



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday morning and afternoon, April 16, 2026

Day 47

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

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Party standings:

United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Progressive Tory: 1

Independent: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Thursday, April 16, 2026

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us pray. Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our King and to his government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by Michael Peters. I would invite all to participate.

Hon. Members:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King!

The Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.
All right. Let's go with Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: She's ready, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much. I am just as keen as these students are to introduce them today. They're a bunch of grade 6 students from Progressive Academy in Edmonton-Glenora. I ask them to please rise and for all members to give them the warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you a school group today from the Beau Meadow school in Beaumont. I would ask them to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Children and Family Services.

Mr. Turton: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly some very good friends of mine, Chris Banas and Kaylee Farn from Spruce Grove community church. They do a fantastic job helping out the spiritual and social needs of the community. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Sherwood Park.

Mr. Kasawski: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to introduce a couple of special constituents from Sherwood Park. We have William. Nine-year-old William O'Neill is here with his mother, Marie-Catherine O'Neill. William is a big fan of democracy, helping his community. He learns a lot from his mom, who's a self-defense instructor and also teaches him a lot about what it's like to

be a proud Canadian. And William can't wait to vote. Will you both please rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy and Minerals.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce the team from CSS Energy Solutions, who's collaborating with Greenhawk Energy Solutions, a Fort McMurray-based company 100 per cent Indigenous-owned, for purchasing Alberta oil export. Please rise and receive the welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise to introduce to you and through you Gurjeet Singh and Ashok Achit of Vtv Punjabi as well as Navdeep Bamrah and Parminder Viridi, who is the father of Leduc county councillor Dal Viridi. I ask you all to please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my friend Trevor Hayter from the great county of Clearwater in our province, also the CEO of Northforge. He and his team are doing great work when it comes to the defence industry and helping put Alberta on the map. I'm glad that he's here today. I'd ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to introduce to you and through you two senior leaders with AtkinsRéalis. Ruby Littlechild is the national director of Indigenous relations for AtkinsRéalis and one of my favourite constituents. She is joined by Jason Easton, who works in government relations with AtkinsRéalis. I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I'd like to introduce to you and through you Sunil Phool and the Safety Awareness nonprofit team. Thank you for your work with public safety. I ask that Sunil and the rest of the team please rise to accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Calgary-East.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two caucus interns from Calgary who are joining us in the gallery, Khadija and Kyryl. These interns are participating in a caucus internship program, where they're gaining valuable first-hand experience with the legislative process. We are pleased to have them with us. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

Members' Statements

Electoral Boundaries

Mr. Sabir: Mr. Speaker, the only democracy the UCP believes in is one that they direct from the Premier's office. They want to pick and choose which citizen initiatives get to a ballot. They want to change the rules at each step of the way to help their friends and

insiders. Now they want to help themselves and only themselves get elected, regardless of what Alberta voters decide. They want to decide which votes and which voters count for more and which voters count for less.

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. The government motion on the Order Paper today is a retaliation against the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission for daring to do its job. That commission presented a balanced electoral map that respects the rights of all voters, urban or rural, no matter their race, religion, or ethnicity. This government can't stand the fact that the chief of the commission, a brave and balanced judge, followed his legal duties and helped draft a map that was fair and constitutionally sound.

The maps the UCP wants would disenfranchise my constituents, and it would make their voices count significantly less than those of constituents of south Calgary or in rural areas. This is not direct democracy. A group of MLAs picked by the Premier should not set the rules for our democracy. The commission did not go her way, Mr. Speaker, so this Premier wants to direct it all again. This government must accept the independent commission's map, or it will be clear that they do not want a direct democracy. They want to reject democracy. Shame on you, Premier.

The Speaker: Even members' statements have to be directed through the chair. I think the hon. member has been here a long time, and he knows that.

Calgary-East.

Premier's Summit on Fairness for Newcomers

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has always been and will continue to be a place that welcomes newcomers and provides opportunities that have a generational impact on families in our province's economy. This week our government hosted its fourth Premier's Summit on Fairness for Newcomers, which brought together community leaders, postsecondary institutions, employers, and newcomer advocacy organizations to collaborate on ways we can better support new Albertans.

The fact is that Alberta is a place that people want to call home. We see this as our population continues to grow faster than any other province in Canada. When people come looking for opportunity, we want to do our part and lend support to newcomers that they need to succeed. This includes removing barriers from professional regulation, which means those coming to Alberta can get to work faster. We are also increasing trust in the immigration system as we look to crack down on bad actors through the proposed Immigration Oversight Act.

As a government we see the value in preserving Alberta's reputation as a safe place to work, with an immigration system that is not going to take advantage of foreign workers. Of course, we are going to use all legal means to take more control over the immigration system that has been mismanaged by the federal government for too many years. This keeps our economy growing, people working, and ensures newcomers in Alberta are given a fair chance to build a life here. Our province benefits when newcomers can contribute their skills and build a real future here.

This week's summit is about breaking down barriers and recognizing the skills newcomers already bring. It's about making sure Alberta has the capacity to support the success and deliver results for all Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

10:10

Electoral Boundaries

Member Arcand-Paul: The government's motion to do away with the independent boundary commission's report is a fundamental

attack on the very principles of democracy we are elected to uphold. It undermines what Albertans hold dear and seeks to gerrymander Alberta's ridings and break apart our communities. Let's not mince words. This plan is to rig the results of the next election. Instead of accepting the independent Electoral Boundaries Commission's final report and giving MLAs in this House a chance to vote on the only fair map that provides effective representation for rural, urban, and Indigenous communities across the province, the UCP is reaching for the reset button.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that the government cannot take away your democratic rights to vote in a free and fair election. This means that the UCP know they cannot use their favourite nuclear option, the notwithstanding clause, as a way to force an unconstitutional and illegal map through this Chamber. Instead, in the vain hope that Albertans won't notice, they're making a plan to see the next election stolen before Albertans even have a chance to cast their ballot. The most crucial pillar of democracy is the right to vote and the right to effective representation.

While our Charter exists to protect that, it doesn't mean our society is protected from the UCP's moves to bend and erode democracy as we know it. The Charter can't do it alone. I'm so proud that thousands of people across the province participated in the Electoral Boundaries Commission process and spoke out against gerrymandering and vote-rigging in hopes that their voices would be heard. It is my sincere hope that all Albertans will use their voice to speak against any attempts to break our democracy and rig the next election. Democracy is only strong if the people fight to protect it, and I believe Albertans will not let the UCP government get away with it because no one likes a cheater, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Medicine Hat region is home to manufacturers, producers, and exporters depending on stable, predictable, and open access to our largest trading partners. Our farmers, energy workers, and manufacturers need clear, consistent rules so that they can do business with confidence, free from tariffs and federal squabbles.

Through the Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement, or CUSMA, Alberta has been largely shielded from most of the disruptive U.S. tariffs, making our province the least affected in Canada. This is no accident, Mr. Speaker. The advocacy of this government worked. It's also proof that our strong export profile, including energy, agriculture, and manufactured goods, is competitive across North America. While other provinces have faced bigger challenges, Alberta has stayed strong.

That's why this agreement matters. It protects jobs, investments here at home, and helps our businesses grow. When Alberta's exports succeed, our families and communities succeed, too. We understand that strong trade deals don't just appear out of thin air. They show up because we are clear about our priorities. Others may talk but we act. We're working on opening new markets, cutting unnecessary barriers, and reinforcing Alberta's position as the best place in Canada to invest, grow a business, and create well-paying jobs. This government is not standing still in the face of uncertainty. We're promoting innovation, strengthening trade access, and making sure our industries take full advantage of every opportunity CUSMA provides.

As CUSMA's mandatory review process approaches the end of its time, the stakes are high. Renewing this agreement with trade

flowing avoids tariffs and gives businesses the certainty that they need to grow and invest. Albertans need certainty and workers need stability. Mr. Speaker, we'll keep standing up for Albertans fighting for an agreement that protects jobs, strengthens industries, and grows our economy. Alberta . . .

The Speaker: Calgary-Beddington.

Electoral Boundaries

Ms Chapman: Calgarians are living under a government that doesn't work for them. This is a government that chose to orchestrate a teachers' strike, that chose to trample on the Charter rights of those teachers, and since that strike nothing has changed. Our classrooms are as complex and as crowded as ever. Now, Calgarians stood with teachers because Calgarians saw that teachers were fighting for our kids.

Mr. Speaker, I have the enormous privilege of representing the riding of Calgary-Beddington, a very working-class riding. My constituents don't always have the time to reflect on the fragility of their democracy. They're busy working two or three or four jobs, all to keep up with the cost of living, that has done nothing but rise under this government. They might not have time to think about how their democracy is fragile. They believe it's as solid as Nose Hill, but now we know that's not true.

