



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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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
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	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>	Spruce Woods	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Earth Day

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, today I rise in recognition of Earth Day, a day that brings people together across the globe in a shared commitment to protect the planet we call home.

This year's theme, Our Power, Our Planet, reminds us that climate change is not just a global challenge, but a global call to action.

I'm proud to share the ways that our government is investing to protect Manitoba's natural environment and support local climate leadership.

Just earlier today, I announced that we're investing over \$2 million in community-led climate action, including through the Climate Action Fund with 35 new projects that cut emissions, improve resilience and foster innovation across the province, from Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation to the Pembina Valley, Dauphin, Bissett and more.

I want to highlight the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the RM of Rosser who are here in the gallery today and joining us as recipients of the Climate Action Fund.

We are also expanding access—pardon me—to greener transportation, with rebates for Manitobans purchasing electric vehicles and funding to install new EV chargers across rural, northern and Indigenous communities.

Our government is investing in climate education with \$200,000 supporting the University of Winnipeg's Prairie Climate Centre, helping ensure Manitobans have the data and tools they need to build more resilient communities.

This year's Earth Day theme, Our Power, Our Planet, also echoes in our government's affordable energy strategy.

Our government will make it easier for Manitobans to switch to heat pumps and is exploring the feasibility of geothermal and district energy systems, using the power around us to heat and cool our homes.

The call for new wind power in partnership with Indigenous Nations and communities builds on Manitoba's green energy advantage and adds prosperity and energy to our landscape, and this call is just the start.

Honourable Speaker, our commitment to nature runs just as deep. Budget 2025 brings major investments in Manitoba's provincial parks and protected natural spaces, ensuring these vital landscapes are maintained and accessible for all. And best yet, provincial park entry is free this year.

We continue to support community leadership in conservation through the next step towards protection of the Seal River Watershed, one of the world's last great intact boreal regions. Just last week, our Premier (Mr. Kinew) announced the protection of the Lemay Forest in Winnipeg, recognizing that the public interest is best served by preserving the area's gift, both cultural and natural.

Honourable Speaker, I'm so proud to stand as the Minister of Environment and Climate Change amongst my esteemed colleagues to continue to do the work Manitobans have sent us here to do.

This includes work across departments, including investments to protect Lake Winnipeg through investment in Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre and includes displacing diesel use in northern communities and committing to nation-building projects like the energy link to Nunavut announced last week. It also includes my colleague's introduction today of a bill to establish climate action month.

It is also such a privilege to meet and learn from so many Manitobans in organizations, businesses and communities who are doing the work each day to protect nature all around us, to push for more climate action and to educate the next generation to think bigger and to be bolder.

In addition to celebrating this day, I want to sincerely thank those Manitobans—the scientists, advocates, educators, water and land protectors—for their dedication and commitment to doing more and pushing us all to do better.

I know that we can and that we will, so that we can enjoy the incredible beauty and bounty of this province for generations to come.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize April 22 as Earth Day, an annual global event dedicated to demonstrating support for environmental protection and sustainability. Earth Day serves as an important reminder of the collective responsibility we share to protect and preserve the health of our planet for generations to come.

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is Our Power, Our Planet. This year, the focus is on transitioning to renewable energy sources and tripling the global generation of clean electricity by 2030. Achieving this goal is vital for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and advancing sustainable development worldwide.

Honourable Speaker, here in Manitoba we are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful and ecologically diverse regions of the world. From the prairies to the forests, lakes and rivers, Manitoba is a province rich in natural beauty. Our environment provides us with countless resources, but it also requires our protection.

I encourage all Manitobans to take some time this Earth Day to appreciate the stunning landscapes that surround us. Go for a walk, visit a local park or simply spend time outdoors. Enjoy the beauty of our province. Whether it's the calming effect of a walk along one of our many trails or the opportunity to witness the vibrant ecosystems in our provincial parks, let us reflect on the importance of preserving these natural spaces for future generations.

Honourable Speaker, it is crucial that we continue to invest in clean energy and conservation efforts. We must ensure that our province remains a place where nature thrives, so that future generations can enjoy the same beauty and resources that we do today.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

MLA Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward today's statement.

Today is Earth Day. For 60 years, Earth Day has been about educating and raising awareness of the need to increase environmental protection. It includes a wide range of events co-ordinated globally by over 1 billion people in more than 193 countries.

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is Our Power, Our Planet, encouraging collective action to boost renewable energy and clean electricity by 2030.

Unfortunately, such encouragement is being challenged by climate change deniers and the US presidency, whose rapid-fire efforts to side-step federal regulations on oil, gas and coal development puts decades of work, education and advancements in jeopardy.

Meanwhile, here in Canada, we are fortunate that over the past five years, we have taken significant and urgent action to address the climate crisis. We have done this by phasing out traditional coal-fired power plants and embracing renewable energy and by investing in made-in-Canada technologies and clean solutions.

We have also improved building codes and standards so homes and buildings use less energy while supporting cleaner alternatives to diesel in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

These were all designed to keep emissions in line with what science says is needed and to ensure Canada is well-positioned to take advantage of the significant economic opportunities associated with a growing low-carbon global economy.

Manitoba has so much potential to contribute to the global need for solar power and electric vehicle infrastructure. It was great to see today's announcement.

In closing, I'd like to encourage everyone to join in with Earth action day by continuing to educate, advocate and mobilize in their communities.

Happy Earth Day.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to members' statements, there's some guests in the gallery that have to depart before we do all the members' statements.

So I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today, from Matray *[phonetic]* school grade 6 class, teachers and teacher assistants Reynold Fast, Brien Dastas, Tammy Kelts; and students Hudson Bee, Colin Boucher, Jace Bridal, Paulinda Clemente, Aryanna Coutu-Desjarlis, Riel DeLara, Steven Delaronde, Tierra Kakewash-Demas, Nevaeh Morley, Nya Parisian-Chol, Isaiah Roulette, Raelynn Whitehead, Rehtaeh Wilson, Jana Berens-Bland, Mariel Gallor, Ethan Hudson, Denver Morriseau, Lucas Santos, Donna Thompson, Trinh Thy, who are all guests of the honourable Minister of Housing, Homelessness and Addictions, the honourable member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith).

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

* (13:40)

Further, we have in the public gallery from Living Hope School, seven students under the direction of Sarah Loewen, and they are guests of the honourable member for Agassiz (Ms. Byram).

And we welcome you all here today as well.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Island Lakes Residents' Group

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to rise in recognition of Island Lakes Residents' Group and their 35 years of contributing to our community.

Residents' organizations play an important role in community building, advocating for community needs and in helping shape future community investments.

The organization was formed in the early years of Island Lakes as a conduit for residents to advocate to developers and different levels of government regarding community needs. As Island Lakes grew and matured, the needs evolved. This completely volunteer-run organization has made many tangible contributions to the area. Their accomplishments include the development of area parks, a splashpad, walking trails, picnic shelters and successfully advocating for a community school. The annual community cleanup and barbeque is coming up on May 24 and everyone is invited.

One of my favourite projects is the Adopt-a-Pot program. For the past 25 years, 100 planters have been spread out along major arteries and walking

paths. The Island Lakes Residents' Group has co-ordinated community members to plant and care for the planters every year.

I have adopted pots over the past couple of years and can vouch for the experience. Neighbours are always wanting to chat as you walk down the street with a watering can. We have with us many current and past volunteers, including Bobbie White, Jessica Burtnick, Helen Lymburner, Val Zurrin, Rolph Zurrin and Chantal Thurston.

I must acknowledge Lindsey Wilson in particular. Lindsey was a founding member and has been the chairman for the group since 1998. His advocacy for and his commitment to his community have been unwavering. He has also supported neighbouring communities in establishing their own groups.

Thank you to the countless people who have contributed to the work of the Island Lakes Residents' Group over the decades. Your investment of time and care have left a legacy of opportunity and community care in the neighbourhood.

Highway 45 Upgrades

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Yes, Honourable Speaker, I rise today to commend the municipal leaders of communities in my constituency who are trying to draw the attention of the Kinew NDP government to the horribly deteriorating condition of Highway 45 in that region and the urgent need for upgrades to this important traffic route.

Elected officials and administrators in Rossburn, Riding Mountain West, Russel-Binscarth and Waywayseecappo First Nation are united with other stakeholders in pushing for an investment from this provincial government in significant repairs to Highway 45. Such an investment in—a long-term fix to the highway would be made, more importantly, in safety for families and children, in commercial vehicle accessibility, in emergency services and health-care access and in the region's economy.

The quality of life has worsened as Highway 45 has become more dangerous and been allowed to steadily crack and crumble over time.

Highway 45 is a crucial route for families, commuters, commercial trucks and emergency vehicles, through—this artery has remained in severe disrepair over many years. Unfortunately, the Kinew NDP has been unresponsive to a call for action on the highway from leaders and residents of the region's

communities, even as a—even as serious crashes there have worsened and become more frequent.

The communities want Highway 45 to meet acceptable standards and to support the growth and well-being of the region, to attract new business and sustainable development.

Most of all, they simply want Highway 45 to allow safe and efficient transportation for everyone in the area.

They can only hope the Kinew NDP government at some time finally sees the need to make this safety a reality.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Kirkfield Park Gives Back

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): After a few weeks of sunshine to bring out the green in our city's landscape, spring is finally here and folks in Kirkfield Park are looking forward to getting out in the community and giving back.

For many, the winter months are met with isolation, and as the snow melts and we welcome the spring and summer season, there are plenty of opportunities for neighbours to meet new people and create new beginnings. This is why I am looking forward to celebrating the start of spring here in Manitoba with our annual Kirkfield Park community cleanup and barbeque.

Spring community cleanups are a great and accessible way for folks to come together and show their love and pride for their community. They help you connect with your neighbours and find common ground. In taking care of the spaces around us, we grow deeper connections to our community and pay better attention to the things happening around us.

Honourable Speaker, we all have a part to play in taking care of our community, and the Grace Hospital Foundation leads by example. This year, May 9 is Grace Hospital Day. Hosted by the Grace Hospital Foundation, Grace Hospital Day features live entertainment, food, refreshments, a petting zoo, face painting and the talents of local kids' entertainers as a way to celebrate and give thanks to the hospital's staff, volunteers, patients and the wider supporting community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking all the Manitobans who've donated, volunteered or helped raise awareness to support the Grace Hospital, and to thank all my neighbours across Kirkfield Park for

their generous dedication to taking care of their community.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

OTTER Home Inc.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Overcoming Trauma Through Everlasting Relationships is a unique and transformative reunification and recovery program for women and children located in the town of Carberry. The program provides a personalized approach to mental health and addiction support in a setting that allows mothers and children to heal together with essential care, education, support with individualized learning plans.

I would like to welcome to the gallery here today Tessa Small-McPhee, Catherine Arnold, who are the cofounders of OTTER Home Inc., and Teague Luhr, participant, co-ordinator and mentor.

Tessa is a dedicated registered psychiatric nurse, and Catherine is a Métis registered social worker. Both are committed professionals who have not only made a significant contribution to OTTER but also have poured their heart and soul into this safe haven.

