life more expensive for seven and a half years; that's why Manitobans showed them the door. Now they want to make life more difficult by supporting Trump tariffs. Whose side are they on?

We're going to keep fighting for team Canada. That's what Manitobans—

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

### **Education Property Taxes Increase Concerns**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** Just because the Finance Minister says it, doesn't make it accurate.

Documents released by the City of Winnipeg show that across all Winnipeg school divisions, taxes and revenue from taxes are going up 12.9 per cent. Let's give that percentage a number: that's \$100 million more in revenue this year from school taxes than last year. That's \$100 million more this year than last year, up to over \$865 million out of the pockets of hard-working Winnipeg families in school taxes, due to poor education and financial planning from this government.

How does the minister think it's appropriate to be taking 100 million more dollars out of the pockets of hard-working Manitoba families at an increasing time of inaffordability?

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

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** The only thing that is poor is the record of the PC government from when they were in power.

I wish, Honourable Speaker, that our government could wave a magic wand and fix the seven and a half years of chronic underfunding that school divisions lived through under the previous failed PC government, the failed leadership of Heather Stefanson and her predecessor, Brian Pallister.

Coulda, woulda, shoulda, Honourable Speaker. That's what the member opposite should be saying. What the member opposite really should be rising in this House and saying is an apology to families and students across Manitoba for their failure to fund the education system. There's a lot of catch-up to do—

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

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Jackson:** Well, it's coulda, shoulda, woulda on that side, Honourable Speaker, and on this side, we capped school division tax increases at 2 per cent. So it's did keep taxes more affordable on this side of the House when we were in government, Honourable Speaker. They're the party of shoulda, coulda, woulda.

Here's what the minister shoulda, coulda, woulda done: introduce a new funding formula for education like she promised and the rest of her 'campaigntriotis' promised in the last election campaign.

\* (14:10)

Will she roll out a new funding model for education like she promised in Thursday's budget?

**MLA Schmidt:** Honourable Speaker, I am so excited for this Thursday where we get to share more details of Budget 2025, a budget put together by our incredible Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) and a budget which is very, very much education focused.

Our plan for Manitoba students and families is to provide them the stable, predictable funding that they have been asking for, for years. That is our plan on this side of the House.

What was their plan on that side of the House, Honourable Speaker? Austerity. That was their plan for students and families here in Manitoba, was austerity. That was their funding plan.

On this side of the House, we know that school divisions were starved for seven and a half years. We gave them a great boost last year, another fantastic—

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

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Jackson:** What we are proud of on this side of the House is a 2 per cent cap, keeping school taxes affordable for Manitoba families and building schools, two things that that government is not doing.

What their record is: larger class sizes and higher taxes on Manitoba families.

Will this minister get up and admit that \$100 million more this year out of the pockets of hard-working Winnipeg families is not acceptable and commit to boosting funding for school divisions so they can cut these tax increases on Thursday's budget?

**MLA Schmidt:** Honourable Speaker, the member opposite says he's proud.

Was he proud when the PC government cut and froze funding to school divisions for years? Was the member opposite proud when they repealed the NDP small-class-size legislation and let class sizes skyrocket? Was he proud when, in northeast Winnipeg, they closed the Concordia emergency room, something that our government is committed to reopening?

What we are proud of at this side—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Schmidt:** —of the House is what we are doing for families in Manitoba, including families in River East Transcona School Division, where we will be building a new school in Devonshire Park, where we will be funding River East Transcona in ways they've never been funded before, where we will be building an addition on Park Manor—

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

#### **Individuals Living in Homeless Encampments Housing Options and Wraparound Services**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Every Manitoba—every Manitoban deserves a safe and secure home. Under this current government, we know at least 700 Manitobans are living in encampments across Winnipeg.

Back in January, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) said his government was going to move 700 homeless people

into housing units, one encampment at a time, but in February, they moved just one person into social housing.

When will the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness move people out of bus shelters and encampments and into homes?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** Well, I'm very proud of the work that our government is doing in supporting folks and getting them into housing, something that that government didn't do. In fact, they sold off housing; they put people into encampments.

We've actually decanted more than one encampment. We've—we're on our way to more than five now under the great work of Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud. I'm super, you know, thrilled to be working alongside someone who has been working in the sector, and I just want to shout out—all those folks that are working so amazingly hard with those folks in the encampments.

You know, they work collaboratively, unlike members opposite, who could not work with any of those folks, so I just want to uplift them—

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

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

**Mrs. Hiebert:** Residents in Manitoba Housing units are pleading for safety improvements and better security.

Are these the housing units the minister is planning to use to house the homeless living in encampments, moving them from one dangerous situation to another?