How exactly did this government expect to get away with making the lives of these working people even harder? The answer is that they expect to get away with it because they are just doing away with free and fair elections. This government plans to gerrymander the election map. Let's not mince words about it. They will rig the next election using Donald Trump's playbook. They will rig this election and cheat their way to an electoral result they want, to separating Alberta from Canada, to do whatever it is they want to do, Mr. Speaker. Teachers had their rights trampled. Now Calgarians will suffer the same under this government.

This government's failure to accept the boundary commission's report is an assault on democracy. The people of Calgary-Beddington understand and are watching, and this government should be ashamed of themselves.

Electoral Boundaries

Mr. Haji: Mr. Speaker, today is a dark day in Alberta's democracy.

Mr. Nixon: You say that every day.

Mr. Haji: The MLAs in this House should be voting for the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. This report was written after input from thousands of Albertans, but instead the UCP is doing something no other government has done in the history of this province. They are rigging the next election.

They're throwing away the report of an independent commission that worked so hard for over a year, a commission which was tasked with drawing the electoral maps. Instead, the UCP is saying that they themselves are going to draw the maps. This has only one explanation. Not adopting the commission's report is cheating. Not adopting the commission's report is Trump-style gerrymandering. In fact, not adopting the report is an assault on our democracy.

When Albertans go to vote, they take for granted that their vote matters, that their vote has the power to influence change, but that may not be the case after today. The UCP is changing democracy in our province not for the best; for the worse. Through their actions the UCP shows that they are so scared of losing the next election, they will do whatever it takes to win even if it costs your vote. They are afraid of a fair fight, but on this side of the House we are not

scared. We are ready to fight for our democracy, for Alberta's right to vote, and for the future of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I'll briefly remind everybody that during Members' Statements we don't have interjections.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Bill 208

Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026

Mrs. Petrovic: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rise to request leave to introduce Bill 208, the Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 208 read a first time]

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The first question belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

10:20

Electoral Boundaries

Mr. Nenshi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. MLAs in the House should be voting for the one and only final report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. This is the only fair thing for our democracy, but it's obvious that the UCP wants to rig the next election. Let's be clear. Not adopting the commission's report is cheating, not adopting the commission's report is gerrymandering, and in fact not adopting the report is a full-on assault on our democracy. Why is the government so afraid of democracy that they won't simply adopt the commission's report?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion put forward by the private Member for Leduc-Beaumont is one that I hope everyone reads and looks at carefully. I've been asking every member to look at page 66 of the report and the judge's addendum to the majority report, which says that the majority of the Electoral Boundaries Commission in its final report would ask that we "[increase] the number of electoral divisions from 89 to 91 for the next general election." This is what is supported by the majority of the commission. It's an addition to the majority report, so yes, we would support it.

Mr. Nenshi: To set the record straight, that is incorrect. The commission report had one recommendation from the majority, and the government set the number of ridings themselves based on the population at that time. The commission's report has one recommendation, and that recommendation is to adopt the fair maps. But this Premier has never loved democracy. Let's be clear. She's the only Premier to have breached the Conflicts of Interest Act. She's the only Premier to have crossed the floor. Why is the Premier so afraid of her political chances that she's willing to gerrymander these maps?

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: And a point of order is called at 10:22.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite is saying is not only untrue; it's dangerous. We on this side as a caucus have looked at the report, including the five recommendations from the boundary commission, with the fifth recommendation from the judge strongly encouraging us to go from 89 to 91 seats. In fact, he said that: I lament that we have in this report only had to reduce two rural ridings, as do my fellow commissioners. The commissioners made it very clear that they did not want to lose two rural ridings, and that's why recommendation 5 is . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Nenshi: The government will repeat that claim, that this is what the commission wanted, but it is not. The only reason the government is doing this is not because they suddenly have a love for democracy. It's because their political pressure on the commission didn't work. They didn't get their preferred maps. This government has been clear from the start that they only care about power. They don't care about ethical government, so will the Premier admit that the only reason she's doing this, the only reason she's changing everything the government did for the mandate for this commission, is to grasp onto power because she can't win otherwise?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is the only one who has voted against the recommendations of an electoral boundary commission, when he was mayor of Calgary and rewrote it three times so that he could get the boundaries that he wanted. I'm going to ask everyone here as a member to look at the report on page 66. The judge in his recommendation implores us to go from 89 to 91 seats so we do not lose two rural seats. Now, I know not every member opposite hates rural Alberta as much as the Leader of the Opposition does. I'm asking them to read the report and vote with us on this.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 10:24.

An Hon. Member: Why do you hate rural Alberta?

The Speaker: Order. Order. When I'm up, I'm the only one that you should be hearing from.

Now we're at the second set of questions, which actually belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

And a point of order.

Mr. Nenshi: Well, rather than character assassination, how about we read page 66? "My majority colleagues do not agree with me on this point." The Premier is not being clear on what the recommendations actually say. In fact, she herself said in this House that, quote, Members of the Legislative Assembly are the ones who will debate and consider this motion and make the decision, but in fact members, unlike in Calgary city council, will not be given the ability to vote on that motion and to debate it. Instead, the government is substituting it with their own motion. Why are they doing that instead of representing the commission fairly in this House?

The Speaker: A second point of order was also noted at 10:24.

Ms Smith: Once again, I ask the members opposite to read recommendation 5, "the majority of the Commission recommends that the Assembly make amendments to the Electoral Divisions Act, increasing the number of electoral divisions from 89 to 91 in the next general election." And why did they come up with this

conclusion, Mr. Speaker? Well, we know that there are members opposite from rural Alberta who in their submissions to this commission also lamented the fact that they were losing rural seats and also asked them to increase the number of seats. That is what the commission is listening to. That's what they're recommending, and on this side we will support that.

Mr. Nenshi: It's a shame the Premier has not read what she is quoting. Directly above recommendation 5 the commission chair says, "[this] is why I am alone in making this recommendation." This is not a recommendation of the commission, and no amount of gaslighting will fix that problem. Gerrymandering is a tool . . .

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Nenshi: . . . that politicians like Donald Trump use to get around democracy. Bad, corrupt politicians carve up constituencies when they know they can't win fair and square. It's rigging the system in their own interest, and that's exactly what's happening here. Why is the Premier doing this? Why is she so afraid of fighting the next election on a fair map?

The Speaker: Well, on the third question we have our fourth point of order at 10:26. It's not a healthy place to be, but that's where we are.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, again, I wish individual members would read the report and see that the issue that the commission came up with is that this Legislature had given them direction to increase the number of seats by 2 per cent even though the population had increased by 20 per cent. The solution from the judge, listening to the majority of his commissioners, was to go up to 91 seats. That is what the motion is. Look, the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford is from Onoway. I am sure that she does not support depriving rural Alberta of its appropriate representation. I hope she votes with us.

Mr. Nenshi: Once again, it was this government using their population numbers that set the number at 89, and now they're claiming this is something that just happened to them, as the Premier always does. Never ever takes responsibility. Albertans are smarter than this. We know how to read. We know what the commission said. We know that the UCP cooked up maps using taxpayer dollars. They dissolved Red Deer into the ridings around it. They got rid of Lethbridge entirely and moved it to the U.S. border. Calgary is unrecognizable. This disrespects rural and urban voters. Why are they doing this?

Ms Smith: I see the member opposite wrote his questions and talking points thinking that we were proposing the minority report. We are not. We are proposing the majority report with the addendum of recommendation 5. Look, Mr. Speaker, Edmonton-West Henday's MLA is from Alex First Nation. He loves rural Alberta. I'm sure of it. Sherwood Park MLA: from Bashaw. Edmonton-Gold Bar MLA: from Hanna. Calgary-Foothills MLA: from Valleyview. Lethbridge-West MLA: from Taber. They need to read the report and understand that the judge was not comfortable. He lamented losing rural ridings. We ask them to vote with us on this.

The Speaker: The third set of questions belong . . . [interjections] Order. It shouldn't be that hard. The third set of questions belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: Well, I really thank the Premier for reminding Albertans that we really understand and represent rural Alberta, in fact, better than they do.

But this is unprecedented because gerrymandering is all the Premier has left to try and cling to power. The UCP government is trying to give themselves a fake electoral advantage. This is contempt for Albertans. The Premier thought she had the commission and the chair in her pocket. When it turns out they actually did their job and they didn't do what the UCP wanted, the UCP is throwing their report in the garbage. Why are they doing that? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

And our fifth point of order. And sixth. How good is that? Both at 10:29. So that's two points of order at 10:29.