I had the opportunity to tour this facility and see first-hand the extraordinary efforts these two women and staff have made to foster reconciliation and family reunification in a culturally safe setting. The facility is designed with participants' needs in mind. Two wings feature single and double rooms, a private counselling room, program area, common room and modern kitchen where participants can cook, bake and create memories together.

The eight-week programs are tailored by trauma-and-attachment specialists who are available for all participants, including the children, ensuring that healing is a family affair. Currently there are four families enrolled, with many more on the wait-list.

The program recognizes that healing doesn't end when a participant leaves. OTTER provides comprehensive after-care planning, connecting participants with job training programs and employment resources before their stay concludes.

Thank you to all of the staff at OTTER Home for their work and guiding those who are on their wellness journey.

OTTER is not just a program; it is a community of hope, healing and transformation. Together, let us build stronger families, healthier communities, brighter futures, and I urge the provincial government

to consider supporting and investing in OTTER Home Inc. We all know healing begins at home.

Thank you.

Ravi Ramberran

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I rise today to recognize a remarkable individual in my constituency of St. James, Ravi Ramberran.

He and his family have joined us here today in the gallery and I would like to thank him for serving our constituency and beyond as a restaurateur and a highly active community member. Ravi serves up great food and good times at his four restaurants, one of which we are proud to have in our constituency, the St. James Burger & Chip Co.

Through his businesses, Ravi gives back in any way he can, such as when he donated \$3,000 to cut down on registration fees for kids playing with the St. James Rods Crunchers football team. He also works alongside Sleep in Heavenly Peace, which builds beds and delivers them to kids in need. Back in December, he was proud to deliver his 1,000th bed.

In 2022, he collected \$30,000 worth of menstrual products to donate to various women's shelters and high schools. He also works with The Dream Factory to make an unforgettable day for sick kids in his restaurant, the Dreamland Diner, where they bring in DJs, superheroes and princesses, and serve a hearty breakfast of ice cream.

Ravi is also very passionate about fighting crime in our city and is a board member for Crime Stoppers. He organized the first ever ride for crime, which brings together motorcyclists to raise money for Crime Stoppers. Last year's ride had 65 participants, and an incredible 300 riders have signed up for this year's Ride for Crime.

* (13:50)

While I could go on about the endless support he's provided for folks in St. James and beyond, I'd like to ensure that Ravi knows just how much of an inspiration he is to all of us. You've shown that when we're passionate, and when we rally behind community, anything is possible.

I think I speak on behalf of all of St. James when I say thank you, that we're proud of you for your endless dedication and commitment to helping others.

Thank you, Ravi.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Death of Pope Francis Acknowledgements

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, throughout his life, Pope Francis deepened the faith of millions. He was a voice for the voiceless, walked alongside the poor and disabled and advanced reconciliation where it was needed most: between nations, within the Church and among people divided

In his Easter vigil homily, Pope Francis reminded us that, and I quote: our whole life can be a presence of hope, end quote, lived out through our words and our small daily acts.

In his Easter Sunday message, he appealed to all those in positions of political authority to, and I quote: use the resources available to help the needy, to fight hunger and to encourage initiatives that promote development. End quote. Faith is not just what we believe but how we serve.

For Christians and Catholics in Manitoba and those mourning around the world, let the life and message of Pope Francis keep your hearts filled with renewed hope. May God bless his soul, and may he rest in peace.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): On behalf of the government of Manitoba, we want to extend and offer our condolences to Catholics across our province, across the country and certainly across the globe.

Pope Francis will be remembered for his humility and his commitment to service of all people. I'm sure we've all seen examples of his efforts to unify people across the globe from all communities, all faiths, all lived experiences and identities: a really important message about valuing one another as people, something that will live long on.

His apology to Indigenous peoples in Canada for the wrongs of the past was an important step on the path to reconciliation; it was meaningful for many, many Manitobans and many folks across our country and across the world.

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

Violent Crime Incidents Release of Repeat Offenders

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Now I know, Honourable Speaker—to switch gears a little bit and on to a brighter note, I know that all of us in this Chamber are excited to have witnessed the Winnipeg Jets go on to a 2-0 lead in the opening round of the series, and I know that everyone in this Chamber is going to be cheering for them loud and proud this coming Thursday night.

But, Honourable Speaker, over this past weekend, we saw some more concerning criminal acts, with a machete attack in the Daniel McIntyre area of the West End; 15-year-old girl and 18-year-old man were rushed to hospital in critical and unstable condition.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised—he promised, Honourable Speaker—to stop violent crime in his Throne Speech on November 19. He promised his machete bill would help stop these attacks, but we continue to see rising violent crime in Winnipeg. It's been 18 months and things are only getting worse under this Premier, Honourable Speaker.

When will this Premier deliver on his election promises or, Honourable Speaker—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, I will acknowledge the Jets and the Whiteout because the Leader of the Opposition led with that. I want to say congratulations to the Jets on starting off at 2-0, at home. Celebrating the Whiteout—I don't know, Honourable Speaker, about you, but I was wearing white all weekend.

Certainly our Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has done a tremendous job, really taking important action to make sure that folks are safe, not only in our downtown community but across the province. And I want to acknowledge the fact that this minister has done something that no other minister in this country has done: banned machetes from being sold on Amazon and at Walmart.

Huge step; much more to do.

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

Mr. Ewasko: So, again, Honourable Speaker, the Premier seemed to be silent on his potential Cabinet shuffle coming up in the next couple weeks.

Under the Premier, the punishment seems to never match the crime, Honourable Speaker. He made promises—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —to get elected, but so far, the only action was writing a letter to the federal minister on their way out the door. His inaction on violent crime and bail reform is having real-world consequences.

Last night, police interrupted a robbery and an assault of a young man and woman with a firearm. I table this release for the Premier. Two counts of armed robbery; charge for possession of a weapon despite prohibition order; a charge for failure to comply with a sentence, but the suspect was quickly released.

Why is this Premier content with a criminal justice system where it doesn't matter how many crimes you commit; everyone seems to be let out, Honourable Speaker?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, seems the member opposite is projecting. There is a change about to happen in about a week that he sure knows about on that side of the House.

Honourable Speaker, to his second question, I do want to acknowledge that the victims of those incidents have been upgraded, to our knowledge, to stable. Want to recognize that they are living with the real impacts of those incidents and we are thinking about them, their families and communities.

Our Minister of Justice has worked very hard to take very real steps to make our communities safer—you know, the machete ban is just one example—other investments to making our communities safe.

The previous government fired dozens of WPS officers from our communities. Our government is doing the opposite and hiring them back to our communities to keep our communities safer for all Manitobans.

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

Rise in Anti-Semitism Anti-Semitic Graffiti in Tuxedo

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, this is the same Health Minister that not long ago would chastise members in this House for sending over thoughts and prayers to the victims of any crime.

Honourable Speaker, not only are we seeing rising and out-of-control violent crime, the past year we saw rising hate crimes. Over the weekend, vandals sprayed anti-Semitic and hateful graffiti on Jewish candidate signs and park benches in Tuxedo.

After community members were subjected to symbols of hate defacing community centres, now some residents of Tuxedo woke up to that anti-Semitism in their own yards.

We are waiting for the Premier (Mr. Kinew) or the MLA for Tuxedo to condemn these hateful acts. There's no place, Honourable Speaker, in our electoral system or in this great province of ours for these hateful crimes.

Can the Premier explain why violence and hate crime is rising under his government?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, we condemn any and all acts of anti-Semitism, any and all acts of hate in our communities. They have no place in our province. They have no place in our country.

My understanding is that those incidents are being investigated actively, as they should be. We want to see people come together. We want to see people be celebrated for what makes them unique individuals. And our government is focused on bringing people together and taking real action to make our communities safer.

We have a dedicated prosecutor now in Manitoba to address specifically hate crimes. That is a real step in the direction of making Manitobans more safe in our province. We know there's much more work to do. Seven and a half years under the previous government didn't get it done. We're focused on making Manitoba safer for all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, Manitoba has seen a troubling rise in anti-Semitic incidents, including attacks on synagogues and other Jewish institutions.

Following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, we have seen increased attacks on Jewish Canadians. Anti-Semitic graffiti was painted on a west Winnipeg community centre during the last days of Hanukkah in what the president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg described as an act of, and I quote, pure hatred, end quote.

Brent McNeil, president of the west side community centre, said at least five swastikas were painted on the back of the building, and we on this side of the House would like to thank the WPS for their hard work on apprehending the culprit.

Honourable Speaker, I ask the Premier again: What is he doing personally to ensure that these hate crimes do not continue?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I would say first and foremost that acts of hate have no place in our communities anywhere in Manitoba; nowhere in our country. On this side of the House, our government has been focused on bringing people together, on celebrating our differences and recognizing that diversity is one of our greatest strengths as a province.

Now, I have to say that that is in stark contrast to the former PC government that went out in the last election with their objective being to divide Manitobans. It was shameful.

* (14:00)

Now we have legislation being brought forward in this House that says ad campaigns like that should never happen again. It was a heinous moment in Manitoba's history and they're blocking that legislation, Honourable Speaker. So which side are they on?

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

OTTER Home Addiction Treatment Request for Provincial Funding

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): OTTER Home in Carberry is a first-of-its-kind reunification and recovery program that helps mothers heal without losing their children. They provide live-in addiction support, therapy, parenting training, cultural healing and pathways to housing and employment, all under one roof. It's innovative and it's working, and it's already saving lives and keeping families together. Yet, when they ask the NDP government to—for support to expand their day program, they were denied.

Why are the NDP refusing to fund addictions treatment in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): That's simply not true. We are funding addictions treatment right across our province. In fact, in our first year alone, we've invested over \$60 million into addictions recovery to get people into treatment that they need.

Budget 2025 is bringing addictions treatment to hundreds of Manitobans.

For years, the PCs left Manitobans in encampments, without the supports they need. We're not taking that approach. We're going to meet people where they're at. We're investing. We're getting the supports where they're needed, something that people on—folks on the other side didn't do. They turned a blind eye, acted like there was no issue, and left people without the supports that they needed.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Stop the clock for a minute. I just caution the minister that using terms such as simply not true is very close to being unparliamentary. There's other ways of expressing their thoughts that—just try and use the proper language and we'll all find a better way forward.

Ms. Byram: Last week, over a year after they first promised it, the NDP finally cut a cheque for the Anne Oake Recovery Centre, and a worthy project it is, with nearly an identical model to OTTER Home.

While the centre is still in the planning stages and won't be operational for a few years, the funding is already in place. OTTER Home is already helping women right now, with a similar proven model. With provincial support, they could help even more.

Why can't this government fund both projects, when they share the same goal of helping women recover and keep their families together?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I want to just acknowledge OTTER Home and the folks that came out today to hear QP and the member's statement, and the really good work that they do. And the member opposite is correct. Last week we were very proud to announce \$1.5 million to support the Anne Oake Recovery Centre that will be doing transformative work in ensuring that Manitobans get the treatments that they need while keeping their families together.

We support all organizations that do that very sacred heart medicine, and we can—we sincerely thank OTTER Home.