When is this minister going to bring in much needed security for existing residents and provide enough security—secure housing units to end Winnipeg's homeless crisis?

**Ms. Smith:** That is rich, coming from that side.

When you sold off housing, we're cleaning up your mess. So we've bought over 400 units. We're putting folks into housing with the supports, something that, when you were in government, you failed to do. You were okay walking out this building each and every day with folks living in shelters, with folks living in tents.

We're not okay with that. We're going to get folks housed with the supports that they need, with the proper medical care with the—

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, wraparound.

**Ms. Smith:** —wraparound supports, exactly. You're right.

In fact, we're working with police on safety and security. You underfunded, you cut services in those very buildings that you're talking about. So look to your right and look to your left—

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

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

I would caution members about using terms such as you and yours. Please address your comments through the Chair. And I would ask us all to take it down a notch or two.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** I've had the opportunity to meet with front-line workers working in the shelters and with our homeless, and this minister's only moved one person in from encampments since the launch of their plan to end the homeless crisis in Winnipeg.

We have also not seen any money to hire new social workers or mental health workers, needing—that need to provide wraparound services and resources that this government's promising. This sector is already facing critical shortages of front-line workers.

When will this minister plan—provide a plan for wraparound supports for the homeless in Manitoba?

**Ms. Smith:** I don't know if that member has read our Your Way Home plan, because that's a great strategy that, you know, members from the sector have been working on, from those that are on the front lines. And we've housed over 1,200 folks since we've taken government. That's a pretty amazing feat. So 725 of those have been in our own social housing. We've put more maintenance funds in, something that when they were in government cut by 87 per cent.

In one transaction alone, they sold off hundreds of units, kicked people out of those units and put them in campments. We're not doing that.

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

### **Oak Tree Towers Residents Government Response to Safety Concerns**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Honourable Speaker, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods have received 80 pages of complaints regarding Oak Tree Towers in Portage la Prairie. The RCMP in Portage la Prairie have handled over 40 reports. The community safety officers are at Oak Tree Towers every day, and the fire department has responded to 19 false alarms.

All of this has happened in the last 12 to 18 months, yet all the residents hear is, stop calling or we will evict you, as was stated in a letter that was sent to myself, the minister and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) yesterday.

When can I tell the residents of Oak Tree Towers that they can finally feel safe in their own—

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

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** As I stated to that member yesterday, we've been in contact, we've been meeting with those very residents. There is a plan in place for safety and security, and we do have safety—or, safety officers going there every evening, doing patrolling, and there are plans to have cameras put in and cards for every floor. So there is plans of safety.

They were asking that government or, that—when they were in government, for years to do that. Fell on deaf ears. They never did anything.

Our government is taking action. We're working, and we're going to get it done.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

**MLA Bereza:** Yesterday the minister mentioned installing cameras at Oak Tree Towers. But the residents tell me that anything can—that can be stolen is stolen, including the lockbox at the shattered front door. That lockbox is gone, leaving the fire department forced to knock on windows or break them to get inside.

Can the minister tell residents when they can expect real 24-hour, in-person security, not just cameras?

\* (14:20)

**Ms. Smith:** Well, what I can say to that member is when they were in government—he can look to his left, he can look to his right, and he can ask those members why they continued to cut services in Manitoba Housing. They cut tenant service co-ordinators. They cut folks that supported folks to keep them safe in their communities. They cut security guards. They cut maintenance. They sold off housing, put folks out into the cold.

So we will take no lessons from members opposite on how to support folks in Manitoba Housing. We're working with those folks. We're going to make sure that there is safety and security in that building, something the members opposite failed to do. And we're going to listen and support those folks.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a final supplementary question.

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, home-care workers at Oak Tree Towers must work in pairs for their own safety, and they're scared. The crisis at Oak Tree Towers is impacting provincial employees and innocent home-care clients.

When will the minister put in place resources to address these issues and prevent further collateral damage?

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Ms. Smith:** As I stated to that member, we are cleaning up a big mess after seven and a half years of that former government's cuts. They cut the maintenance budget. They fired staff. They fired security guards. They cut the maintenance. They sold off housing.

We are continuing to clean up their mess. Safety and security is the No. 1 priority for us. We've hired new tenant service co-ordinators. We hired more security guards. We're working with those tenants. We're putting in security measures. And we'll continue to meet with them and ensure that they get what they need in that building.