Ms Smith: We are not, Mr. Speaker. We are supporting the majority report with the recommendation of the judge to not deprive rural Alberta of representation. The Member for Edmonton-Glenora: from Kinuso. The Member for Edmonton-Manning: from Pincher Creek. The Member for Banff-Kananaskis, who we know is a biologist, absolutely loves rural Alberta. The member from Barrhead as well, who is also from rural Alberta. We are not politicizing this the way the member opposite is. In fact, talking about vote rigging sounds kind of like another politician we've heard of in the south. What we're trying to do is preserve the representation in rural Alberta, just as the judge recommended, and we ask members opposite to vote with us. [interjections]

10:30

The Speaker: Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, enough, please. [interjections] Hon. member, we only want to hear from the leader of the official . . . [interjections] Order.

Go ahead.

Mr. Nenshi: She literally spent 80 per cent of that answer talking about us and then saying: I'm not politicizing it.

Albertans are so much smarter than this. Thousands of Albertans came to these public hearings. They told the committee these are the maps they prefer. The commission did their work. They did it well. The maps aren't perfect, but they are democratic and they do follow the UCP government's mandate. But this government is now removing all public consultation from the motion. They're removing the ability for Albertans to speak. Why does the UCP hold Albertans in such contempt that they don't even want them to participate?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why the Leader of the Opposition holds rural Alberta in such contempt that they won't listen . . .

Mr. Nenshi: Point of order.

Ms Smith: . . . and read the report and the recommendation from the judge, who lamented losing two rural seats, who recommended adding them back in. I got a little backwards, Mr. Speaker. It's the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood who is from Barrhead. I'm surprised that there are actually so many members from rural Alberta over there and why they would just blindly follow what it is the leader of their party is doing when they know that this report would make it better for rural Alberta, would preserve representation. I'm asking them as individual members because, remember, this is a vote of the Legislative Assembly. It's not a partisan vote. I'm asking them to do the right thing and support rural Alberta.

The Speaker: And a further point of order at 10:31.

Mr. Nenshi: Let's be clear on what has happened and what is about to happen. First, the UCP tried to exert political pressure. They presented cooked-up maps, paid for by taxpayer dollars, but that didn't work because those maps are so shocking. Albertans stood up against that attack on democracy, scared them off. They didn't want to present the minority report, so now they're presenting the minority report in slow motion. What we see here is a cooked-up political process without independence or public consultation to allow for gerrymandering again. Why is the Premier Gerry-mandering in slow motion?

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: Oh, how good is that? We have a point of order at 10:32.

Let's just hear from the Premier now.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, we know that the members opposite are smart and can read the report. We know that the media is smart and can read the report. We know that the media will see on page 58 of the majority report that it says: "As noted throughout the report, the majority believes we would have been able to provide Albertans with more effective representation had the Legislature allocated an additional two seats." In fact, in one of their recommendations they say that next time this is done, give the commission the latitude to increase the number of seats. We're following the recommendation of the majority.

The Speaker: The fourth questions belongs to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: The Minister of Justice three days ago said that every single MLA deserves to debate the recommendations and the report in its entirety; the government does not draw electoral boundaries. That statement was intentionally and wilfully false.

Mr. Williams: Point of order.

Ms Pancholi: The UCP never intended to allow MLAs to vote on the maps developed by the independent boundary commissioner. The UCP always planned to cheat and rig the rules because their thirst for power is more important than democracy. So how can the Minister of Justice pretend to be the defender of the rule of law when the UCP holds such contempt for democracy?

The Speaker: And another point of order at 10:33. We're going to be here until 4 o'clock doing points of order.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As noted by the Premier, the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission: the majority of the commission believes that they would have been able to provide Albertans with more effective representation had the Legislative Assembly provided an additional two electoral divisions, bringing the total number of proposed electoral divisions to 91. The proposed 89 seats would have been an increase of about 2 per cent. The population of Alberta has grown by 20 per cent. We're responding to the recommendations by the committee.

Ms Hoffman: No. You're cheating.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order.

An Hon. Member: Yep. Okay.

The Speaker: No, it's not okay. Nobody gets to accuse people of cheating here.

Ms Pancholi: The commission's report presented maps based on the 89 seats that the UCP gave them to work with. That's what was taken to Albertans. That's what Albertans across this province made submissions on. Tossing the commission's maps based on the number of MLAs that the government provided to that commission to consider: that is cheating. Changing electoral boundaries to give their own party an advantage is gerrymandering. It is straight out of Trump's playbook. It's treating this province like it is theirs to govern forever. Why doesn't the UCP admit there's no fundamental right of Albertans that is safe from their government?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems to be commonplace for the members opposite, particularly the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, that if they disagree with someone outside of the Chamber, they criticize and they assassinate their character, including, in this instance, when the members assassinate the character of the judge, the head of this commission. To address the concerns that have been noted about the number of seats, we are putting forth a motion, and the chair of the committee is the Member for Leduc-Beaumont, to address the issue having to go to 91 seats. That's to ensure we have effective representation across the entire province.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Speaker: Oh, another point of order. How good is that? At 10:36.

Ms Pancholi: Mr. Speaker, this government should know that an advisory panel that reports to four UCP MLAs is not an independent process that has ever been used by any democratic country to determine electoral boundaries. No ethical or legitimate government should ever get to pick its own voters. This will go to the courts, just like so many other actions of the UCP. The chaos is the point. The cheating is the point. The power is the point. You know what's never the point for the UCP? Albertans. Democracy is worth fighting for, and Albertans will fight for it.

The Speaker: I'm almost completely sure I didn't hear a question there, but if the Government House Leader wants to respond, then you are certainly entitled to do so.

Mr. Schow: Happy to, Mr. Speaker. I do believe it is bad form for members in this Chamber to call members of the public cheaters, particularly judges. That member is a lawyer. That member should know better. And when the member decides to run for leader again and ultimately fails and goes back to her legal practice, it may be worth while remembering that judges have a long memory, so it's not a good idea calling judges cheaters.

Mr. Sabir: Another point of order.

The Speaker: Another point of order, 10:37.

Okay. We are now on question 5, where there are no preambles on the supplementaries. Question 5 belongs to the Member for . . . [interjections] Order. Calgary-Mountain View.

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

Ms Ganley: This morning the UCP's plans to cheat were laid bare for Albertans to see. The UCP want to tear up the fair maps and

start over again because their independent commission got just a little too independent. Democracy is where voters pick their politicians, not where politicians pick the voters. Why is the Minister of Justice so scared of the people of Alberta that he won't even allow MLAs to debate the map?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have said, the Minister of Justice has said, the Premier has said, and I will repeat time and time again that the Members of the Legislative Assembly will have final say and will have final vote and the opportunity to vote on this matter. Now, the important piece to note about this is that, coming from the recommendations from the chair of the commission, it'd be more equitable and create more fair representation to go to 91 seats given the population growth. We are following the recommendations of the committee and the report.

Ms Ganley: Given, Mr. Speaker, that the chair was clear that that recommendation was his alone; it was not a recommendation of the committee and given that the commission warned that not adopting their map would be unconstitutional and violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and given that there is no compromise between cheating and not cheating – refusing to adopt the report is cheating and a full-on assault on democracy – will the UCP government finally admit the obvious, that they have no regard for the rights of Albertans?

10:40

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would appear that the members opposite are having a difficult time pivoting from their line of questions after having been answered multiple times, but I am happy to provide more commentary on this for the members of the Assembly and all those who are at home. The chair of the committee said, "The majority of the Commission recommends that the Assembly make amendments to the Electoral Divisions Act, increasing the number of electoral divisions from 89 to 91 for the next general election." We are following the recommendations of the commission.

Ms Ganley: Given, Mr. Speaker, that the chair also said, "I am alone in . . . this recommendation," words on a piece of paper, and given that anything but the map Albertans drew with the commission could violate their right to vote and given that the UCP's old friend the notwithstanding clause doesn't apply to Albertans' right to vote and given that the only reason to reject the fair and independent electoral map is to reject the right of Albertans to choose, will the UCP finally come clean and admit that they want to gerrymander Alberta, silence . . .

The Speaker: Time ran out about seven seconds before you finished talking, just as a piece of information.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. To quote the report, it says, "Much of the objection [of] our interim report is based on the loss of two rural seats. I lament this, as do my fellow Commissioners." We lament the loss of two seats in rural Alberta. As a result, the recommendation from the commission, the majority members of the commission, is to move to 91 seats. Now, to respond to the comments from the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, 91 seats, 89 seats: every Albertan gets to vote in this next election and have their voice heard, and we're going to make sure it's represented . . .