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

Ms. Byram: I look forward to seeing that support for OTTER Home. It's breaking the cycle before it starts, keeping moms with their babies, keeping kids out of CFS and giving women a real chance to recover and

rebuild. Their program is affordable, effective and culturally grounded. Provincial funding could help them grow and make care even more accessible today.

Addictions treatment services are desperately needed across the province, but particularly in rural Manitoba. Representatives from OTTER Home are here with us in the gallery today.

Will the minister commit to meeting with them today?

MLA Fontaine: Once again, I want to say miigwech to OTTER Home for the important work that they do.

But the—it really does beg the question, why, in seven and a half years, members opposite—and that member asking the question—didn't advocate for more funding for addictions treatment. In fact, as my colleague often says in this Chamber, each and every one of them buried their head in the sand and acted as if addictions doesn't exist in Manitoba. They certainly—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —didn't care about keeping women with their children in seeking addiction.

So I find it quite ironic and, really, the audacity of the member to stand up and ask why we're not doing the work that they never even thought of ever doing.

Drug and Weapon Seizure Release of Individuals on Bail

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): The NDP made a big show of promising that they would end violent crime and hold drug dealers responsible for poisoning our communities. On April 17, the guns and gangs unit determined poisonous drugs were being trafficked out of a residence in the Burrows neighbourhood. I table the list of these seized items: cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, T3 pills, Canadian currency, sawed-off shotgun, assorted ammunition, and the list goes on.

Of course, as soon as the minister heard about this arrest, he ordered their release back into the community.

Can the minister identify what items seized are the benefit to our community, as he seems to believe?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Manitobans know that we're serious about getting tough on crime and also tough on the causes of crime.

But they also know that we've been left in a real hole left by the previous government. Seven and a half years, we know that crime was skyrocketing: a 40 per cent—an increase in homicides; a 44 per cent increase in attempted murders; a 39 per cent increase in firearms offences; a 21 per cent increase in robberies. The list goes on and on and on, Honourable Speaker.

Meanwhile, members opposite did nothing. In fact, they did less than nothing: they cut funding and cut officers on our streets here in the city of Winnipeg. We're taking a different approach. We're going to make our streets safer, and we're going to do it in conjunction with law enforcement.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon West, on a supplementary question.

Child Sex Offenders Release of Individuals on Bail

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): We have previously risen to share our shock that this Minister of Justice released a child pornographer on bail. At this time, the NDP MLA shouted and screamed that it was unfair to cite a single example.

In March of 2025, the Winnipeg Police Service's Child Abuse Unit began investigating an incident involving the luring of a female victim in her mid-teens. The perpetrator has been charged with sexual assault, sexual exploitation and luring a person under 18 years of age by means of telecommunication. And, of course, he was released by this minister.

Of the three charges, which one does the Minister of Justice feel makes our community safer?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, once again, Honourable Speaker, either the member opposite shows a fundamental misunderstanding of how the justice system works in this country or he's misrepresenting the truth here in the Legislature.

Either way, Honourable Speaker, he's doing a disservice to the people of Manitoba, who know that our government is taking real steps when it comes to bail reform. That means more officers on the street. That means more resources for our Crown prosecutors. That means uniting every single premier across the country to write to the federal government to ask the Prime Minister and ask every federal candidate to step up and show real bail reform.

That's the real action that we're taking. Members opposite, what did they do? They cut the electronic

monitoring program and they said, well, that's good enough for us.

Not good enough for us and not good enough for the people of Manitoba, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please. Stop the clock.

Once again, I must caution the minister about the language that they're using. To suggest that someone is misrepresenting the truth is suggesting perhaps that they're lying, and we all know that that's not allowed under our rules. So if the minister in the future could rephrase his statement so that they're not doing what that does, which is clearly in violation of our rules.

Mr. Balcaen: Winnipeg Police Service's ICE Unit recently charged an individual with possession of child pornography, accessing child pornography, importing and distributing child pornography, invitation to sexual touching and making or printing or publishing child pornography.

Most parents would feel safer knowing this person was held securely. The only person who disagrees with this is the Justice Minister who again released them on bail.

Would the minister share what crimes would—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Balcaen: —actually keep someone in custody, because we obviously know the crimes that won't.

Mr. Wiebe: Seven and a half years the members opposite did nothing, did worse than nothing by cutting funding, of course, to municipal law enforcement, to the City of Winnipeg, 55 net less officers here in the city of Winnipeg.

But it gets worse, of course, because the member opposite knows full well that during his time as the chief of police in the city of Brandon, there was an 80 per cent increase in weapon crimes. Violent crime went up by 29 percent, and yet funding was frozen for seven and a half years.

* (14:10)

We've given a 30 per cent increase to law enforcement, including \$2 million for the city of Brandon that the member opposite voted against. We'll take no lessons from members opposite.

We're going to continue to work with law enforcement. We're going to make our province safer.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Manitoba Nurses Union Working Conditions Concerns

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The Manitoba Nurses Union continues to sound the alarm louder than ever. In a public statement, they wrote, and I quote, our members are running on fumes and empty promises. They say the NDP has not moved, quote, fast enough, boldly enough or transparently enough to deliver on their many promises. And nurses have been clear: they are not just frustrated; they're exhausted; they're angry, and they're wondering what, if anything, this Health Minister is doing to fix it.

So I ask: What is it going to take for this Health Minister to start listening to the people holding our health-care system together and actually acting on their very real concerns?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I want to thank the nurses that I had the opportunity to chat with and meet with over the weekend—several of them. I had a lengthy conversation with a nurse, actually, on Sunday afternoon, who shared with me not only her concerns and what they're navigating in health care but also her ideas, their solutions and their hopes for health care. And she reiterated to me that this was the first time in years that somebody in government took the time to listen to them at any point.

And so I want to say thank you to the nurses. Thank you to the nurses who are meeting with our government, who are bringing their ideas forward and who are working with us to make health care stronger. We know you didn't have anybody who would listen to you for seven and a half years. You have a government who's here for you.

We're going to take care of the issues that you're bringing forward by working together in our health-care system here in the province.

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

Mrs. Cook: Well, while the minister is busy patting themselves on the back for meeting with a nurse over the weekend, the Manitoba Nurses Union launched a new advertising campaign. New ads have shot up across Winnipeg that read, quote, same shift, different day, with a bit of creative wordplay imagery. I'll table those for the minister. And you don't need a degree in critical thinking to figure out what these nurses really mean.

This is the level of frustration health-care workers have reached in Manitoba under this Health Minister. These nurses say they're done being polite, done sugar-coating things and done waiting.

When nurses are literally spelling it out in giant letters that the NDP are breaking their promises, how much louder do they need to be before the NDP starts listening?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, this is the same member who was advising Heather Stefanson to fire hundreds of nurses. This is the same member that was advising the previous government to close emergency rooms. That member didn't care about health-care workers then; she certainly doesn't care about them now.

That member stands up and criticizes our government for listening to health-care workers. It's embarrassing, Honourable Speaker.

On this side of the House, we've been taking action. We understand: seven and a half years of cuts and closures has done tremendous damage. Things are so very hard in the health-care system, but we are moving things in the right direction, and we're doing that by listening to health-care workers and by working together, an approach that was missing for far too long by the failed PC administration.

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

Mrs. Cook: Honourable Speaker, let's be clear. These are not anonymous tweets or complaints; these are coming straight from the Manitoba Nurses Union, the largest nursing union in the province.

In another post, they said, quote: There is no point in trying to pretty up one hell of a mess. Unquote. That's not a line from one of my speeches; it's from the president of MNU, who is clearly tired of being asked to be, quote, nicer, by this NDP government while health care falls apart around them.

Nurses say they are again being, quote: gaslit, whitewashed and ignored. MNU was literally begging this Health Minister to show a little humility and a whole lot more urgency.

Does the Health Minister think it's fair or even remotely responsible to keep dodging the nurses who are begging them to do their job?

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would caution the member for Roblin about the language that she is using. Lot of people take that as

being profanity; therefore, it's not allowed in this House.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, there's a huge difference between the former failed PC government and our government. We don't run away from feedback. We don't shy away from criticism. We welcome the voices of all nurses and their representatives into our offices, into this building, so that we can work together, truly collaborate to make health care better.

Our government has hired a net-new 600 nurses to the front lines of our health-care system.

Now, the reality is that we need many, many, many, many more nurses. Hundreds, thousands of nurses fled because the previous government treated them with contempt and disrespect—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Department of Finance Therapy Services Contract

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, more than ever, Manitobans find themselves under increasing financial pressure and stress. Over half of Manitobans struggle paycheque to paycheque. Almost 40 per cent of businesses are looking at layoffs.

But never fear; the Minister of Finance is here.

Why is this minister spending over \$10,000 of taxpayers' money on therapy?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I didn't catch the last part of the member's question, but I will say this team, this government, is proud to be doing the work of making life more affordable every single day.

Honourable Speaker, 25 ways to save in Budget 2025. Let's read the ways that we're providing savings: 10 per cent cut to the gas tax permanently; free park passes for a year; a hydro rate freeze; of course, our universal school nutrition program; and we're making our \$1,600 Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit come online next year. We're reducing costs for Manitobans.

And again, for seven and a half years, Manitobans had a government that wasn't attuned to the challenges they faced. They made life more expensive for almost everybody. We're going to do the opposite. We're going to keep cutting costs, because that's what Manitobans sent us here to do, and they can rely on us to do just that. We're going to get the job done.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Riding Mountain, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Nesbitt: I asked about therapy. The NDP taxpayer-paid counselling service promises, and I quote, safe and private way to explore and to learn about yourself and how you relate to the world.

Thanks to the raise this minister just gave himself, he earns \$170,000 a year. In fact, this minister earns \$65,000—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The honourable minister can respond to the question, but can't raise a point of order.

An Honourable Member: I think I want to raise a point of order. That is inappropriate—

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

The honourable Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), come to order.

You can raise a point of order after, but you can't do it during question period. [interjection] The honourable Minister of Families will come to order.

Mr. Nesbitt: In fact, this minister earns \$65,000-a-year more today than he did two years ago.

While being an MLA can be stressful, why is this Finance Minister billing taxpayers for his personal and, I quote—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: —journey of self-reflection, awareness—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: —and discovery? Why can't this minister pay for his—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The member's time has expired, and I would ask everyone to please calm down.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, I want to make very clear that that line of questioning from that member is deplorable. That line of questioning from that member, clearly green-lit by the Leader of the Opposition, is one of the most shameful moments I have ever witnessed in this Chamber during question period. That member, for his next question, if he gets up, should stand in his place and apologize, not only to the Minister of Finance, but to all members in this House. That is

absolutely unacceptable, embarrassing and unbecoming of any member in this Assembly.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, I want to table a disclosure of contracts from the Minister of Finance's office.

The Minister of Finance's taxpayer-funded—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nesbitt: —therapist advises, and I quote—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

* (14:20)

I'm not going to scream one more time for order in this House.

The member is clearly trying to incite people; he's succeeded. So now let's get back to business and treat each other with some respect.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, these sessions are scheduled for one hour a piece.