#### **Employment and Income Assistance Rates Affordable Housing for Recipients**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I believe that the minister responsible for homelessness is off to a good start, but there are concerns being raised with respect to working with camps, how money is being spent and the overwhelming need for the rent top-up.

Social housing took a hit in recent years, and homes are still not being built or acquired fast enough. The average low rent for a bachelor apartment is \$873, that's if you can find one. And the rent benefit for someone on EIA is \$638.

How is a person on EIA expected to find an affordable place to live?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** Miigwech to the member for Tyndall Park for that important question.

Our team at Families is working very, very hard, particularly in the Rent Assist benefit, that I'll remind the House today and the member, and I know that the member would be acutely aware of this, the members opposite, when they were in their failed, cold, callous, inept government actually decreased and cut the funding to Rent Assist.

I'm proud that our government and our department and our team are dedicated to ensuring that Rent Assist is there for those that need it every single day.

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

**MLA Lamoureux:** EIA rates in Manitoba have not increased in decades. This government, while in opposition, demanded that rates go up. Yet they have not prioritized this after a year and a half in power.

Being homeless increases the demand for soup kitchens and food banks. It increases hospitalization. And poverty is one of the root causes of crime.

Between this government's \$180 million in increased tax revenue in 2024 and \$337 million in equalization payments from the federal government, how has this provincial government done nothing to raise the EIA rates so that people can afford sustainable housing?

**MLA Fontaine:** Miigwech for that important question.

And the member and I will agree on this, that when members opposite were in their failed government, they did not raise EIA rates. And I think that that's important to put on the record, that for seven and a half years, they had no concern for folks that were struggling.

I'll also remind the House that members opposite, when they were in their failed government, wouldn't even raise the minimum wage. I think they went like the first two years by not doing it, then they raised it by 10 cents, then they raised it by 5 cents. Members opposite don't have a leg to stand on when it talk—when we talk about affordability or when we talk about trying to ensure that those most vulnerable Manitobans are—

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

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

**MLA Lamoureux:** We have strong advocates here in Manitoba, with decades of research, who regularly remind us MLAs that people who rely on EIA are among the most vulnerable in our province.

There are more than 1,200 people in Winnipeg alone experiencing homelessness on any given night. These are families, the elderly, people with disabilities and with mental health conditions, just to name a few, Honourable Speaker.

Will this government commit in Thursday's budget to ensure that those experiencing housing insecurity will be able to afford to live with their basic needs met by immediately increasing EIA rates to a liveable basic benefit?

**MLA Fontaine:** When we came into government, one of the first things that we did was that we passed legislation to lift people out of poverty to ensure that folks that are on EIA could also pursue education, and we're very proud of that. And our EIA staff are working with Manitobans to ensure that either it's a pathway to employment or that they've got a pathway to education. And that's the commitment of our government.

What else did we do? Hmm, we also doubled the Prenatal Benefit. We know that when Manitobans have the good things that they need while they are pregnant, that that has long-lasting benefits to Manitobans.

What was the other thing we did? Oh right, we instituted a universal food school—

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

### **School and PCH Capital Investments Transcona and Radisson Constituencies**

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** Honourable Speaker, under the PCs, our seniors and our schools in Transcona were treated like political props. The PCs consistently failed to deliver on their opportunistic promises. The PCs did nothing to meet the demand of our families. And as the need for personal-care homes and schools grew, the PCs responded by cutting beds in the system and misleading Manitobans with promises that had no real plan.

Thank goodness those days are over, Honourable Speaker. Our government knows that the capital projects support communities and create good-paying jobs.

Will the Minister of Finance please share with the House some of the recent news around capital projects for the great constituencies of Transcona and Radisson?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** I'd like to thank my fellow colleague for that important question.

Honourable Speaker, we are so excited to be building up our communities and to be building one Manitoba. Among our historic investments in education is the new K-to-8 school in Devonshire Park, which will have space for 600 students and 104 new child-care spaces. We are supporting the growing needs of families in the River East-Transcona neighbourhoods.

And, for years, the community of Transcona has been asking for a new personal-care home at Park Manor, and our government is getting it done, Honourable Speaker. We start building a new 90-bed personal-care home this year.

These capital projects are meeting the needs for Transcona and creating good-paying jobs here in Manitoba. We're getting to work, we're meeting needs in our communities and we are building one—

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

### **US Tariffs on Steel Industry Request for Government Support**

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Speaker, since 1907, Selkirk has been producing steel, the lot of it going to the American market. This industry has survived and thrived despite many uncertainties in the world at different times. Now rash American tariffs threaten that.