The Speaker: The next question belongs to the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Diabetes Supports

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, for many Albertans living with diabetes, managing treatment is a constant and often intrusive experience requiring devices that can be cumbersome and disruptive throughout their lives. However, tubeless insulin pump technology is available for patients to support their treatment plan and encourage a more seamless, discreet, and adaptable treatment option. Can the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services explain to the House what a tubeless system is, like the Omnipod 5, and how it may benefit Albertans living with type 1 or type 3C diabetes?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the excellent question. The Omnipod 5 is the first pump of its kind to be covered in Alberta using real-time data from a continuous glucose monitor to automatically adjust insulin and maintain glucose levels within a targeted range. Tubeless systems like the Omnipod 5 remove many of the physical barriers associated with traditional pumps. It is designed to make managing diabetes easier for the individual and more streamlined support for Albertans living with full, active lives so that they can go on and do what they need to do.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much to the minister for that answer. Given that when new health technologies are introduced, one of the first questions Albertans ask is how and when will they be able to access those and given that the Omnipod 5 is now being included in the insulin pump therapy program, clarity around eligibility and timing will be important for those who are planning their care. Can the same minister outline who will be eligible for this device and how access will be phased in under this amazing program that demonstrates the generosity of this province?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, eligible Albertans will be able to access the Omnipod 5 through Alberta's insulin pump therapy program, which we started just a few years ago. Through this program eligible Albertans can receive an insulin pump at no cost every five years. Additionally, Albertans already using an Omnipod system may be eligible to upgrade earlier through the manufacturer's Omnipod innovation pathway program.

Mr. Speaker, we're excited to provide Albertans with access to life-changing technology that simplifies daily care and supports better health for Albertans living with diabetes. I had a mom come to me and say that she is so grateful her young son can go on this program.

The Speaker: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for all of her amazing and hard work. Given that Alberta has consistently worked to ensure that all those living with chronic conditions have access to high-quality publicly funded care that keeps pace with innovation and given that investments like this support individuals and can lead to better long-term health outcomes, especially with the addition of things like the Omnipod 5, can the minister share why increasing access to new health technologies is so important for all Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta continues to offer some of the strongest publicly funded drug and health benefit coverage in Canada. By adding the Omnipod 5 to the insulin pump therapy program, Albertans have access to leading-edge technology that can help them improve daily management and reduce the risk of serious health complications over time. This ultimately leads to better health outcomes for patients and helps to reduce the strain on the overall system. We're going to continue to make sure that we invest in new, practical, patient-focused health advancements for Albertans. They deserve it, and we are going to make sure that they get the supports they need.

Electoral Boundaries

(continued)

Mr. Shepherd: Attacking our independent judges, rewriting laws to help their friends turn a profit, building a police force only they control, assaulting democracy by rigging electoral processes, running them again and again until they get the results they want: those are all authoritarian tactics, Mr. Speaker, actions beyond what Albertans will accept from a government, actions of a government who believe they're above the rules put in place to protect our democracy. A simple question: is there any democratic boundary, any rule of law this government isn't willing to trample?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only ones attacking judges in this Chamber are the members opposite. We've heard it a number of times already from the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

Mr. Schow: It is very clear on this side of the House that we are looking at the addendum, addendum recommendation 5 of the report, which reads as follows. "The majority of the Commission recommends that the Assembly make amendments to the Electoral Divisions Act, increasing the number of electoral [seats] from 89 to 91." This is from the commission. The majority of members are following the recommendations.

The Speaker: There was a point of order called at 10:48.
The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that the only thing we should be voting on are the full recommendations from the majority of the commission, not the opinion of a single member, and given that what the Government House Leader is putting forward is precisely the opposite – it's letting this government choose its voters instead of voters choosing their government – and given that the UCP's refusal to accept this report, if they refuse to do so, makes it clear they don't believe they can win without cheating, will the UCP just admit they can't win this next election unless they themselves draw the map?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I can assure all members in this Chamber and all people watching at home that we will take no lessons from the members opposite on how to win elections.

Now, we have listened to the commission. They have tabled their report. They're suggesting that we ignore the addendum, similar to they suggest that you ignore an appendix in a contract, Mr. Speaker.

This clearly says, “The majority of the Commission recommends that the Assembly make amendments to” . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. I heard the question crystal clear; I had a hard time hearing the answer.

Carry on, Minister.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the members ask questions, I patiently sit and listen. I ask the members opposite do the same with the answer.

What the commission says is that they recommend going from 89 to 91 seats. As I said before, and I’ll say it again with the next question because I expect it to be the exact same thing, we’re following the recommendation.

10:50

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that gerrymandering always, always backfires wherever it’s been tried, from America and Trump to Australia and everywhere in between, and given that authoritarian governments always end up reaping what they sow even as they always show who they are and given that thousands of Albertans have already spoken up, written to the commission, and told the Premier not to do precisely what she and her government are about to do, will the UCP step back from the brink, take a breath, take their hands off our elections before they do permanent damage to our province and Albertans’ right to a fair vote?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having followed the process, as I’m sure members of the Assembly all did, they will know very well that the commission received thousands of written and verbal submissions as they did town halls around the entire province, and they wrote a report. In that report, it says right here on page 66 that they recommend going from 89 to 91 seats. In doing so, it continues to ensure we have fair representation, equal representation across the province in our elections.

Member Irwin: The only lawful and constitutional option for this government is to adopt the majority maps of the Electoral Boundaries Commission. There is no other democratic option. The UCP are so scared of losing the election, they’re planning to cheat to win. The law requires that this Assembly adopt the maps of the report, and that’s an 89-seat map respecting the Charter right to effective representation. So why is this government so blatantly ignoring the voices of Albertans and the nonpartisan Electoral Boundaries Commission?

Mr. Schow: Well, Mr. Speaker, I’d hope the members opposite would take yes for an answer. We are adopting the recommendations from the report, which is why I have put a motion on the Order Paper to form a select special committee that will be chaired by the Member for Leduc-Beaumont. The recommendations of this report, as it says in recommendation 5 in the addendum, is that we move from 89 to 91 seats to ensure there is fair representation and we are not deleting rural Alberta seats. That member is from Barrhead, Mr. Speaker. I’m not sure why that member has decided to jettison Barrhead for her city lifestyle.

Member Irwin: Given that I love Barrhead and I love rural Alberta, just like all the members on this side of the House, and given that just last fall that Justice minister stated that “government has nothing to do with the boundary commission review. It is an independent, nonpartisan process” yet the UCP government proves they will stop at nothing short of rewriting the rules in their own interest against the interests of Albertans, given the boundaries

report clearly warned that anything other than the commission’s map is unconstitutional and undemocratic, why is the UCP taking direction from the Trump playbook to carry out their assault on democracy?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will begin my answer by cautioning the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood about insulting our largest trading partner, with 90 per cent of our goods going south of the border. Again, this is their form of democracy. This is their form of diplomacy, which is to insult other world leaders in some attempt to maybe gain some headway or maybe some clicks. The member is about the clicks, but what I can . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Again, it was really quiet with the question. Had a hard time hearing the answer. Let’s hear the answer.

Mr. Schow: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member and I do agree. I love rural Alberta, and the member opposite loves rural Alberta. If she loves rural Alberta, why does she want rural Alberta to lose two seats in representation?

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 10:54 or so, right?

Member Irwin: Given that this UCP government’s record includes revoking the rights of Albertans four times using the notwithstanding clause, the same government that will pave a path to give separatists what they want while shamelessly disrespecting the voices of Albertans who want to stay in Canada, this new assault on democracy encourages cheating and rigging elections, all in a desperate attempt to cling to power. Why – why – does this UCP government feel so entitled to cheat and ignore the very democracy Albertans have fought so hard to build and defend?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m glad the member decided to bring up the notwithstanding clause again because it gives me the chance to talk about the importance of protecting fairness in girls in sports. Now what I think is really interesting is that the member opposite would love to watch on TV a male demolish a female in boxing, for example. Now, that’s not entertainment to me; that’s just savagery.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I can say in this Chamber is that when it comes to this commission’s report . . .

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

Mr. Schow: . . . I am happy to report that we are going to follow their recommendations to move from 89 seats to 91, which is their recommendations for the majority numbers . . .

The Speaker: Well, a point of order was noted at 10:56.

Ms Hoffman: Just a few months ago the Justice minister stood in this House talking about how great the interim report was from the Electoral Boundaries Commission. He loved that it was unanimous. He loved that it was an independent commission and that it was chaired by an impartial justice of the Court of King’s Bench. He said that he respected the process, but instead of tabling that final report, upholding the democratic principle, there’s a motion to rig the election on the Order Paper. Is this what the member thought he would be doing when he decided to run for office, so he would be known as the Justice minister who destroyed democracy?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Member for Edmonton-Glenora is conflating the interim report and the final report. There was no debating the interim report, but the final report: we have seen it. What it includes on page 66 in the addendum on recommendation 5 is that the Assembly modify the electoral act so that it moves from 89 to 91 seats. This is a recommendation from the commission. It's the majority of the commission. We are following said recommendation. I'm not sure what the members have with that unless they want to make sure that rural Alberta loses representation. I want to know: is that their intention?