How many therapy sessions did the minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

An Honourable Member: Oh, this isn't right.

The Speaker: You're right, this is not right. If you're talking about somebody's personal medical information, that cannot take place in here. *[interjection]*

Order. Let's all just take a moment, calm down.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, that was a government contract that I tabled.

Thank you.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, our government has brought forward many pieces of legislation that put the interests of Manitobans first, and on that side of the House, they stand up and they block that important legislation. We're talking about bills that protect survivors of sexual assault blocked by members on that side of the House. We're talking about legislation that protects seniors from having their homes sold from underneath them blocked by members on that side of the House. We're talking about an approach on this side of the House that brings Manitobans together and protects them across all of our communities.

On this side of the House, we are going to stay focused on bringing Manitobans together and making their lives better.

On that side of the House, they might want to get on board with an approach that puts the people of this province first.

Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin Channel Project First Nations Consultations—Environmental Impacts

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I rise today on behalf of Warren Spence, the manager of Wolverine construction incorporated, based in both Fairford and Winnipeg.

Mr. Spence, like many Manitobans, is concerned about the significant environmental impacts outlined in the federal environmental assessment for the proposed Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin channel project.

Can this government confirm whether a path forward has been found and which First Nations and local communities have been consulted?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I appreciate that question from the independent member.

So I believe that she's asking about a path forward around working with First Nations and Métis communities regarding the channels project. That is work that, unfortunately, was stalled for many, many years under the previous government. Very little work was undertaken, which is why the project really struggled to meet the federal government's expectations for environmental—to pass their environmental legislation.

And so that's the work we've been doing. I'm really pleased with the progress that we're making—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: In September 2023, Wolverine construction submitted two proposals to the Province regarding their potential involvement in Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin channel project. To date, they have not received a response.

Given the change in government, can the minister clarify: is this project still moving ahead, or what is the plan.

MLA Naylor: I think it's been pretty clear from previous questions in the Chamber that the channels project is absolutely moving ahead.

But it is moving ahead in partnership and collaboration with First Nations in this province. We're working closely on an MOU with the IRTC. We're also—there's a number of other First Nations that are involved who are currently receiving follow-up feedback and answers to a number of the questions that they had asked of our government. And we're continuing to do this work.

It's a shame that it was stalled for so many years under the previous government and we've had to pick up where things left off back in 2016.

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

MLA Lamoureux: On July 10, 2024, we wrote to the minister of Municipal and Northern Relations on behalf of Mr. Spence, requesting a meeting about this project. Months later, he was redirected to a different department, and as of today, he still has not heard back.

Mr. Spence is hoping to have a meeting with the department to discuss his proposals and the potential environmental and economic impacts of Lake St. Martin channel.

Will this government commit today to arranging a meeting with Mr. Spence, who has joined us today in the gallery, so that small and Indigenous businesses, like Wolverine construction, can be considered?

MLA Naylor: For the information of the member who's asking the question about a specific company who is applying for a specific project, I would just remind all members of this House that any company in Manitoba can apply when they have the opportunity to apply for a tender. They can respond to request for proposals. That opportunity is wide open.

When it comes specifically to Indigenous involvement in the channels project, in this year's budget, we're—we've set aside \$5 million specifically for community benefit agreements to help support local communities in getting trained up and getting the equipment they need to apply for various opportunities. And we will—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Health-Care Recruitment Number of New Workers

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Honourable Speaker, our government understands that hiring staff and treating them with respect is the key to fixing health care here in Manitoba.

You know, as a first responder, I worked for seven and a half years under that government, unfortunately, and saw the chaos that all their cuts caused first-hand, you know, here in Manitoba.

I'm now with a team who opened a retention and recruitment office; re-established the rural doctor recruitment fund; are actively seizing the opportunity to attract health-care workers from the US instead of sending people away to them. And last year we set a target of hiring 1,000 net-new health-care workers, a goal that we have surpassed.

Can the Minister of Health please update the House on our new staffing numbers and how those front-line workers are helping improve patient care here in Manitoba?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I want to thank my friend for that really important question.

It's true, Honourable Speaker, front-line staff are the key to repairing the damage done over seven and a half years by the previous PC government. We have put enormous effort into retaining and recruiting health-care workers, and I'm happy to say that that work is paying off. We have hired 1,509 net-new health-care workers to the front lines of our health-care system. This includes 600 nurses, 500 health-care aides and over 150 doctors.

I want to thank everyone for helping us to get to this point. We know that things are still challenging, but we know the way that we achieve big things and address challenges in Manitoba is by working together. So let's keep working together to retain and recruit more health-care workers.

Manitoba Hydro Projects Impact on Revenue and Rates

An Honourable Member: Manitobans are questioning this minister's plan for—

The Speaker: Sorry, the honourable member for Midland.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Manitobans are questioning this minister's plans for Manitoba Hydro and how much NDP interference will cost them.

This Premier (Mr. Kinew) continues to flip-flop on his plans, issuing fake directives while increasing Hydro's \$25-billion debt and charging Manitobans 11 per cent in rate hikes. These rate increases, compounded, would be close to a 20 per cent increase.

Now he's announced plans for an uncOSTed transmission line.

When can Manitobans expect accountability from this minister, and how many more rate increases will he set at the Cabinet table to fund his political projects?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Honourable Speaker, after seven and a half years of taking us backwards when it came to energy, this government is getting the job done. Not only—not only—are we keeping rates affordable, and lower, I might add, than the members opposite did even though they did nothing when it came to hydro: no new development, no investment in our infrastructure.

* (14:30)

We're keeping rates lower. We're also building it out and we're going to make sure that we have the energy we need to support homeowners and grow our economy here in Manitoba.

And that's exactly—go ahead, if you want to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

MLA Sala: That's exactly what we're doing, 600 megawatts of wind in partnership with First Nations, and we are going to continue build, build, building Manitoba, and we're going to get the job done.

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

Mrs. Stone: Again, this NDP is using Hydro for self political glorification. Apart from the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) penchant for inventing facts to put a national spotlight on himself, there is the issue of lost revenue and cost implications to Hydro.

In 2010, the NDP signed the Xcel \$3-billion contract over 10 years, so that would be a projected \$300 million in lost revenue per year. I table that for the minister. The NDP have failed to present a realistic plan to replace that lost revenue while growing Hydro's \$25 billion of debt.

Can this minister explain what is the revenue loss to Hydro today, why it hasn't been disclosed and how much it will cost Manitobans in rate hikes?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, one of the things this government is proud of is that we understand the important work that's done by the Public Utilities Board. Manitoba Hydro just submitted a GRA, a general rate application that's going forward, that's being assessed and analyzed. And through that important work, we'll ensure that Manitoba Hydro has the funds it needs to service its debts and do the important work it needs to do.

That's our government's focus. We understand the role of the PUB. What did the members opposite do? They tried to kneecap the role of the PUB and they tried to set Hydro rates at the Cabinet table. We're doing the opposite. We're ensuring that we trust in the PUB, we keep rates low by working with them to ensure Manitobans don't need to overpay while we work through that important public process.

We're going to make sure transparency is in place, unlike what the members opposite had in place for seven and a half years.

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

Mrs. Stone: Despite what this minister says, the fact remains that he is giving himself the ability to set rates at the Cabinet table. This Premier made a fake directive to redirecting US exports. The PUB filings and the IRP from two years ago clearly state the contracts could not be renewed.

Rather than directing this surplus power to support needed capacity during peak times here in Manitoba, he's announced an uncOSTed transmission line. The last time the NDP built a transmission line, it cost Manitobans almost \$5 billion in cost overruns and an increase to Hydro's debt.

Will this minister release the cost projection for the Nunavut line today, or is he hiding the true cost for Manitobans?

MLA Sala: First of all, Honourable Speaker, the critic should become very familiar with what her government tried to do when they were in power.

They tried to bring forward legislation that was setting the rates at the Cabinet table. That was in the bill that they brought forward, and fortunately for Manitobans, we did away with that provision because we trust in the PUB and we know that the best way

to keep rates low is by working through the public regulator.

When it comes to telling our government and lecturing this team about what we should do about energy, I would suggest that the member opposite look at her government's record where, for seven and a half years, they managed to develop how many megawatts? Zero megawatts.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Child Welfare System—Call for Inquiry

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition.

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

On Sunday, February 11, 2024, Manitobans witnessed an unimaginable tragedy when five individuals were murdered.

(2) The victims ranged in age from two months to 30 years. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Brandon West has the floor.

Mr. Balcaen: (3) Manitoba has the second highest rate of intimate partner violence among Canadian provinces, at a rate of 633 per 100,000 people, according to police-reported data from Statistics *[phonetic]* Canada.

(4) Public reporting indicates that on December 9, 2023, Myah-Lee left a voicemail for her Child and Family Services worker in which she pled to be moved out of her home in Carman.

Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth noted: This case highlights the failures of government to respond to our recommendations, end quote.

(6) On March 6, 2024, the Minister of Families, the MLA for St. Johns, indicated on the public record that she was too busy to discuss issues surrounding children in care, including calling a public inquiry into this unprecedented tragedy.

(7) The last inquiry held in Manitoba was for the death of five-year-old Phoenix Sinclair in 2008.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Families to develop better policies to protect youth in care from potential physical or psychological abuse; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately establish a public inquiry to identify the failing of the child-welfare system and ensure that no call from a child ever goes unanswered or ignored again.

And, Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Jessiah Clark, Angela Malo, Shelayne Bloomer and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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 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.

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

(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 much-needed relief.

This petition is signed by Miles Glanfield, Alexander Pynoo, Robert Mazur and many, many more fine Manitobans, Honourable Speaker.

* (14:40)

The Speaker: No further petitions?

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Despite repeatedly violating his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets, ultimately claiming Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

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

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

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

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

(7) This government must prioritize public safety over leniency toward repeat offenders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

To call on the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allows for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This is signed by John Birston, June Reyes, Mike Acuna and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

(6) There are currently hundreds of children on a wait-list for child care in Headingley. The daycare operator in Phoenix School has been told that they will continue to have space within the school for the 2024-2025 school year only, that further expansion of

child-care space within the school is not possible and that space may be reduced moving forward due to the shortage of classrooms. If new space is not constructed as planned, many families may be left without child care.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Heside Iredohude, Marcy Armstrong, Charlene Henry and many, many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Illegal border crossings into Manitoba have increased 14 per cent in 2024, raising significant public safety and security concerns, particularly in border communities.

(2) Changes to the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement have driven migrants deeper into hiding to avoid apprehension, making law enforcement efforts more difficult.

(3) Border patrol officials believe that criminal organizations, including Mexican cartels, are involved in smuggling operations at the border, posing serious security threats to Manitoba.

(4) Human smuggling networks are abandoning vulnerable migrants, including families, in isolated and dangerous locations, exposing them to severe risks, especially during Manitoba's harsh winters.

(5) Border communities are preparing for a possible surge in illegal border crossings, which could overwhelm local resources and emergency search-and-rescue services.