Not long ago, the minister didn't even know the name of Gerdau, so what reassurance can he offer my Selkirk families that real plans will be in place for them?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Honourable Speaker, I've had a great pleasure of chatting with Vin from Gerdau and I know the people up there are doing really important work that supports our growing economy here in Manitoba.

Our government is very proud to do the work, to listen to that business community and offer them the supports they need through this difficult challenge during the Donald Trump-imposed tariff tax.

Now, instead of thanking Donald Trump for the tariff, we're actually getting to work defending Manitoba businesses, ensuring they have the supports they need, and we're—make sure that we continue to work them each and every day.

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

**Mr. Perchotte:** I asked about real substance: supports and plans. This government can only offer empty words or offer to defer taxes. It doesn't matter how long you defer taxes, it's still a burden. That's why our PC team called last week for dismantling of the unfair payroll tax that taxes employment.

\* (14:30)

What has this 'minner' refused to—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Perchotte:** Why has this minister refused to advocate for Manitoba industry that is fighting to keep Manitobans working?

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker, we're absolutely working with Gerdau. We know how important the steel industry is to Manitoba.

But, more broadly, we're working with manufacturers right across this great province to ensure that Manitobans can work in that very important industry.

Manufacturers—bus manufacturers, aerospace manufacturers, agriculture manufacturers: these are the industries that move our economy ahead and that's why we're working directly with them to understand how we can support them through this difficult time of tariffs, tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration but also those imposed by China. So we're working with the agriculture sector as well to understand their needs.

This is the comprehensive approach that moves our economy forward, something members opposite never, ever understood.

**The Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired. *[interjection]*

Order.

## **PETITIONS**

### **Breast Screening**

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

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

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

(2) Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year; 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to

mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

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

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lowering the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening to age 40.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast cancer to 40.

Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower

mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

And this petition is signed by Val Coulter, Cindy Pillipow, Janice Crerar and many, many other Manitobans.

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

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

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create 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.

\* (14:40)

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Terry Morris, Rodney Smith and Bruce Cook, as well as many, many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

### Teaching Certification

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well-rounded learning experience for all Manitobans—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.

(3) 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 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 deserve.

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 petition has been signed by Julia Mainprize, Madison Posthumus and Marnie Bloom and many other fine Manitobans.

### MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(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 regional health authority.

(4) An MRI machine located in the provincial 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 M-R-A-MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plains 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.

\* (14:50)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Harold Nichol, Sheila Riendero [*phonetic*], Trudie Krause and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Medical Assistance in Dying**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access 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.

Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide 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, not death.

This is signed by Crystal Malenko, Lori Schroeder, Pat Schmidt and many, many, many more Manitobans.

### Breast Screening

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to the evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age of breast screening to 40.

Based off of 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women usually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those that don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast screening age, or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age, and

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower breast cancer screening to age 40.

This petition is signed by A. Allamard [*phonetic*], Lorraine Lavich and Robert Lapointe and many, many more Manitobans.

### Provincial Road 275

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

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

(1) Provincial Road 275, known as Ditch Road, intersects with PR 588, serving rural areas west of the town of Swan River, and is a heavily used travel corridor linking Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The highway curves on entry into the town of Swan River and terminates at PTH 10A, the town's north bypass.

(2) The Swan River Valley is a highly productive agricultural area, and PR 275 is used by farmers to move heavy machinery and equipment, as well as transport seed, grain and fertilizer to many farmers located within reach of the highway.

(3) It is also frequented by families, people shopping at businesses along the route and school buses to transport rural students into the town of Swan River for school.

Due to only having patchwork and minor repairs, the highway has 'deteriated' and is covered with large potholes, posing a significant threat to vehicles and passengers.

(5) The roadway and shoulders on PR 275 are extremely narrow, leaving large ditches that have not been properly cared for, which has caused poor drainage. The Town of Swan River and the Municipality of Swan Valley West have inquired with MTI for a drainage solution over the past several years. This ditch is not graded properly and is full of bulrush, willows and cattails.

\* (15:00)

(6) The solution brought forward is to decrease maximum speed limits on the road and to undertake a full rehabilitation of the highway and to reroute the stream through which is now existing farmland, under CN rail line, and the PTH 10A bypass, as well as

through several hundred metres of an existing slough into the Swan River.