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 10:58.

Ms Hoffman: Given that the Justice minister said that the "government has nothing to do with the boundary commission" and given that if the Justice minister wants a chance to preserve his integrity, he must honour that independent commission and give the Assembly a chance to approve the commission's report. Is the Justice minister really so scared of the commission's boundaries for Calgary-Cross that he'd rather be known as the Justice minister who cheated in an attempt to save his own seat?

The Speaker: The second point of order was noted, interestingly enough, at the very same minute of the clock at 10:58.

Mr. Schow: It's really sad, Mr. Speaker, to stand and have to answer a question of that nature, one that is a clear direct assault on the character of the Minister of Justice. This kind of language is not becoming of any member of this Chamber, and to stand here and call the Minister of Justice any form of insult is incredibly personal. If the members want to go down that road, I can tell you that the government will not engage in that. People at home are watching this, and they're watching the conduct of that member and the members all across the opposition benches, and I can tell that they are not impressed. [interjections]

The Speaker: Opposition Leader, I could actually hear you better than the person that had the floor. I know you weren't the only one talking, but you were the only one that was louder than the person that was recognized.

Ms Hoffman: Speaking of not impressed, given that 11 years ago the then Leader of the Official Opposition decided that she was smarter than voters and better than democracy, given that she crossed the floor and sat behind the Premier that she was actually elected to oppose – she thought she could get away with it, but it backfired. She didn't even win her nomination. Why? Because it wasn't fair. Because voters felt betrayed. They knew that it was an affront to democracy. So is the Justice minister really willing to stand behind her, show that he's just as entitled under the UCP, and sponsor the death of democracy?

11:00

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is rich hearing the member opposite talk about floor crossing, when it wasn't that long ago that one of their overlords in Ottawa in the NDP caucus crossed the floor to the Liberals, helping to get Mark Carney his majority government. Didn't say anything. Now, what I can say is that as members continue to personally insult and personally malign the

character of members on the government side, Albertans at home are watching. They are not impressed, and they recognize that the members are clearly just flailing. This is a caucus in complete disarray. Nobody takes them seriously, and it's why they've lost two consecutive elections and they're going to lose another.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 11:01.

Member Kayande: Mr. Speaker, this UCP government is doing the unspeakable. This plan to gerrymander the maps will dilute the vote of Calgarians. Why did this government slam Calgarians and only Calgarians with a \$340 property tax increase? Because they don't expect to face the judgment of Calgarians in an election, that's why. Calgary and Airdrie and Cochrane and De Winton are different places. Why is this government going to rig the next election instead of actually governing for the people?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that in 2015 the mayor at the time, now Leader of the Opposition, led council to vote to allow his administration to redraw the boundaries for the independent report. This is not without precedence. I can tell you that in this instance we are taking the recommendations of the commission to ensure that rural Alberta has their seats, from 89 to 91. That is what I call effective representation.

Member Kayande: Mr. Speaker, given that thousands of Albertans had their say in front of a bipartisan boundary commission and given the commission wrote a report with boundaries that respected Canada's Constitution and the unique nature of Alberta's urban and rural communities, especially Calgary, the largest city in Alberta and my home of 25 years, how can this government justify its Trumpian rigging of our next election by ignoring the boundary commission's report?

Mr. Schow: Well, there we have it, Mr. Speaker. More assassinations of the character of the President of the United States because when they can't agree with something, all they do is go and assassinate the character or they malign or insult our largest trading partner, with 90 per cent of our goods going down there.

Now, in 2016 the member opposite votes against the final boundary map, but council decides to adopt the broader boundary changes. The member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, seems to have a problem with something he has done himself. This is about effective representation, and that's why we're going to look at 91 seats. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Member Kayande: Given that the failure to adopt the boundary commission's final report is cheating and rigging and undemocratic and rips away the rights of Calgarians to choose their government and given this government treated Calgary as a punching bag for the last seven years, raising taxes, cancelling transit projects, and orchestrating a teachers' strike, why won't this government be honest with Calgarians and tell them that taking away their right to vote was the plan all along?

Mr. Schow: There was a lot there, Mr. Speaker, and I'm really even struggling how to answer some of that because it's a bit ridiculous. But the only person who has treated Calgary like a punching bag . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

You know, it was dead silent when the question was being asked. Let's hear the answer, too.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, the only people, the only person who has treated Calgary like a punching bag is the Leader of the Opposition when he hiked taxes . . .

Mr. Sabir: Oh, point of order.

Mr. Schow: . . . on the city countless times while fully neglecting the most basic services that the city needs, like water. [interjections]

The Speaker: Take another 10 seconds, and I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition won't interrupt this time. Listen, everybody's making noise, but when you're louder than the person with the microphone, it's a little tough to ignore.

Go ahead.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, it would appear that Johnny is rattled again. Johnny, Johnny, Johnny. The truth hurts. What I can say is that Calgarians have not forgotten the fact that they've had to ration water living in their own city. I mean, they want to be able to take showers regularly. It's that member's fault.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order. How good is that? At 11:06.

Okay. The next question belongs to the only one that we should hear, the Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Sport, Recreation, and Physical Activity Funding for Children and Youth

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, Slave Lake is often called the jewel of the north, predominantly because of our beautiful lake, but there are also some real hidden gems when it comes to talented athletes. It's always been my belief that sports can be an amazing tool for kids who live in remote and rural communities, providing them with hope and maybe even a path out of what seems like hopelessness to bigger stages and arenas they could only dream of as a little kid. To the Minister of Tourism and Sport: can you share how your government is supporting young athletes in Alberta and helping them to get in the game?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for a good question. Our UCP government believes that every kid deserves the opportunity to play in the sport that they love no matter where they live in our province. That is why through Budget 2026 we have committed \$8 million in funding for the every kid can play program. This funding supported over 100,000 athletes across the province just last year alone, and now applications are open and will close on May 21.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Sinclair: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for the answer. Given that all kids should have the opportunity to play sports regardless of where they are in this province, further given that programs such as every kid can play are improving access by reducing financial barriers and creating opportunities, hopefully cultivating our next generation of Olympians or maybe even NHLers, to the same minister: can you expand on how the every kid can play

program is supporting children and families, specifically in northern communities?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Boitchenko: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for a good question. Our government supports children and youth in every corner of the province, including those in our beautiful northern corners of our province. Through our every kid can play program we funded over \$130,000 for programs and the organizations in northern Alberta alone. With programs such as hoop heroes and the extreme freestyle skiing, we're helping every kid to get in the game that they love.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Sinclair: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks again to the minister. Given strong participation in sports is only possible with having access to updated and modern facilities and given local hockey arenas or ball diamonds in small towns are often the central hub for families or even the second home or an escape for kids like me in northern Alberta, not to mention pretty good comfort food at the canteens, could the same minister share what steps are being taken to ensure northern communities, particularly in Lesser Slave Lake, have access to high-quality sports facilities?

11:10

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member again for another good question. Sport and recreation facilities facilitate active and healthy lifestyles in our province. Last year alone, through our active communities initiative, we funded nearly \$1.5 million for an indoor rink, track to create year-round access to sport in the constituency of Lesser Slave Lake. This year we're investing \$9 million to continue funding projects across the province. Applications are now open, and they will close on June 1 of this year.

The Speaker: In 30 seconds we will continue with the daily Routine. We are at points of order. I think there are north of 20 of them.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

The Speaker: Okay. We started at 10:22, a point of order called on the government side.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a line that was used commonly, so wherever there is a repeat in this point of order, I'll combine it, but I suspect with your mountain of paperwork over there that that may be difficult to navigate through. At the time noted, the Leader of the Opposition said, "She is willing to gerrymander these maps." This is illegal. It's clearly a point of order. We have outlined, at least I think I outlined, about as clearly as one can today through all the questions in question period that we are following the recommendations of the commission, so there's no need to delve deeper into debate there.

This comment has been made a number of times, and you will see that in your notes. So I ask that this and future mentions of one individual or the government as a whole being accused of gerrymandering be ruled out of order because this will clearly become part of the conversation going forward, and it should remain parliamentary. Under 23(h), (i), and (j) I strongly urge the chair to side with my arguments and recognize that there will be continual disruption of this Chamber if the members continue to accuse

members or the government as a whole of cheating, gerrymandering, breaking the law, and so on and so forth.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that it's a point of order, and I also do not believe that's what the leader said. The leader's questions were: "Let's be clear; not adopting the commission's report is cheating" and "Not adopting the report is gerrymandering." I understand that the Government House Leader is bothered by the use of the term "gerrymandering," but it's used quite universally across North America whenever a government attempts to draw the maps based on their political considerations and not fair and effective representation. I do not believe that it's a point of order.