(6) Despite these challenges, there has been little communication or support from the provincial and federal governments regarding their plans to assist border communities, leaving them under-resourced and unprepared to manage this escalating crisis.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to assist border communities in managing the rise in illegal border crossings into Manitoba; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to work closely with federal and local authorities to ensure adequate resources, including funding and support for emergency services, are available to protect local communities; and that immediate measures be taken to dismantle and destroy all human smuggling networks operating in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Barb Adair, Sarah Bueckert, Mary Reimer [*phonetic*] and many, many, many, many, many Manitobans.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert).

An Honourable Member: I wish to present the following petition to the—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler. The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, your mic is muted.

Morden Waste Water Project

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

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

* (14:50)

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

(2) While growth is welcome and encouraged, Morden has long faced the critical need for infrastructure 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 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 \$108 million.

These revised estimates leave Morden with a significant funding shortfall of \$13 million to \$33 million.

(6) Despite efforts to address the gap, including plans to raise utility fees for residents and businesses, 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 *[phonetic]* Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate action and recognize the critical need of this waste water project for economic growth and environmental sustainability by committing to advance and working with 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 approve necessary—sorry, approvals necessary to advance the Morden waste water project with no further delay and ensure no hindrance to growth and economic development—develop—development for Morden and southern Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Susan Morgan, Fredrick J. Britton and Bill Turner and many, many other Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to

ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I wish to present the following petition—oops, sorry.

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 presentative—preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility, a surrounding—and the 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.

Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Saint Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the Regional Health Authority.

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

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

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is a Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance and 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 is signed by Kim Young, Nicole Terrick, Shailee [phonetic] Harder and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Road 227

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

* (15:00)

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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 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 227—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 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 a 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 the already stated timelines.

This petition has been signed by Celine Sholdice, Lorne Robertson and Jedish *[phonetic]* Wipf.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase to food prices.

(2) Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

(3) Agriculture and agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture producers. In order to make 18 cents from one loaf—from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agriculture producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

(7) The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and local stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

(8) Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food on the table for Manitoba consumers.

This petition has been signed by Landin Hudson, Charlene Nikkel, Theresa Narth and many, many other Manitobans.

Support for Border Communities

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Illegal border crossing into Manitoba has increased from 14 per cent in 2024, raising significant safety—public safety and security concerns, particular in border communities.

(2) Changes to the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement has driven immigrants deeper into hiding to avoid apprehension, making law enforcement effects more difficult.

(3) Border patrol officials believe that criminal organizations, including Mexico—Mexican cartel, are involved in smuggling operations at the border, posing serious security threats to Manitoba.

(4) Human smuggling networks are abandoning vulnerable immigrants, including families, in isolated and dangerous locations, exposing them to severe risk, especially during Manitoba's harsh winters.

(5) Border communities are preparing for a possible surge in illegal border crossings, which could overwhelm local resources and emergency search-and-rescue services.

(6) Despite these challenges, there have been little communications or support from the provincial and federal governments regarding their plans to assist border communities, leaving them under-resourced and unprepared to manage these escalating crisis.

We petition the Legislative of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to develop and implement a comprehension-'comprehensive' plan to assist border communities in managing the rise in illegal border crossing into Manitoba.

(2) To urge the provincial government to work closely with federal and local authorities to ensure adequate resources, including funding and support of emergency services, are available to protect local communities; and that immediate measures be taken to dismantle and destroy all human smuggling networks operating in Manitoba.

This has been signed by Scott Sambrook, Garry Serruys and Glenn Vercaigne and many, many other Manitobans.

* (15:10)

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This is signed by Alice McKay, Maqbod Akhter, Kate Babij and many, many other Manitobans.

Breast Screening

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower their 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, 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 who don't receive screening.

(5) 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.

(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.

(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 age to 40.

This is signed by Don Wiebe, Ken Rutter, Cor Lodder and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

* (15:20)

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

This petition is signed by Nathan Retumalta, Mary Retumalta and Marcel Retumalta and many more Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) Construction of a new bridge in accordance—current design codes and the RTAC standard, located on PTH 34 crossing the Assiniboine River, will support trade and commerce and improve public

safety in the area, and also accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Jonathan Dyck, Brian McDonald, Garnet Smith and many, many more Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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) 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 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 homes, 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; and

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

This petition is signed by many, many, many, many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

* (15:30)

The Speaker: Further petitions? Seeing none, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Glen Simard (Acting Government House Leader): Honourable Speaker, pursuant to rule 34(7), I am announcing that the private member's resolution be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz).

The title of the resolution is 1,255 Net New Healthcare Workers.

The Speaker: It has been announced that pursuant to rule 34(7) that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private member's business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Waverley. The title of the resolution is 1,255 Net New Healthcare Workers.

* * *

Mr. Simard: Honourable Speaker, can you please call third reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; followed by Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended).

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; and following that, concurrence and third reading on Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended).

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The Provincial Court Amendment Act

The Speaker: So at this point, we will go to concurrence and third reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), that Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, be now—let me try that again—that Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, that Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

And just for everyone's information, it was previously agreed that the honourable member for Tyndall Park could second all stages of the bill.

Mr. Wiebe: I am very proud to rise on third reading to debate Bill 2, and as you mentioned off the hop—as you mentioned, Honourable Speaker, seconded by my friend from Tyndall Park, and I'll have more to—more praise for her later in my remarks this afternoon.

But I think it is remarkable that here we are at third reading of this important bill, and I do encourage its swift passage here in the Legislature this afternoon.

We know that Bill 2 responds directly to calls from survivors of gender-based violence who, in sharing their stories with us, have brought advocacy and awareness to the critically important issue of intimate partner violence, and specifically of coercive control.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

It also responds to members of the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as Indigenous communities, whose

particular lived experiences and realities need to be considered as part of our training requirements for judges and for our judicial justices of the peace.

I want to specifically acknowledge the work of Dr. Jennifer Kagan-Viater, the mother of Keira Kagan. Dr. Kagan-Viater is a leader in advocating for these changes at a national level—has done so as well in Ontario—and now is seeing this legislation moved to third reading here in Manitoba as well.

I had the great privilege of meeting with her to discuss this legislation and I want to thank her, on behalf of our government, for her tireless advocacy on behalf of survivors of intimate partner violence and coercive control.

Her advocacy—that meeting—has made a real, lasting difference here in the province of Manitoba. I'd also be—I'd be remiss if I didn't mention, however, the important work of the MLA for Tyndall Park, as well as the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), who did such extensive work in helping us get to where we are today.

And I want to express my gratitude for their commitment to this issue, but also for helping to move the needle, both for the Minister of Families in opposition and now for the minister—or, the member for Tyndall Park in bringing together community, allowing this to be debated at second reading, to hear from survivors and to bring that to the legislative process through our public hearings. That was an important part of the process.

And to that end, I want to thank every survivor who came forward; who presented at committee; who shared their stories about why this legislation was needed. What an incredible act of courage those individuals showed by coming here today. It was so much admired and appreciated by myself and our—I know our fellow members of the committee, as well as members of the Legislature as a whole.

At present, continuing education on sexual assault law, including social context on systematic racism and systematic discrimination is required to be eligible for appointment as a provincial court judge. The current legislation does not address continuing education for judicial justices of the peace, who, at the end of the day perform many of the responsibilities under the act.

But this bill will change those requirements. In addition for training for new judges and JJPs, will—there will be required training for—on three, new additional topics, including intimate partner violence, coercive control in intimate partner and family

relationships and the experiences of Indigenous persons and the 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in the justice system and in society in general.

The amendments are intended to ensure that those appointed to the decision-making positions in our justice system will always have awareness, not only about sexual assault law and social context, but also on these specific new topics.

The chief judge will continue to have the authority to establish continuing education seminars for judges, and this will also now include authority to establish training for judicial justices of the peace, additional capacity at the courts.

I want to highlight that the judiciary has already been an excellent partner when it comes to training with—specifically, the current chief judge having a keen interest in providing continuing education topics on important issues to members of the bench.

As a way of supporting this ongoing work, Bill 2 ensures that the money that's budgeted for continuing education for judges and JJPs never lapses, strengthening the ability for the provincial court to provide these educational opportunities for members of the judiciary.

I'm proud of the fact that this bill is strongly supported by those who are working to address gender-based violence as well as our Indigenous partners and Indigenous leaders throughout our province. Coral Kendel, the executive director of Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre, said that any time—sorry, quote: Any time we see further education happening, especially in different large systems, it's incredibly encouraging to see how it could continually impact survivors to receive better care at all levels, and especially to reduce the significant recurrence of harm that can occur when they are interacting with systems. End quote.

An MKO grand chief, Garrison Settee, said that, quote: Passage of bill 41, the previously numbered Bill 2, is a pivotal step in ensuring the judicial system that not only understands, but deeply respects the unique challenges faced by those affected by intimate partner violence, particularly those within our First Nations and 2SLGBTQIA communities.

Honourable Speaker, Dr. Kagan-Viater fought hard in the wake of her daughter's death to ensure that what happened to her would not happen to any other mother. With her advocacy, Keira's Law, Bill C-233 became law in May, 2023, making amendments to the federal Judges Act and the Criminal Code.

Similar legislative amendments in Ontario soon followed, and we now must pick up the mantle and act in the spirit to do the same here in Manitoba. Like the advocates who have championed this legislation, we will not stop pushing for change. Our government will continue to take further action to for—to support survivors of intimate partner violence and coercive control, and to ensure that we are advancing reconciliation within the justice system.

As well, we'll continue to stand up for the rights and freedoms of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. I'm committed to working across government, including with my colleague, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) to do just that.

So, let's pass this bill, let's get this done this afternoon and let's ensure that Manitobans' criminal justice system is better able to address the diverse experiences of folks in our communities to protect the vulnerable and to strengthen public trust in our justice system.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

* (15:40)

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I just wanted to reiterate a couple of thoughts that I had shared during second reading on Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, also known as Keira's Law.

It's important to remind the House where this legislation came from. Bill 2, Keira's Law, is named after Keira Kagan, a four-year-old little girl who was found dead next to her father at the bottom of an Ontario cliff in 2020. This was after her father was granted permission, even with 53 court orders being issued against him for unpredictable and violent behaviour, to have access to Keira.

About a year ago, on April 3, 2024, I had the honour of introducing Keira's Law here in the Manitoba Legislature. It was seconded by my colleague and friend from Brandon West. Bill 209, the original bill, was created through the consultation with hundreds, possibly thousands, of individuals here in Manitoba and across Canada. I also worked very closely with many individuals who were exceptionally brave and shared their personal experiences, and how Keira's Law as a piece of legislation could help them and their families.

It was such an experience hearing from these individuals who we were able to consult with and to not only see this legislation move forward through committee but to be able to participate throughout the

stages. Honourable deputy assistant Speaker, this bill was about providing judges and judicial justices of the peace with ongoing education on intimate partner violence, coercive control and sexual assault law.

It is important to share that this legislation was also supported and enacted by all political parties in different provinces and nationally. Now, if we fast-forward a little bit, we had a powerful committee on October 10, 2024. And I've sat in on many committees over the last nine years, and this one by far was one of the most impactful and powerful. Because of the stories that were shared, it was so evident how needed and necessary this legislation is here in Manitoba.