(7) Numerous meetings held with Swan Valley West and town of Swan River with the provincial government have not moved forward. It was agreed in 2022 that MTI was to complete a hydraulic investigation of the capacity of PR 275 and 2nd Avenue ditch. The municipalities have not seen the results of this investigation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to address the much-needed rehabilitation of Provincial Road 275 to ensure public safety.

(2) To urge the provincial government to provide the results of the MTI investigation to the town and municipality and provide immediate funding for the repairs of PR 275; and

(3) To urge the provincial government to address issues on PR 275 and create permanent solutions so that flooding can be avoided.

This petition has been signed by Roy Wohlgemuth, Kaden Bell and Glen Beans and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210**

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

The intersection of Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210 is known as a dangerous intersection, resulting in a safety review published in the fall of 2023.

In the summer of 2024, the Province presented four options for public consultation, and area residents were promised a presentation of a final option by the fall of 2024.

Delays in the renovation of this intersection have put Manitobans at risk, as the safety review identified that changes are needed.

The provincial government failed to meet its own timeline in the fall of 2024 and as such, area residents are concerned that the project has not been designated as a priority.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately implement work on renovating the intersection of Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210, to keep area residents and travellers safe.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

#### **New Neepawa Health Centre**

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

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 service plan, construction for the new Neepawa Health Centre is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from an added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a CT scanner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Gail Poncsak, Ray Poncsak, Sheila Ducharme and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

\* (15:10)

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Jim Pollock, Terry Salyn, Christina Hunter and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

(6) The new scanner will reduce pressure on emergency response services, who would no longer

have to transport these patients, opening up appointments in other communities and allowing more people to get the care they need sooner.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by E. Jane Goudie, Lynda Lowry, Shannon Hockin and many, many more fine Manitobans, Deputy Speaker.

### **Removal of Federal Carbon Tax**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

### **Supports for Manitobans with Learning Disabilities**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Neurodivergent persons who struggle, struggled to learn literacy skills: reading; reading comprehension; spelling; written expression and math, in public schools deserve to be taught these skills.

(2) Marin, an autistic adult with learning disabilities faced significant challenges in learning literacy skills in Manitoba's public schools. Marin's teachers were trained in and expected to teach balanced literacy.

(3) Successive provincial governments, via the ministry of Education, failed to provide proper literacy instruction that has been known for a century to learning-disabled students. Marin was also repeatedly incorrectly diagnosed until a private diagnosis in 2024. Many students have been lost to suicide due to similar trauma that Marin experienced from public education and public health in the province. Marin did not get an IEP, as she is intelligent and non-violent.

(4) Marin's rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms were violated. The Manitoba public school system denied her the right for proper diagnoses and literacy instruction due to the policies and curriculums of various ministers of Education. The provincial government and appointed bodies have defied Supreme Court of Canada rulings.

(5) Marin's principle, embodied in the request below, was created by her and her family because of perpetual and systemic harm caused by the province's public education and public health systems.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government, including associated service providers, to adopt Marin's principle and to comply with Supreme Court of Canada judgments, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and The Human Rights Code.

To urge—(2) to urge the provincial government to ensure provincial public classroom teachers are fully trained in knowledge and approaches explicitly created for students with learning disabilities, with no restriction to a single program or product.

\* (15:20)

(3) To urge the provincial government to commit to funding a private literacy service for children at their parents' discretion for all who are currently learning-disabled with no penalty of discontinued instruction in public school, so they can become functionally literate and gain knowledge and skills like their peers.

(4) To urge the provincial government to commit funding for private counselling so each learning-disabled adult, diagnosed or suspected, has their choice of therapist to help overcome education trauma due to adverse provincial curriculums and policies for private literacy instruction at their discretion, to become functionally literate and for access to evidence-aligned senior year classes that were missed so they can graduate with the education they have always had the right to receive; and

(5) to urge the provincial government to provide compensation for harm and loss of income for Manitobans with learning disabilities who remain functionally illiterate at level two after the age of 18.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

### **Morden Waste Water Project**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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

(1) Between 2011 and 2021, Morden's population grew by an impressive 27 per cent, outpacing the national average by 16 per cent, according to Statistics Canada.

(2) While growth is welcome and encouraged, Morden has long faced a critical need for infra-

structure upgrades to meet current demands and support future development.

(3) Morden's waste water system has operated beyond capacity for years, prompting the Province in 2019 to halt property subdivisions due to insufficient water and waste water—winter waste water storage.

(4) As of 2024, after exploring all options, the City announced in July that the estimated cost for critical infrastructure upgrades has risen from 70 million to 88 million to possibly 108 million.