The Speaker: Well, here's what the Blues say: "Why is the Premier so afraid of her political chances that she's willing to gerrymander these maps?" That is clearly accusing an individual member and not a side of the House of that. It's a clear point of order. It must be apologized for and withdrawn.

Mr. Sabir: I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Thank you.

At 10:24 the opposition side rose.

Point of Order

Imputing Motives

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of points of order. I will keep it really to the point. It's 23(h), (i), and (j), accusing another member. The Premier, a direct quote: why he hates rural Alberta so much. That's clearly a point of order. And if you would allow me to include the one I raised on 10:24, at that time the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre also heckled the same: why you hate rural Alberta.

I think given your ruling on the previous point of order, it's clearly offside that you're accusing a member of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the Official Opposition, of hating rural Alberta.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber on a number of occasions the members opposite have accused the government of hating individual groups of public-sector workers, and I think that this is right in line with that. They were not called points of order in the past. This is clearly a matter of debate. Based on actions and words from the members opposite, one can deduce an opinion of whether or not they like, dislike, hate, loathe, appreciate, love, so on and so forth. In this instance I don't believe it's a point of order. I believe it's a matter of debate, and I would be concerned if we're unable to suggest based on comments how someone thinks or feels or does.

The Speaker: Here's what the Blues say: "I know not every member opposite hates rural Alberta as much as the Leader of the Opposition does." You know, our rules here allow a lot of latitude for people to say things. What you're not allowed to do is project thoughts into somebody else's mind. When you say that the Leader of the Opposition hates rural Alberta, that's not against the party; it's against an individual. You don't get to project thoughts into that individual's mind, so this is a clear point of order.

Listen, there are ways you can do this, folks, on both sides. All you've got to do is say that the member acts like they hate rural Alberta. I'm not encouraging it. I'm just saying that you folks didn't have to go through all these points of order today if you just kind of

follow the rules that we all know and maybe we should start to love. This requires an apology and a withdrawal.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure you and all members of the House that I always follow all the rules, but in this instance I will withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: That concludes that.

Sorry. Opposition member, I know that you tried to deal with two at once, but I've just got too much paper in front of me. At 10:24, what was your complaint there, please?

Point of Order

Imputing Motives

Mr. Sabir: At 10:24 was that during the same exchange the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services, clearly heckled with his loud voice, saying: why do you hate rural Alberta? That is clearly offside. I don't know if *Hansard* or the Blues caught it, but I hope the member will show some integrity and apologize and withdraw.

Mr. Schow: For the sake of speed, is that what the record said? I didn't hear it.

The Speaker: The record says that somebody said, "Why do you hate rural Alberta?" But it doesn't say who the somebody was.

Mr. Schow: I can't apologize for somebody. I need a name, Mr. Speaker, so absent that, I would not be able to apologize, but if that member did say that, I would apologize.

The Speaker: We can all acknowledge that no one should have said that, but somebody did. We just don't know who it was.

My goodness. Sorry. I've just got way too much paper here. At 10:26. I have no idea who. Anybody remember who complained at 10:26? Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Imputing Motives

Mr. Schow: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I raised the point of order. At the time I believe the Leader of the Opposition said that the Premier is "gaslighting" Albertans. That has also been ruled out of order many times, 23(h), (i), and (j). Let's try to get through this expeditiously, I guess.

11:20

Mr. Sabir: If that word was said in relation to the Premier directly, I will retract and apologize.

The Speaker: So I can accept what you just said as an admission, since the Blues say that the opposition leader said, "No amount of gaslighting will fix that problem"? I guess we'll call that an apology, what you just did, because one is required, just to be clear.

Mr. Sabir: I said that if it was said specifically in relation to the Premier, I would retract and apologize.

The Speaker: That's good. That's dealt with.

At 10:29.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

Mr. Schow: Now, I'll combine 10:29 and 10:32, at both times the Leader of the Opposition. One said that gerrymandering is all she

has left to grab power, referring to the Premier. And then, “Why is the Premier gerrymandering in slow motion?” at 10:32, also the Leader of the Opposition to the Premier.

The Speaker: Give me a second here to shuffle paper.

Mr. Sabir: Mr. Speaker, I do understand that the Government House Leader is bothered by the use of the term “gerrymandering,” but as I said earlier, it’s fairly universally used in North American politics, and it refers to whenever a government attempts to amend, tweak boundaries in their favour to further their politics. What’s happening – in this particular instance context is important – is that there is a report in front of this House and government members want to take a different route instead of accepting that. That would be described as tweaking boundaries to suit their political needs, so I don’t think that describing that as gerrymandering is offside. It may offend the Government House Leader and government members to hear, but it’s not offside the rules of this House.

The Speaker: Well, accusing somebody of something that might not be legal is against the rules of this House. You are right in saying that “gerrymandering” is a fairly common term, and accusing a side of the House of gerrymandering would not be a point of order, but personalizing it to an individual member definitely is. At 10:29 the Leader of the Opposition said, “Gerrymandering is all the Premier has left to try and cling to power,” so definitely attaching it to an individual member. There’s one apology required there, but there’s a second one you need to do. I’m going to let you do them at the same time. At 10:32 the opposition leader said, “Why is the Premier gerrymandering in slow motion?” Let’s hear two apologies at one time. I’m going to help you out here.

Mr. Sabir: Two apologies at one time, and I will also withdraw the point of order that was raised at 10:29.

The Speaker: At 10:29. Thank you.

You’re just going to have to forgive me for a minute.

Mr. Sabir: At 10:31 I raised one.

The Speaker: Yeah. I just don’t know what – you might have to forgive me with so many of them. We just did 10:29, 10:32.

Mr. Sabir: We dealt with 10:29. We dealt with 10:32.

The Speaker: Okay. You had one at 10:31. Are you withdrawing that one?

Mr. Sabir: The 10:29 I withdraw, and the 10:31 I will argue.

The Speaker: Then you may.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Sabir: Again, at that time the Premier was answering the question, and she directed her comments to the Leader of the Official Opposition: why the Leader of the Opposition holds rural Albertans in such contempt. Again, a wildly inappropriate allegation against 23(h), (i), and (j) and good parliamentary practices of this House.

Mr. Schow: Based on the way that the record has been remembered by the member of the opposition, it was a question posed: why does the member hold rural Alberta in such contempt? I think that is in line with the creative language that you have suggested, Mr.

Speaker. The Premier did not say that the member holds rural Alberta. It’s: why does? I thought it was a creative way of getting to a point. Not a point of order.

The Speaker: Here’s what the Blues say. “I don’t know why the Leader of the Opposition holds rural Alberta in such contempt that they won’t listen.” I don’t think it was projecting thoughts. It was a matter of debate.

We’ll move on to the next one. I think it’s number 9. You might have to forgive me for not remembering exactly what minute that was.

Point of Order Allegations against a Member

Mr. Williams: Yeah. I called at 10:34 a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: At 10:34 is about in line with the time I don’t have on here.

Mr. Williams: Wonderful.

What is not wonderful, however, was the language that was used by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. In a scripted question, Mr. Speaker, I must add, as I rise on 23(h), that this is particularly problematic. It wasn’t a crime of passion, so to speak. It was scripted. It was intentional. That member is a very learned member of this House. She said, after saying that the Justice minister made a statement, that that statement was intentionally and deliberately false. That is the definition of a lie. The member cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly.

Mr. Speaker, it is a problem because what the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is doing as a matter of pattern is, again, flaunting these rules, not by passion, not by accident, not by putting a foot over a line, but by jumping all the way over it and putting yours and this House’s nose in it. I ask the member to apologize and withdraw. It seems like a tragedy that members are allowed to intentionally do it and get through the rules, which is different than 99 per cent of the other points today.

The Speaker: Opposition.

Mr. Sabir: Again, thank you. I think what the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud said was, “That statement was intentionally and wilfully false.” We do hear many things about statements, that nothing can be further from the truth. It’s the same kind of statement. I don’t think that it was directed personally at the Justice minister. It was in reference to a statement that was made, that after the fact we found that it was false. But I leave it to your . . .

The Speaker: Can I save you some time here?

Mr. Sabir: Yeah. I retract and apologize.

The Speaker: That’s a good thing because what was said was, “That statement was intentionally and wilfully false,” referring to the Minister of Justice. That’s calling somebody a liar, one of the most clear points of order in here. Since you’ve already apologized and withdrawn, which is the right thing for you to do, that matter is concluded.

At 10:35. Government House Leader, I think I have here.

Mr. Schow: I have no idea what it was. I’ll withdraw.

The Speaker: Okay. You would have won it, but that’s all right. You don’t know what it is.

Mr. Schow: Well, then, in that case . . .