And, again, I want to give my sincerest of thanks to those who came and presented at committee and to my colleagues who came and attended committee and asked questions.

Honourable Speaker, Manitoba has one of the highest rates of intimate partner violence, and this is disappointing that this bill had been held up. Now, if we fast-forward just a couple of weeks through many conversations and meetings, the Justice Minister and I were able to come to an idea, and it was suggested that if I withdrew my bill, the government would introduce theirs. Now, I disagree with this approach, but I do have to agree that their bill is stronger.

So on October 30, 2024, I withdrew bill 209 and the government replaced it with bill 41, which is the Bill 2 that we are debating here today, The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

I want to be very clear, as a lot has been put on record in—during second reading of this legislation: I do not agree with the political games played with this piece of legislation, but I do mean it sincerely when I say that I'm grateful that this legislation is, in fact, moving forward. I think that it's a perfect example of how, if MLAs were to put partisan politics aside, we could work together and pass more legislation that will benefit all Manitobans faster and more efficiently, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

I thank you for the opportunity to share a few words. I thank all of my colleagues for supporting the legislation—it is critical to implement here in Manitoba—for my colleagues on the PC side for supporting me in my efforts all the way through, as well as the Justice Minister in working with me and collaborating with me on their new piece of legislation.

Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Think this will be the third or fourth time that I've had the opportunity to speak on this particular piece of legislation, and, really, it's unfortunate that we have to speak on it so many times, because the legislation was actually introduced on April 3 of last year and could already be enshrined in law right now and could actually be in front of the courts for consideration. It could also be the fact that many, many survivors and people that were impacted because of this law—or this delay—are impacted and perhaps didn't get the justice that they were seeking.

Now, I understand the political games, but this is a piece of legislation and political games that actually impacted so many people, so many survivors of intimate partner violence, whether you want to call it IPV, domestic violence, coercive control, many of the different forms that this legislation was brought forward to deal with.

So I'm going to take a second—actually, quite a few seconds—to again thank the MLA for Tyndall Park for having the time that she dedicated to this bill, the consultation and the impact that talking with the survivors and people that would benefit from this bill had. I know personally, from talking with the MLA for Tyndall Park, that she spent hundreds and hundreds of hours on consultation and I'm sure if you added her time, her staff's time and those that gathered the data, there would have probably been thousands of hours that were put into this piece of legislation.

And, again, I would like to say thank you publicly and congratulate her on what I see as her bill passing. And it's unfortunate that, again, we have to play political games, because I've seen this since I've been in this Chamber: the number of bills that have been held hostage or have been taken from another member.

And I know, on a couple of bills, I'm seeing this—the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) because she had one on health care recently—sorry—a private member's resolution and bill as well as this one and, you know, obviously, she writes good law, because people are looking to emulate the work that she's doing and that speaks volumes of that.

However, people should think about this work themselves and not have to take it from another individual. And that's the part that I've struggled with in supporting this bill, because I knew that it was very powerful and the work that had done—or, sorry—that had been done—on this bill prior to the introduction of bill 42, when this was bill 209.

And, you know, on October 10 of last year, 2024, we had committee. And it was very impactful, as the member from Tyndall Park had said. We listened to a number of survivors who shared their stories, who shared their stories of what had happened to them. And I know from personal experience investigating these how traumatic this is for individuals to bring this forward and to speak about these events and to talk about what has happened to them personally. They feel very violated and they feel that, once again, they have to share their story.

And so I thank each and every one of you that came out for committee, for those of you that consulted on this, that shared your thoughts, that shared your ideas with the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux). And I was very proud to second that bill, bill 209—the original bill that brought this to where we are today.

* (15:50)

And, you know what, when I hear what was poured out, it's unfortunate and not a lot of survivors came out and spoke with bill 42 because it's just, again, subjecting them to revictimization over and over again, when this bill could've already been passed and put into legislation.

And I'm going to take some time in a while to read through what Ms. Dawes had to say regarding the provincial judges court and what she felt was really hijacking the autonomy of the judges and the courts when they talk about, you know, this bill.

And for years they've been talking about putting extra duties onto the courts, and so bill 209 was certainly one that has gleaned national attention and is—has passed in other jurisdictions. But then bill 42 added more educational requirements on judges, on top of what's already been legislated; and the more we do this, we—the more we trample on independence of the judiciary.

And independence of the judiciary is extremely important under our Canadian legal system. We have to make sure that our judiciary is focused on what they need to and not influenced politically. And there has to be that separation between politics and the judiciary, and that is why there is the independence that, unfortunately, keeps getting added on when we're looking at this.

So, you know, Manitoba has extremely high rates of intimate partner violence, and with that comes the coercive control and other mechanisms of violence that is perpetrated against those individuals. And we

have a duty to make sure that individuals are taken care of and that are certainly protected. But when I say we, I mean the greater community, all of us, and that can be through education, and that can be through advocacy, but we certainly should not do it politically and place ourselves as being the judges of these cases; they have to do that on an independent matter.

And when asked at committee what could've been done different, it was indicated that it could've had consultation from the start with the chief judge and that a memorandum of understanding could have been brought forward so that the judicial independence was still kept intact and they could make the decisions on specified training in what is needed, because there's a number of Provincial Court judges that have this expertise already, and making sure that you mandate this training, although beneficial for numerous people, it is also that fine line and that balance that needs to happen.

And it can also be a hindrance to the court because for all of the training that the NDP government is stacking onto our judiciary, that's time that they have to be away from the court—pardon me. And while they're away from the court, they are not hearing cases; they're not hearing—or not doing bail court; they're not doing judicial interim releases or discussions on case conferences. So the wheels of justice get slowed down when this happens.

So, you know, with this I was certainly hoping to see the hiring of many more Provincial Court judges by this NDP government so that the wheels of justice could continue moving forward at an acceptable pace and to make sure that all of the court cases that are required to be heard within specified time periods could get heard. But I'm assuming that the NDP government doesn't believe that the judicial system should have independence, and they're more concerned with putting their bills forward and making it more cumbersome for the judges and the JJPs to get this training.

Now, the JJPs—it is very important for them—the judicial justice of the peace—to get this training because many times they do not have the same legal mind, the same legal training, that all of our judiciary goes through when they're called to the bench. And then, you know, they're able to preside over cases and make their rulings.

So very, very important to make sure that our JJPs receive this training and understand why this must be put into place and why individuals need to have this training and have the understanding of intimate

partner violence and certainly, coercive control, and how that plays into this.

I have to agree, again, with my colleague and friend from Tyndall Park. During our discussions on bill 209—and I can say I had limited input. I did have discussions and went to the bill briefing and added some minor suggestions, but the work that was done on this and, you know, all of the successes that we're seeing belongs to the MLA for Tyndall Park.

And when she talked about the impact that October 10 had, there was many people, including several MLAs, including some of the people in the gallery and certainly the presenters, that were absolutely moved to tears with sharing their stories and what has happened to them. And political games have stepped inside of this arena, and those people that were hoping for that bill to move forward and come to third reading and gain royal assent were denied that from the government because they wanted to step in.

And rather than bringing amendments forward or perhaps allowing this bill to go forward and then putting forward an additional bill if it was about funding and finances, they chose to delay this and to actually impact many victims of intimate partner violence. So to me, that was quite shameful.

And when I look at what was stated in committee when we did committee on bill 42, Ms. Dawes, who represents the PJAM, brought forward her concerns once again. And she dated back to 2022, when she spoke to the committee regarding, at that time, which was bill 8, and she says this was brought forward the first of what I'll call the judicial education amendments.

And at that time, we raised concerns about the intrusion on judicial independence and indicated that the legislation could be perceived as the legislative branch of government directing the judiciary in the area that's clearly a matter of judicial independence. And that rings loud and clear, the fact that judicial independence cannot be trampled on, and it cannot be directed by the legislative branch of our government. It really needs to be fully independent.

* (16:00)

So the other part that the minister brought forward in this bill and stated reason that it had to be a government bill was financial.

So again, and I will state—read this out, and, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, this actually comes from Hansard, from the Legislative Assembly of

Manitoba Standing Committee on Justice, Tuesday, March 25—sorry, it was from 1 to 6 p.m.—sorry, at 6 p.m. on the 25th.

And so Ms. Dawes says, and I quote: Finally, I want to address resources for judicial education. The minister emphasized in his remarks at the second reading of Bill 2 that it improved upon bill 209 because it added funding. He explained that there have been years in the past in which funding had lapsed, in that the court was not permitted to carry over unused funds into the next fiscal year.

She goes on to say: "Let's be clear. The court's education budget has been frozen at \$40,000 since 2005; if that amount was adjusted for inflation, it would be well over \$61,000 by now. But it remains frozen and there's been no added funding for the court's education budget; none is provided in this bill." It's true that funds from this budget did lapse in past years; to my understanding, this happened during COVID years when the court could not hold in-person educational sessions that the court arranges with this budget. In ordinary years, though, the funding is woefully insufficient. The pressure on that funding will be compounded by the addition of new topics, not to mention that there are new developments each and every day, in every aspect of criminal law.

If this Legislature wishes to support judicial education, it needs to resort—and then she says sorry—needs to restore the amount of this education budget to an appropriate level and ensure increases on the go-forward to account for inflation.

Finally, time spent on judicial education means judges are not in courtrooms; that means fewer cases heard. Consideration must be given to ensuring an adequate number of judges to ensure that judicial education does not impact the court's ability to provide for timely administration of justice.

So, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, I thought that was very important to put on the record, that the—sorry, that the lawyer that represents PJAM notes these deficiencies in the bill and notes that finances are a big piece of this bill, which is not coming through from this government.

And it really puts the chief judge in a precarious situation where he has to balance the needs of the court with legislation that has now come in, that is really meandering into the administration of justice and looking at that independence, and with that, not only does the chief judge have to balance which judges will go on which training, he has to balance all

of the court proceedings in the cases that have to be heard in the courtrooms that have jurisdiction over this case. And, of course, a Provincial Court judge has jurisdiction over all of these cases and these important cases that come forward.

And so taking judges away from the courtroom, again, takes judges away from the work of the court and it can really grind justice to a halt. And I'm sure we would see that moving forward. None of us want to see that, though, and I think it would also be incumbent if the NDP hired more judges and more court staff so that the wheels of justice could motor on and make sure that all of their timelines are met.

So, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, there was no survivors, as I said, that came to speak out at this bill because they did not want to be revictimized. But for those that attended before, on behalf of our caucus and those that are concerned about justice, thank you for your bravery, thank you for coming out and sharing those stories because I know, as a husband, as a father to a daughter and to four grandchildren, this is not something I would certainly wish upon anybody within my family, and I know that that would go across all people in this esteemed Chamber. Nobody would wish to see that sort of violence perpetrated.

Once again, thank you to the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) for bringing this forward and making sure that we are here today, and thank you for the opportunity to put a few more words on the record, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I rise today to speak to Bill 2, an act to amend The Provincial Court Act, a timely step forward, a more informed, empathetic and socially aware judiciary.