(5) These revised estimates leave Morden with a significant funding shortfall of 13 to 33 million dollars.

(6) Despite efforts to address the gap, including plans to raise utility fees for residents and businesses, such as—such increases that have been delayed since 2017 due to the lack of an approved capital project, taxation is not enough.

(7) The lack of waste water capacity has severely impacted economic activity and growth in Morden and surrounding communities. Without much-needed waste water infrastructure investments, growth and economic development will be hindered in all of southern Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate action in recognizing the critical need of this waste water project for economic growth and environmental stability by committing to advocating and working with the federal government to close the gap with additional funding for Morden's waste water treatment system.

(2) To urge the provincial government to ensure all levels of government and regulatory bodies will expedite necessary funding and approvals necessary to advance the Morden waste water project with no further delay and ensure no hindrance to growth and economic development for Morden and southern Manitoba.

This petition was signed by Shirley Burton, Salley Chubey and Don Dyck, and many other Manitobans.

### **Provincial Road 227**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) As part of ongoing strategic infrastructure investments to the provincial highway network, it was announced in August 2022 that almost \$70 million would be spent on upgrades to provincial road PR 227.

(2) Over 72 kilometres of PR 227 were to be paved along with the repair or replacement of three bridges and multiple drainage works.

(3) Reeves, mayors, councillors and residents of the surrounding municipalities, cities, towns and villages were ecstatic and overwhelmingly supportive of this plan.

(4) The planned PR 227 was to connect Highway 16 with Highway 6, thus creating an alternative route to Highway No. 1.

(5) PR 227 was to be part of Manitoba's trade and commerce grid initiative, an expanded grid of highways that can accommodate heavy commercial loading that will attract new industrial activity, reduce transportation costs and optimize supply chain efficiency, which will benefit all Manitobans.

(6) The 2023 multi-year infrastructure investment strategy is a five-year, \$4.1-billion investment in Manitoba's roads, highways, bridges, airports and flood protection. The paving of PR 227 was part of this strategy.

(7) The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has cut the PR 227 project, notwithstanding that the project appears to be—appears in the multi-year infrastructure investment strategy and listed on the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure website as an active project.

(8) Additional keystone projects in the 2023 multi-year infrastructure investment strategy were the Winnipeg One Million Perimeter Freeway Initiative, the Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba outlet channels and the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway to the Ontario border. The actions of the NDP government now bring into question whether any of these projects will be completed as planned.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately restore funding to the PR 227 paving project; and

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to the commitment to Manitobans to carry out all of the projects as outlined in the 2023 multi-year infrastructure investment strategy in their

totality to the same scope and in accordance with already stated timelines.

This petition is signed by Grant Combott, Luke Lefloch and William *[phonetic]* Fleury and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for La Vérendrye?

Seeing no more petitions, grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Finally. Can you please call second reading of Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures), followed by Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities).

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will be resuming debate on second reading of Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures), followed by second reading of Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities).

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 5—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures)

#### Questions

**The Deputy Speaker:** And with that, we will be moving to question period for Bill 5 and the floor is open to questions.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** My question to Minister of Justice is—the Reimer family was really the catalyst to this change in legislation as we had them here for justice for Jordyn.

I'm just wondering, if the minister has said how important this law is to Manitobans, why his leader, the Premier (Mr. Kinew), has refused to meet with the family, the victims of impaired driving, after 19 separate requests?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, the member's just wrong. Of course, we've met with the Reimers: as I mentioned last question period, an opportunity to meet with the Reimers while in opposition and multiple times since I've been minister.



This is about all victims of impaired driving, and, of course, with regard to the Reimer's case specifically, the former Justice Minister refused to have any kind of review of the case.

I undertook that as Attorney General. We're confident in the decision that was made there, but we have committed to all victims of impaired driving that we will continue to move our feet. We're working with MADD Canada and so many others to make that a reality.

**Mr. Balcaen:** Just to clarify, in case this was another one of the listening tours where they didn't actually hear the questions or the answers, the question was about the Premier (Mr. Kinew) meeting with the family. But on another note, police have expressed concerns that staff shortages as well as increase in violent crimes are taking emphasis off of impaired driving.

Will the minister be providing police with additional resources coming forward?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, it's not a surprise that after seven and a half years of freezes and cuts to law enforcement across the province, that law enforcement certainly were wondering where the previous government stood when it came to impaired driving.

Of course, we've increased by 28 per cent last year and a permanent escalator that'll be 2 per cent continuing each year.