The Speaker: No. Too late. You know what? When you folks give me this much paperwork, I'm just not going to really help anybody out here.

Eleven. I'm going to – 10:36, thereabout.

Mr. Sabir: I think just to comment on the previous point of order, I was sitting next to the member, and I did hear the heckle, and that was inappropriate. I can withdraw and apologize, although it was dealt with.

**Point of Order
Parliamentary Language**

Mr. Sabir: At 10:36. Again, the Government House Leader was responding to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and made a clear accusation that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was somehow trying to assassinate someone's character. That's wildly inappropriate and against 23(h), (i), (j).

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, in many instances I would like to follow the lead of the opposition leader in his apology without being prompted, but in this instance I cannot. The line of questioning from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud at the time was clearly directed at the Minister of Justice. With relation to the point of order, I just don't see how calling the Minister of Justice a cheater or saying that he's cheating or he's lying – this is all something that cannot be tolerated in this Chamber. Today is a perfect example. We are wasting good debate time on 20 points of order. That member is a learned, experienced, good communicator in this Chamber who knows how to use this time wisely. It is clear that these assassinations and these attacks on the Justice minister are persistent, and they need to stop. I'm going to continue to call the points of order because it cannot be tolerated, and at some point I would even ask the chair's indulgence to intervene in the middle of question period as he sees fit. This cannot continue.

11:30

The Speaker: Go ahead. No; you did your thing. Did you need to say anything?

Mr. Sabir: No. I raised this point of order.

The Speaker: Yeah. Okay. So what was said: "The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud . . . if they disagree with someone outside of the Chamber, they criticize and . . . assassinate their character." Based on the previous point of order that was properly apologized for – thank you – that was called because the member was trying to assassinate someone's character, this is a matter of debate, fairly characterizing that. That's what it is. It's not a point of order.

It goes to 12 now if I can find it. I've got two called 13. Oh, no; that's two pieces of paper. Does anybody know who called something at 12? I think you can all probably forgive me for that, with the rapid-fire points of order that you all put in front of me today.

The member.

**Point of Order
Parliamentary Language**

Mr. Sabir: Thank you. That was at 10:37 against the Government House Leader, who was responding to a question from the MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud. The member went on to say that "it is bad form for members in this Chamber to call members of the public cheaters, particularly judges. That member is a lawyer." "That member" was a direct reference to the Member for Edmonton-

Whitemud. Again, you can say things about caucus as a whole, whatever different policy positions are, but saying that that member is calling members of the public cheaters and pointing specifically to one individual: that is offside, 23(h), (i), and (j).

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, it is in *Hansard* today that the members opposite have called, indirectly, the government cheaters, and I used my line specifically about being a lawyer because it is the direct quote used by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud when not so long ago referring to the Minister of Justice. She said, I quote: that member is a lawyer; he should know better. That is her direct quote. You can pull it from *Hansard*. I don't have the exact date, but this is certainly not a point of order. I'm simply pointing out that the member is a lawyer and should know better. With that, I'll finish my remarks.

The Speaker: The learned members for each side made very compelling arguments, and because of the number of points of order I have no paperwork on this, no Blues, no nothing. We're moving on because I just don't have any evidence unless somebody wants to admit fault or something. I don't see anybody jumping up. My apologies to the House. I'm just unable to deal with this.

Mr. Sabir: May I suggest that you reserve ruling on this?

The Speaker: No. Sorry. Not with 21. I'm not reserving anything today. You all are putting me through the hoops here, and that's your right to do.

We're moving on to number 13, which was called by you, I believe, sir.

Mr. Sabir: May I ask another question under 13(2)?

The Speaker: Yes.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Sabir: What would we consider as the ruling on that point?

The Speaker: Well, let me just say this. Based on the accusation you made, I didn't quite see that that sounded like a point of order to me, anyways. It said something about, "You're a lawyer" – I'm not sure that's a point of order – and: because you're a lawyer, you should know something. I don't think that's a point of order. Those are both probably reasonable comments to make to somebody who's a lawyer, and there are lots of those around here. There's your explanation. That's the best I can do. I'm sorry.

At about 10:48 the deputy House leader for the opposition made a point of order.

**Point of Order
Imputing Motives**

Mr. Sabir: At 10:48 the Government House Leader responded to a question, and he used this wording: "The only ones attacking judges . . . are the members opposite," collective, "We have heard it a number of times," and then he went on to say, "from the Member for Calgary-Mountain View . . . [from] the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud." Again, the member is accusing other hon. members of doing something which is wildly inappropriate. Anything against judges we have heard in this Chamber is not from this side.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, whether we're talking about the boundary commission or we're talking about Justice Raymond Wyant, there have been many comments made specifically about

judges in this Chamber from the members opposite, specifically today the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and the Member for Calgary-Mountain View. I believe that I'm pointing out what we all heard. I don't believe this is a point of order.

The Speaker: Here's what I have. "The only ones attacking judges in this Chamber are the members opposite. We've heard it a number of times . . . from the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud." The context seems to me that the comments made in here could be interpreted as attacking judges. You don't have to agree with that, but it's definitely a matter of debate.

I think 10:54 is the next one. It's nice to have a few minutes in between points of order.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Sabir: I think that was, again, the Government House Leader responding to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood and again taking a really personal route to answer that question, trying to project thoughts and questions in others' minds, saying why the member has jettisoned Barrhead for an urban lifestyle and those kinds of things. I think that's against good parliamentary traditions here and questioning people's lifestyle and those kinds of things, 23(h), (i), and (j).

Mr. Schow: Precedence is already set today, Mr. Speaker, where the Premier responded to the Leader of the Opposition saying "why is" instead of "the member is." I posed it the same way. I said: why does the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood jettison Barrhead for the flashy, fancy, bougie life of the big city of Edmonton? I don't think it's a point of order.

The Speaker: Well, here's what I have that was said, and this is one of those places where context matters. "If she loves rural Alberta, why does she want rural Alberta to lose two seats in representation?" If it was saying that she doesn't like rural Alberta or something to that effect – but I think the comment was in the context of a difference of opinion about what the government wants to do, and the opposition doesn't have to agree. The government perceives this will save two seats in rural Alberta and the opposition says not, but that's a difference of opinion, which is why it's basically not a point of order. No one is projecting thoughts into somebody else's mind. It's a difference of opinion about what may happen depending upon what the House decides at some date in the future. Based on what's in the Order Paper today, that hasn't been presented yet, but I imagine it will be on Monday. There. That's the best I can do with that.

At 11:01. Whoa. We're finally into 11 o'clock. There we go.

Mr. Sabir: At 10:56.

The Speaker: Oh, there we go. I was wrong. Okay. I don't have anything that says 10:56. Oh, you know what? I do. It came in later because it's in a different pile, but that's what happens when I get 20 of them. Sometimes the filing by me up here doesn't happen the way it could.

Go ahead.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Mr. Sabir: I rise pursuant to Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j). At that time again the Government House Leader was answering a

question from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, and part of the answer was deeply troubling. The minister went on to say, "What I think is really interesting is that the member opposite would love to watch on TV a male demolish a female in boxing, for example." It is wildly inappropriate for the House leader to suggest that the hon. member would watch or condone violence against women. I not only expect the Government House Leader to apologize, but I ask him to reflect on this and do better.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the member did create the distinction because such an action in the street would be considered a crime, but apparently in the boxing ring it's just considered a sport, which is why we stand steadfast on making sure that women and girls have a safe place to compete and play.

With that said, I can understand why the member of the opposition took issue with those comments, and there's probably a better way to frame my answer. With that, I withdraw and apologize.

Before I sit down, I will say that I love the city of Edmonton, so hopefully my last comments were not taken in the wrong context. It's a great city. My wife is from here. I love Edmonton.

The Speaker: That's a lesson for all of us to think about what you say before you say it, more than after. That wasn't directed just at you, sir. That was directed at all of us, including myself. You've just apologized and withdrawn, if I caught that correctly?

11:40

Mr. Schow: I did, but I'll say it again. I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Okay. That deals with that issue.

Okay. We have, apparently, a second one at 10:55 or 10:56 by the Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j). Recently you have ruled on this a number of times, that you cannot project thoughts in other members' minds. The Government House Leader was answering a question from the hon. Member for – I don't remember at this time, but it was a minister answering everything. The minister said, and I quote, that the member opposite is inflating the interim report with the final report. Again, that's, I guess, projecting thoughts in other members' minds. It's offside.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I'm not presupposing what's in the member's mind. In the question – I specifically remember this – the Member for Edmonton-Glenora had mentioned the interim report but then made reference to the final report and the discrepancies therein. I don't understand how I'm apparently trying to presuppose what the member thinks. I'm just simply drawing a conclusion based on what the member said.