I want to thank the member from Tyndall Park as well as the member from Brandon West for the time that was spent on this bill, but I'm so sorry that it has taken so long. And when we think about those that have been lost, for the reasons that we're here today, and what goes on in this Chamber some days to slow that down, we need to think more of those that are affected.

I ask to speak on this bill because I, too—like the member from Brandon West or the member from Tyndall Park—I have two grandchildren, I have two daughters. I've also got two of my constituents that I'm dealing with right now regarding issues that would be covered in this—that it's too long and nobody should

have to suffer anymore because of what we—and I'm going to say we—do in this Chamber.

We are given the opportunity to move forward, to help create law that will stop four-year-olds from losing their life. This bill proposes a modest but deeply meaningful change, to expand the scope of continuing education for our Provincial Court judge, judges and judicial justices of the peace. It mandates learning in the area of intimate partner violence, coercive control within family and intimate relationships, and the experiences of Indigenous persons and the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

* (16:10)

We have to—when I had the opportunity to speak to this here today as well, it reminds me of a constituent that come into my office and told me that he thought that he was wrongfully accused for what he was doing. This law will make sure that that person that was in my office does not think that way. We need to better educate.

These are not abstract issues; these are lived realities for too many people across our province, people who come to our courts seeking safety, fairness and justice. To better serve them, we need judges who understand the context, not just the Criminal code.

This bill ensures that our judiciary is equipped with the tools to recognize coercive control, a form of abuse that can be invisible to the untrained eye, but devastating in its impact to the victims. And let's be clear: those victims can be impacted for the rest of their lives. It acknowledges that intimate partner violence does not always leave bruises, but can still leave lifelong trauma. It recognizes that Indigenous peoples, because of intergenerational harm, experience the justice system in ways that are often deeply different, and too often, deeply unjust. And it highlights the unique barriers faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, whose experiences of discrimination and violence are frequently misunderstood or ignored all together.

This is not about interfering with judicial independence. This is about providing judges with critical insight, tools they can use to better interpret evidence, understand context and render fair and informed decisions. It's about recognizing that justice must not only—impartial, but also informed and responsive.

I am encouraged by the provision that ensures funding for continuing education seminars established by the chief judge will not lapse. This provides stability and continuity, a recognition that education

is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process. That said, we must approach this with care.

There is always—always—a risk when we legislate learning. We must ensure that training is not merely symbolic or performative. We must avoid reducing complex social issues into simplified checklists or ideological lectures. If the training is not thoughtfully developed with input from communities most affected, we run the risk of either alienating the judiciary, or failing to achieve the depth of understanding this bill aspires to promote.

I can only hope that some of these people that have walked through the doors of my constituency office will be listening today and know that there is hope for them to come forward. There is hope for the justice system to be better informed, better educated, have more judges, have more people that can look after these issues.

We must also be mindful that this new requirement does not become a barrier to judicial appointments, especially for individuals from diverse backgrounds who may already face systemic barriers. Equity in education must also mean accessibility to that education.

Again, in conclusion, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, I want to thank so much the MLA for Tyndall Park for being there for the victims, for the amount of hours that were put into this, for the amount of time. But mostly, when I think about those little ones that have been hurt through all this, this bill proposes a modest but deeply meaningful change: to expand the scope of continuing education. It mandates learning in the areas of intimate partner violence within family. These are not abstract issues. As I said before, they are lived realities.

It troubles me to even speak when I think about the people that are affected by this and the intimate partner violence that happens. What is going on in the world today, but particularly right here in Manitoba, with all that we are doing here in this House to slow things down instead of moving things forward. And I think if we thought a little bit more about that four-year-old that was laying beside her dad, that we would more—we would want to do more, not only for them but for other people that are out there as well too.

And, again, when we—I want to make sure that I go back to this because I think it's so important, that there—that these are not abstract issues; they are lived realities that people are going through day after day after day. And we must make sure that we have the

resources in place so that we can continue to make sure that these issues aren't happening.

This bill ensures that our judicial—judiciary is equipped with the tools to recognize coercive control. Again, what—you know, talking about coercive control, that's nothing that we see out there. It's a form of mental abuse that goes on every day to belittle and make someone feel that they are less of a person than what they need to be.

I also want to talk about Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act committee. And, again, when we talk about Ms. Dawes. So as the member, you know, as the member from Brandon West predicted during the second reading of this bill—and again, this is a direct quote, and I want to go on with this; I'm indeed back to speak on it. I'm doing so—I want to be very clear that the PJAM is in no way opposed to judicial education.

* (16:20)

In fact, PJAM vigorously supports the needs for its members to have access to high quality judicial education, and I will also say, at the outset, that PJAM members recognize the trauma and challenges that victims face, and they see and hear it in their work and they deal with this 24/7, all day, every day.

Again a quote: In 2022, again, from this committee, I spoke to this committee regarding bill 8, which was brought in first of what I'd call the judicial education amendments. At the time we raised concerns about the intrusion on judicial independence and indicated that the legislation could be perceived as a legislative branch of government directing the judiciary in the area that's clearly a matter of judicial independence.

That bill was passed and, as a result, section 8.1.1 of the act provides that the chief judge may establish seminars related to sexual assault law in social context, which includes systemic racism and systemic discrimination.

The chief judge should establish seminars, establish—sorry—should ensure the seminars are established after consultation with a listed—with a list of suggested groups, and that the chief judge should include certain information in the court's annual report. And the permissive language is important, as it would be unconditional for the Legislature to direct—mandate—judicial education.

In 2024 bill 209 was introduced and the bill would have added two topics, intimate partner violence and

coercive control, to the list of education topics. Again, this goes on too long, and too many people have passed over this.

The bill was withdrawn; bill 41 was introduced and, as all we know, bill 41 didn't make it to committee, and now it's been reintroduced as Bill 2.

Bill 2 now lists five education topics, and we have a longer list of which of the suggested that the chief judge should consult with. One looks at this and says, who's next?

PJAM considers that the inclusion of an expanding list of topics for judicial education is an incursion—judicial independence. But we must also ask: Should public input into judicial education occur through amendments to legislation; or would it be better for the branches of government to discuss these matters, to consult with one another and to reach an understanding. PJAM considers that the latter would be much better approach and one that would support judicial independence?

Again, but—as I'm reading this here, I think it's important to touch on the court's education budget has been frozen. We don't need more freezing on this. We need more people to be out—able to be—to act on this. It's been frozen at \$40,000 since 20—or, 2005. If that amount was adjusted for inflation, it would be well over \$61,000.

What is the price of a four-year-old person to be lying beside their father?

It is true that funds from the budget did lapse in the past years. But, again, I want to—before I conclude I want to thank the member from Tyndall Park for the amount of time. And every time we get to see that little boy of yours, it will always bring back that there's other people out there that aren't so lucky as your little boy. And you know, I have the utmost respect for your dad as well, too, and I know that your dad, like me, does not want to see something like this happening.

So, again, I want to reiterate that these are not abstract issues; they're lived realities. We much—and again, we have to approach this with care. When we talk about learning, there's always a risk. We must make sure that the training is not there just as a check-the-box so that we don't have to worry about what's going on.

We must avoid reducing complex social issues. If the training, as I'd said before, is not thoroughly developed with the input from the communities and those mostly affected, we run the risk of either

alienating the judiciary or failing to achieve the depth of understanding this bill aspires to promote.

We must be mindful that this new requirement does not become a barrier. Equity in education must also mean accessibility to that education. We must make sure that our judges have enough time to learn about this law.

So, again, thank you again to both the member from Brandon West for seconding, and also to the member from Tyndall Park for introducing this. I'm so sorry this had to take so long, but let's not let another four-year-old ever die again. And you should be very proud of what is here today.

Thank you very much, honourable Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Again, it gives me great pleasure to rise in this House and speak to Bill 2, otherwise known as Keira's Law, and put a few words on the record regarding The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

This bill represents a crucial step forward in an ongoing commitment to enhancing the judiciary's understanding and handling of sensitive issues, particularly those surrounding intimate partner violence and coercive control.

This bill also builds on the foundation laid by the previous private member's bill, bill 209, which had been introduced by the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), known as Keira's Law, in memory of a young girl whose tragic story highlights the urgent need for reform in how we address domestic violence within our courts. And again, I want to say thank you to the member for Tyndall Park for bringing that bill forward earlier and the impact that it's had thus far, and like the member from Portage la Prairie said, sorry it sort of came around to be this way.

We all know the current government, the NDP government, is notorious for taking the initiative and the work of others and morphing it into something that they want to call theirs. We see that with announcements that they've made in the last while. Now we see it happening again with this here, bill 209, Keira's Law. They have now claimed it to be their own. That's, in my mind, an example of coercive control at its best.

This legislation would change and expand the education mandated for judges and judges—justices of the peace before they are appointed to include education on intimate partner violence and coercive control. And like my colleagues have spoken to—MLA for

Portage and Brandon West—coercive control is not a visible form of abuse. It is one of those types that we don't always see the results of that or the impact that it has, but it is abuse, and not always showing visible scars.

* (16:30)

This bill would make a couple of major changes to existing Provincial Court legislation. The bill would expand the definition of continuing education. It is referred to The Provincial Court Act to bring intimate partner violence and coercive control into the definition regarding intimate partner and family relationships.

As well, the amended legislation would make it necessary for any candidate for appointment to Provincial Court or for appointment as a judicial justice of the peace to take part in ongoing education on laws for sexual assault, intimate partner violence, coercive control in intimate partner and family relationships, in addition to the social context, including systemic racism and discrimination.

I think that is in a—very important component to practising and offering that extended education and insight can assist those in their judgments, perhaps.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill originally came about because of a tragedy. That was the homicide of Keira Kagan, who had been caught in the midst of 'intimate' partner violence. The mother had sought protection for Keira from the father. Though the judge had a background in labour and employment law, had no experience dealing with domestic violence and did not heed the concerns of the girl's mother.

We need to see a change in the way judges understand domestic violence and coercive control. Again, it goes back to the fact that coercive control, again, has no visible signs, but is abuse nonetheless.

It also should be noted that this bill, in Manitoba, is similar to legislation enacted federally and by the Ontario government in that province. And as I mentioned, it seeks to expand the important education requirements of judges and justices of the peace as far as intimate partner violence and coercive control are concerned.

Here in Manitoba, this bill follows other tragic incidents that underscore the importance of this legislation. Closer to home, we've seen in Carman several members of a family who were killed in what was among the worst incidents of domestic and intimate partner violence ever seen in our province. In

McCreary, a similar incident saw members of a family killed in a tragedy related to domestic violence.

Manitoba, it should be noted, sadly, has the second highest intimate partner violence and family violence rates in the country behind Saskatchewan, as our province experiences what could be viewed as an epidemic of such cases.

What makes these abusive and violent situations so much more problematic is that vast numbers of domestic violence cases are simply not reported to police or other authorities. This is another obstacle that needs to change. These situations are horrific, with victims in often perpetual states of violence and with very few options to escape them.

And I've had many conversations with individuals who are impacted by this; who fear going to police; who fear escaping their partner because of the unknown and the fear and consequence if things do get reported. I have had many conversations with individuals and how this impacts their personal lives and their family.