But what's curious is that the members opposite, specifically the member for Brandon West, still has not indicated whether he's going to support this bill. And that should be shocking to all Manitobans. This should be something that we pass immediately, and he can do that by moving past the question period, not delaying this any further and passing this bill this afternoon.

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Can the minister advise or table the data that shows the number of Manitobans charged with impaired driving causing death or bodily harm as well as the number who refused to provide a sample?

**Mr. Wiebe:** We've made that information available to the critic, and certainly we can make sure that the member opposite maybe wants to talk to the critic and get on the same page.

This is about strengthening our legislation around impaired driving. It's absolutely imperative that we move forward on this. For somebody who has a second offence in Manitoba of causing bodily harm through an impaired driving charge, we think it's absolutely clear that they should not be given an op-

portunity to have a third opportunity to hurt somebody on our roadways.

This is important legislation, supported by MADD Canada; members opposite should get on board.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no further questions, we will move on to debate.

### Debate

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any speakers for debate?

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Certainly a great privilege to be up today and speak on this bill. Of course, being an ex-police officer and chief of police, I would support any measures that help law enforcement do their jobs and do it more effectively, making sure that victims of impaired driving are protected across Manitoba.

This is a systemic issue that we've dealt with many, many times throughout the years. But I think what happens, honourable Deputy Speaker, is that people really focus on alcohol impairment. And what people have to realize is that impaired driving or impaired operation of a conveyance is something that really has grown over the years, especially with the introduction of different intoxicating substances, including but not limited to illegal drugs such as methamphetamines, fentanyl, carfentanil and many of the other different stuff. We can see severe intoxication through huffing, and that's using intoxicants through stuff like paint thinners or spray paint or any of these other things.

And I'm proud that the PC government, when they were in power, supported law enforcement and made sure that law enforcement had the tools that they required when they were doing this. So I know, under the previous PC government, funding was provided for roadside screening devices, and that—funny story, I started back in 1990 with using what was called an ALERT. And when you walked up to a car to get a roadside sample, the box you were carrying was literally eight inches by about a foot, and it was something you would have to carry to the cars to get a sample.

And now, with the alcolmeters and the smaller devices, it actually fits within the palm of your hand. And I know that the PC government provided funding for these instruments. They also provided critical funding for areas such as SFST, which stands for standard field sobriety testing, and DRE, which was the drug recognition experts program.

Really interesting, the drug recognition experts spend two weeks in the classroom learning the way the body chemistry works with drugs and with alcohol

and with intoxicants. They learn the pharmaceutical processes that happen within the body.

But, then, they're sent away to an area that has people that volunteer for a program, whether it be in a detention centre—I know commonly was used in Phoenix in Arizona or in British Columbia or some of the other states within the United States. And people would volunteer to be subjects for police officers to actually study and to learn what people's eye reaction is, body reaction, speech, tones, pace, all of these. And they become drug recognition experts and they can give expert testimony if they pass all of the criterium set down by the courts.

So again, when we talk about the funds and the money and the availability that was put forward to—I know the Brandon Police Service, but I know globally to all of the police services in Manitoba funded under the previous PC government—I'm sure that that saved thousands of lives and allowed for the police officers to have the expertise that they required while they were going through their paces involving impaired driving and stuff.

So just to answer one of my colleague's questions—the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth), he asked about some statistics and, unfortunately, the latest statistics that could be 'frovided' to us were that during the time in 2023, five drivers were charged with impaired driving causing death, while 23 were charged with impaired driving causing bodily harm. At the time of the briefing, the minister didn't have the number that refused to provide breath samples in any of those.

So again, I look forward to further debate on this, honourable Speaker. And thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any further speakers for debate?

Seeing none, I'll put—is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Question before the House is second reading of Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures).

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion is accordingly adopted—oh.

\* (15:40)

## Recorded Vote

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader):** A recorded vote, please.

**The Deputy Speaker:** A recorded vote has been requested, call in the members.

*The Speaker in the Chair*

\* (16:40)

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm directing the bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is third-second reading of Bill 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Measures).

## Division

*A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:*

## Ayes

*Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cook, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Goertzen, Guenter, Hiebert, Jackson, Kennedy, Khan, King, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Loiselle, Maloway, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Stone, Wharton, Wiebe, Wowchuk.*

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 50, Nays 0.

**The Speaker:** The motion is accordingly passed.

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill 32—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

#### (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities)

**The Speaker:** As previously announced, we will now proceed to second reading of Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities).

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations (Mr. Simard), that Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wiebe:** It is indeed a pleasure to rise in the House today for second reading of Bill 32, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities).