Honourable Speaker, as already mentioned, the legislative amendments would require every appointed judge and judicial justice of the peace to take part in further education in sexual assault law, intimate partner violence, coercive control in intimate partner and family relationships, and social context that would involve systemic racism and systemic discrimination.

I feel I need to note for the House, too, that in 2021, the previous Progressive Conservative government introduced amendments to The Provincial Court Act requiring candidates for Provincial Court judge appointments to agree to training in sexual assault law and social context and to permit the Chief Judge to set up seminars on these subjects.

This was one of the many steps that were taken by the previous PC government to strengthen supports for victims and domestic violence and their families. These latest amendments before the House are similar, though they differ in the enforcement of the education.

This legislation is commended by women's resource centres and others who advocate for victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault, which makes it even clearer that it is doing the right thing.

And again, I commend the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) for doing the important work and the initial work on getting this bill before the NDP government claimed it as their own. The member for Tyndall Park was very passionate and invested to see

her bill 209 go to committee and get passed. I know she worked tirelessly with the family and the stakeholders to gather information and facts for this important legislation.

Her work and compassion are appreciated, and I must say thank you to her. So thank you to the member for all her work in this.

I also want to make reference, as well, to another bill that the NDP were holding hostage: the Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act, otherwise known as Clare's Law. This was introduced by our previous PC government and is an important piece of legislation initiated by our PC team in 2022.

The Speaker in the Chair

This legislation would allow women and/or family members to access vital information that could determine the background on a partner and give a history of domestic violence issues. Background information on a person's history can be vital to a woman, to her children's lives and to those of other members of their family. We've all seen, heard and been impacted by too many heartbreaking acts of domestic violence.

And just think about how many we don't hear about; and those women and children that we won't hear about because they live in fear. Every day, Honourable Speaker, there are women and children living in fear in an environment that is unhealthy and scary, and they fear losing their children, their children's lives or their own life if they were to stand up or to leave or to report.

Although this province has seen many lives lost, nothing stands out more than the horrific tragedies in the towns of Carman and McCreary. Lives were taken away too early by domestic violence. Prayers go out to those families that have lost loved ones and whose lives will be forever impacted and changed. No words can express the heartache a family feels, and I can't imagine the journey those families face moving forward with such loss, day to day.

With so many acts of violence, whether it's domestic, random, religious-based or political, we need to take steps forward in an effort to change this violent climate and prevent further harm to those who face such acts against them.

As our world changes, it is our duty in this Chamber to work together to make our province a better and safer place for all Manitobans.

* (16:40)

As we know, the stakes are high, and the impact of intimate partner violence is devastating and far-reaching. The tragic story of Keira, the young girl whose life was cut short due to a custody battle in which her mother's concerns were ignored, serves as a haunting reminder for change.

The tragic case of Keira serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for reform. We cannot ignore the failures of the past, where critical concerns—voiced by the victims—were overlooked, leading to devastating consequences.

We've seen far too many instances with tragic outcomes where lives have been taken, many at a very young age. This is happening in our own communities, and we may not always be aware until it is too late. I've had, like I mentioned before, conversations with women where they've approached me and have shared with me some of their personal experiences.

And many—many—live in fear, day to day: scared to make a move, scared to get out of the situation, not sure where to go, living under—living in an environment—a controlled environment—very unbelievable in some situations.

Sometimes to people we don't think things like this could actually be happening to, and the impact that it has on their children, their mental health, can be devastating. So, yes, things desperately need to change.

I know bill 209 went to committee, and again, thank you to the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) for getting it to that stage. Although I was not at committee to see and hear from all the presenters, I did take some time to review Hansard and read through the material that many of the presenters made, and it is heartbreaking to hear those stories.

And for those individuals who came forward, I must commend them to be brave, bold and having the courage to share their stories and their journeys through the justice—or, legal system, to share the challenges they had navigated through and the outcomes that they are now living with.

With these personal testimonies we have a full scope of what many go through. They're heart-wrenching stories about abuse, loss, mental health, and the many kinds of abuse that exist in our world today, much of which we don't see outside closed doors.

What these stories also provide is a phenomenal amount of courage and strength, determination and a demonstrated ability to work through one's biggest

challenges while holding on to strength and desire to make change.

The personal stories emphasize the importance of resilience and the strength that can rise from such adversity. I know, myself, it's not an easy journey, and I know the value of support, and the power of self-love.

Just think of the stories and the acts of violence that can potentially be eliminated with legislation in place to further educate and to prevent this cycle from repeating itself. Think of the young women—the young girls—that could be changed. Think of those mothers' lives, think of their babies' lives, that could forever be changed.

Although intimate partner violence primarily affects women and girls, violence does not discriminate. We must look at all the effects, on all people, and whom this legislation will impact: all of us in Manitoba.

I must also recognize the hard work of our judges and of those professionals within the justice system, who work diligently to protect and keep Manitobans safe. I must say thank you: thank you to all of you for your service and contributions to our province and the justice system.

By providing additional resources and training for judges and judicial justices of the peace, we empower them to make informed decisions, fostering a judicial environment that is sensitive to the nuances of many of these cases.

We need to ensure that our judges and judicial justices of the peace are equipped with the knowledge and the training necessary to prevent such tragedies as Keira's from occurring in the future.

Bill 2 attempts to represent a significant stride toward a more just and equitable legal system. By investing in the education of our judges and ensuring that they understand the complexities of intimate partner violence, coercive control and the experiences of diverse communities, we work toward protecting the vulnerable and promoting justice for all.

It is essential, however, to recognize that this legislation is not without shortcomings. It lacks mechanisms for regular review and updating materials. Is there provision for judges to provide feedback? That would be an invaluable mechanism in assessing the effectiveness and relevance of the programs.

You know, and continuous assessment and community consultation and collaboration is key. I believe speaking with survivors and marginalized groups

must be an integral part of what this process is, an important component to the success of this training.

As we move forward, it is imperative that we ensure our judicial system not only understands the law, but understands the lived experiences by those affected by it. We owe it to the victims of intimate partner violence and all marginalized communities to create a judicial environment that is not only fair, but informed and compassionate.

Honourable Speaker, accountability and continuous improvement are fundamental to ensuring that our justice system truly serves all members of society, especially those who have been historically marginalized. We are here to advocate for change and to ensure that those who seek justice are met with compassion and understanding.

Again, and in closing, I do want to say—I highlight again how imperative it is that we empower our judicial system and recognize the nuances of these cases, and to treat victims with the respect that they deserve; take fear out of their lives when they feel that they need to come forward and say their 'speeps'—piece; and get out of an environment that is harmful to them and their families.

As we discuss the implications of this bill, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to individuals who have bravely shared their experiences with members of this Chamber. It is not easy to relive these moments and to share these experiences.

And, like I said earlier, I have spoken to many women living in fear of their partner, wanting to escape, not sure where to go, not sure how to get out and still remain safe, not only for themselves but for their young children, their babies.

* (16:50)

And—not always an easy feat to get through, and not knowing where to find the help that they need, but also having a system in place that they know will support them and people that they can trust.

Again, it is important and imperative to have the systems in place and to have the people in those positions with the ability to have proper training, to understand what some of the other abuse can look like for women and children. Again, it's not always a physical sign; quite often, there are mental health signs.

You know, some women I know have a hard time—maybe it's just a matter of holding down a job, just because of the control that happens within their home life that we aren't always privy to. We don't see

that; that's not something that is visible. And it's not something that women always talk about—can talk about, actually. But it is the life that they're living, in constant fear.

So, in closing, Honourable Speaker, I want to say how important it is that there is change made, that we do address—that there's work that can be done to help better this system, in the judicial system with some proper training and perhaps insight to what coercive control can look like.

And, again, I want to commend and thank the member from Tyndall Park for bringing this forward and for all the compassionate work and investment that she made into having this brought forward, having those individuals share their story at committee.

And to those committee presenters, sharing their stories and having the courage to bring it forward again and to relive some of those experiences can be the hardest thing that we have to do, that women have to do. It brings up a lot of other emotions that are uncomfortable and experiences and memories and living through that trauma more than once can be horrific for many.

So again, I just want to say thank you to the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) and for the—for bringing this forward.

So thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I just want to put a few words on the record when it came to this bill, the important bill that, again, I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for the work that she did, and I know the minister actually decided to put it as Bill 2.

It's important that, you know, when it comes to—for this bill, when it comes to the provincial courts, the importance of when it comes to youth and the parents that actually did presentations of some of the issues that we have with our—with—when it comes to our child family services, so what's important that—the importance of putting this Provincial Court Amendment Act together here, it's very vital that we focus on our—the youth when it comes to our society.

And I just want to thank my members, the member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza) and the MLA for Brandon West and the member for—MLA for Agassiz for putting a number of words on the record here about this important bill. And it's important that we continue advocating that this minister, when it comes—goes forward here, is to make sure that the protection of

children in care is so important, and how the courts deal with all these cases.

And the importance of our youth—the importance that—the youth are our future, and we want to make sure that we—they are protected. They are protected, that—and we saw that situation in Carman, the tragic—tragedy of that one individual who took the lives of the child in care, with his own kids and his wife. It was very tragic for this province and I think it's important that we look at these certain cases and making sure that it never happens again, and it's important.

And, again, I just want to thank the opportunity here to thank the member for Tyndall Park, all the work she's advocated and all the people that she's met.

Honourable Speaker, it's important that we continue to advocate for children and making sure the courts do not forget those children. And I want to thank you and I want to thank together that we can come together to make sure that this bill gets ratified and be able to move forward.

I want to thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the—putting a few words on the record.

The Speaker: Are there further members wishing to debate?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 2, The Provincial Court Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 42—The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended)

The Speaker: As previously announced, then, we will now move on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended).

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor), that Bill 42, the buy Canada act, the government purchases act amended, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery, seconded by the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, that Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act (Government Purchases Act Amended), be reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

MLA Sandhu: I'm so proud to rise today on the third reading of Bill 42, The Buy Canadian Act. This will direct the government to establish a buy Canadian policy. Our government is committed to standing up for Manitoban jobs and protecting our local economy. I look forward to this important bill receiving the unanimous support of this House.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): It's always a privilege to rise in this Chamber and to speak on—in debate on legislation, and it's a pleasure to speak on The Buy Canadian Act, Bill 42, which, as I've indicated before, our side, you know, supports notionally, the buying Canadian, and we think it's very important, especially these days. And it's something that in our seven and a

half years in government, the previous PC government, in procurement and in our tax policy, did a lot to support Manitoba businesses, to support our Manitoba economy and Canada more broadly, as well.

So, in fact, it was the previous PC government that signed on to the New West Partnership with our neighbours to the west: Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia.

And so this side has always championed not only Manitoba but unity within Confederation. And that was the grand deal of Confederation—was to create economic and cultural ties between the 13 jurisdictions—10 provinces, three territories—and it was our PC government that believed in that vision, the vision of those who came before us and who—the framers of Confederation. And so we implemented many of—

The Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 28 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

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

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