Our government was clear that we were going to take a different approach. We were going to be tough on crime and we were going to be tough on the causes of crime.

And we recognized very early on that it was important that we go after those drug trafficking activities that are happening in our communities. We know that this is a major problem that was ignored under the previous government, that the PCs never took seriously.

And so it was important that we made a statement. It was important that we made a statement early on by bringing forward our unexplained wealth act as one of the first bills that I brought forward to this House. That, of course, that important legislation, goes after those drug traffickers. It goes after those folks who are bringing toxic drugs into our communities and it sends a message to them that organized crime has no place in our communities, that toxic drugs have no place in our communities and that we are going to get tough on those criminals.

And so we brought that legislation forward here in the Legislature, and what happened? Well, the members opposite, who like to talk tough about crime, they like to sort of say that they're the ones who can—the only ones that can do something about crime in our community. And even today, even now, they work themselves up into a frenzy—they work themselves up into a frenzy—patting each other on the back, saying okay, now—now—this time—this time—we're going to do something.

When given the opportunity, what, in fact, did they do, Honourable Speaker? What did they do? Well, I hear from the honourable House leader, and

who knows very well what they did, and that is to block and delay and to talk out and to use all kinds of procedural maneuvers that I guess sound pretty cute to them in their caucus meetings. They think it's a bit of a laugh in their caucus meetings.

Meanwhile, Honourable Speaker, we're out in the communities, we're talking to law enforcement, we're talking to community leaders, we're talking to those who are affected by crime and by violence in our streets, and they are—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

I realize it's late in the day, but the same rules still apply. Hollering back and forth across, I can't hear what's being said. I need to hear, so the members will contain themselves.

**Mr. Wiebe:** But, you see, this is all they've got. They've got the heckling and they've got the laughing, and I hear them supporting, you know, certain federal candidates who've got one-liners and quips. But they've got no solutions, because when they were in government, crime got worse, and they never supported the kind of work that we're doing when it comes to the unexplained wealth act or this bill, Bill 32, to empower communities and stop drug dealers in our communities.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is before the House again, the honourable minister will have unlimited time remaining.

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

Think people seem to forget that they're supposed to be quiet when I'm speaking.

The hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		Employment and Income Assistance Rates	
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Lamoureux	751
Bill 44—The Matriarch Circle Act and Amendments to The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act (Ribbon Skirt Day)		Fontaine	751
Fontaine	741	School and PCH Capital Investments	
		Dela Cruz	752
Bill 43—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act		Sala	752
Wiebe	741	US Tariffs on Steel Industry	
Bill 205—The Budget Impact Reporting Act		Perchotte	753
Wasyliw	741	Moses	753
<b>Members' Statements</b>		<b>Petitions</b>	
Weiming Zhao		Breast Screening	
Simard	742	Balcaen	753
Gerda Manitoba Steel Mill		Cook	754
Perchotte	742	MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility	
Oh Doughnuts and Planet Pantry		Nesbitt	754
Asagwara	743	Teaching Certification	
Winter Activities in Lac du Bonnet		Perchotte	755
Ewasko	743	MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility	
Good Neighbours Active Living Centre		Schuler	755
Schott	744	Medical Assistance in Dying	
<b>Oral Questions</b>		Stone	756
Individuals Charged with Drug Trafficking		Breast Screening	
Ewasko	745	Wharton	757
Kinew	745	Provincial Road 275	
Manitoba's Inflation Rate		Wowchuk	757
Ewasko	746	Provincial Trunk Highways 12 and 210	
Kinew	746	Lagassé	758
Education Property Taxes		New Neepawa Health Centre	
Stone	747	Bereza	758
Sala	747	Byram	759
Education Property Taxes		Ewasko	759
Jackson	748	Removal of Federal Carbon Tax	
Schmidt	749	Guenter	760
Individuals Living in Homeless Encampments		Supports for Manitobans with Learning Disabilities	
Hiebert	749	Lamoureux	760
Smith	750	Morden Waste Water Project	
Oak Tree Towers Residents		Hiebert	761
Bereza	750	Provincial Road 227	
Smith	751	King	761

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **Debate on Second Readings**

Bill 5—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act  
(Impaired Driving Measures)

##### Questions

Balcaen	762
Wiebe	762
Narh	763

##### Debate

Balcaen	763
---------	-----

#### **Second Readings**

Bill 32—The Residential Tenancies Amendment  
Act (Measures to Address Unlawful Activities)

Wiebe	764
-------	-----

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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