The Speaker: I have it here, and what you said was: "I believe the Member for Edmonton-Glenora is conflating the interim report and the final report." I don't hear any projecting of thoughts. You're saying that the hon. member has mixed up the two reports. I'm not saying that the hon. member on the other side would agree or disagree, but it's a matter of debate. I'm sure both sides will have a different interpretation of what the previous hon. member said. Most importantly, for today, right now, it's not a point of order; it's

a matter of debate. Nobody seemed to project a thought into anybody else's mind.

At 10:58 a.m. Okay.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

Mr. Williams: May I? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At 10:58 the Member for Edmonton-Glenora was speaking, asking a question, weirdly looking right into the camera and past all the members of the Assembly. That member said: "Would the Justice minister like to be known as the minister who cheated to save his seat?" or words to that effect. To accuse the Minister of Justice of cheating: it is definitively a point of order. I'm happy to say that so far the members opposite have been very responsive to apology and withdrawal. This member knows exactly what she did. This member knows it's inappropriate. I would hope that the Opposition House Leader would apologize.

Thank you.

Mr. Sabir: Apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Thank you. That deals with that matter.

Perhaps we are now finally in the 11th hour or the 12th hour of the day at 11:01 a.m. The Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order

Parliamentary Language

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j). At that time again the Government House Leader was answering the question. I will just get to the relevant part of the answer: what I can say is that the member continued to personally insult and malign the character of members on the government side. Again, singling out a member as doing something which the member was clearly not doing is offside the rules.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From as far back as I can remember, I used to love working on projects in my garage for wood and welding and all that kind of stuff. Over time you begin to develop calluses on your hands, which protect you from things like sharp objects, where you otherwise have to wear gloves. I think this is an instance where I would hope the members opposite – today is a perfect example – could begin to develop a little more callus as we continue to debate what are emotionally charged, highly important issues. When language like this is brought as a point of order, it is ridiculous. It is not a point of order. This is clearly a matter of debate. I don't see how we continue to bring these up.

We are now into – I think this is half an hour of points of order. Mr. Speaker, you get to skip . . .

The Speaker: Half hour of my life I will never get back.

Mr. Schow: You get to skip leg day today, Mr. Speaker, because you've been up and down all the time.

Without bringing the Speaker in, I will say this. I disagree. As we debate this going forward, particularly in the next week, I would ask the members to look inward and determine if this is the way we're going to spend time and if this is the kind of thing that they're going to find offensive. That is why I asked for your indulgence on these extra comments on this point of order. I don't believe it's a point of order.

The Speaker: The opposition? Okay. I've got the Blues here.

It is rich hearing the member opposite talk about floor crossing, when it wasn't that long ago that one of their overlords . . . crossed the floor to the Liberals, helping to get Mark Carney his majority government.

I'm skipping over this a little bit. I'm just doing it so you know what I'm looking at here.

Now, what I can say is that as members continue to personally insult and personally malign the character of members on the government side, Albertans at home are watching. They are not impressed, and they recognize that the members are clearly just flailing.

Yeah. Apparently, it was the Government House Leader's opinion that members were flailing, et cetera. It sounds like it's the opposition's belief that they weren't. It's clearly a matter of disagreement and debate. Clearly, not a point of order. Well, that was number 18.

Let's go to number 19, shall we?

Mr. Sabir: How about I also combine number 20 with it? It was raised at the same time pursuant to 23(h), (i), and (j).

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Point of Order

Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Sabir: Okay. Thank you. It was interesting to hear that the Government House Leader was trying to lecture us about what should and should not be said, but most of these points of order relate to comments made by the Government House Leader, and these do also relate to Government House Leader comments. I will make it very quick in response to answers instead of answering.

The Government House Leader said that the only person who has treated Calgary as a punching bag is the Leader of the Official Opposition and then also went on to say that if people in Calgary can't take regular showers, it's that member's fault. Like, that kind of language will not help with decorum in this House. These kinds of accusations should be beneath an experienced member like the Government House Leader. They are clearly offside the rules of this House and the parliamentary traditions of this place.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah. I like that we are in the home stretch. Let's try to get this done quickly.

The Speaker: It's too late to get it done quickly.

Mr. Schow: Yeah. Good point. Lessons for all of us, Mr. Speaker.

It wasn't that long ago I spent the night in a hotel in Calgary, and when I got there, there was a letter right on the front desk that said: please ration your water. This was not that long; a couple of weeks ago: please ration your water as a result of maintenance that's taking place with the repairs of the pipeline in Calgary.

Mr. Speaker, it has been clear for the last two years that water rationing is a result of pipelines and critical infrastructure being burst as a result of the negligence from the Leader of the Opposition. Now, I'm not trying to wade too deep in this debate, but I have to give context to what I'm saying. In this instance this is not a point of order. It's a matter of debate. I just understand that the Leader of the Opposition might be a little thin skinned on this one. That's why I said: let's develop some callus. Let's have this robust debate, and let's make sure that we're having, you know, a debate that benefits Albertans and not just spending time here debating frivolous points of order, which I think this is as well.

The Speaker: Okay. Well, see, folks, like, you're going home for the weekend after today. I know you've still got a few more hours

in here. I'll just ask you to think about how one side accused the other side of treating a city like a punching bag, and the other side accused the other side of treating somebody like a punching bag. I guess when you throw what you think is an insult and you get the same insult back, maybe you shouldn't complain. Anyways, the fact is that it's not unparliamentary to say that a municipality is getting treated like a punching bag. It's a matter of debate. It's a matter of opinion on both sides. There are no points of order here.

11:50

Talking about the water thing and saying that it's that member's fault: it's not a point of order. It's a reference to a historical thing that a member might or might not have done. It's a matter of debate. It's certainly not a point of order.

Are we done? That was 19 and 20. That was both of them. Neither one is a point of order. They're matters of debate.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 23

Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move third reading of Bill 23, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a lot of robust debate about this bill, an important bill for certain. Much to anyone's surprise, the NDP didn't really want to debate the merits of the bill, had a whole lot of nothing to say about the bill itself that we're currently debating. They made it clear that they don't like the transparency and accountability provisions of the bill. They don't want to reduce red tape, and they certainly didn't care about ensuring that all Albertans have confidence in our democratic systems.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

We brought Bill 23 forward to modernize and strengthen direct democracy in Alberta because Albertans deserve to have absolute confidence in how their democracy operates. Albertans expect elections and citizen-led initiatives to be fair, to be transparent, and to be secure. Now, I'm proud of the work that our government has done to ensure meaningful participation in democracy. Indeed, all of the work that we've done to champion the processes of direct democracy in this province are things that Albertans very much have embraced. In fact, the only people really opposing it are members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Justice I'm equally committed to ensuring that participation happens within a system that Albertans trust. That's why we're making these targeted amendments. These targeted amendments to the Citizen Initiative Act and the Recall Act allow scrutineers to observe the signature verification process. Now, imagine that, an opposition that opposes the requirement or the permission to allow scrutineers to witness processes. Those are the types of things that members opposite oppose throughout Bill 23. That's why we're making targeted amendments to make sure that scrutineers are able to come in, view the verification process, make sure that the count is proper, and report back to the proponents. That's an important thing when it comes to the integrity of elections here in this province. It's also why we're clarifying how long Elections Alberta must retain signature sheets, ensuring that important information remains available if the need ever arises.

Now, Bill 23 will provide greater flexibility regarding the timing of referendums after a successful policy or constitutional proposal, which makes the process more practical without compromising integrity, Mr. Speaker. It also creates stability in the process. When parties know exactly when these questions can come forward, they can prepare properly and they can plan even better.

We are reinforcing transparency in government, particularly when it comes to public-sector compensation. Now, how we're doing that, Mr. Speaker, is simple. We're lowering the disclosure threshold to improve that transparency while at the same time cutting unnecessary red tape by eliminating the process or the requirement of duplicate reporting for severance payments. This is a recommendation that came forward by the Standing Committee on Families and Communities. They have confirmed themselves that this simply does not improve public accountability. That is to say, repeated disclosures in the same year don't actually improve public accountability. It is a problem. It creates additional red tape. Bill 23 simply cuts that by requiring one reporting per year.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Bill 23 takes a firm stand to protect the fairness of our elections. This bill will prohibit the creation and distribution of misleading deepfakes intended to deceive voters about a candidate's actions or statements. Now, the rise of deepfakes poses a real threat to public trust, and that's something that members opposite told us yesterday that they agree with. In fact, it's not just us here in Alberta that is dealing with this. It's also the federal government, who has introduced similar legislation to help deal with the problems that deepfakes may pose.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Now, Bill 23 clearly outlines the penalties for failing to comply with the law, and they are severe. Madam Speaker, the emerging issue of deepfakes is one that this government takes seriously, and we are acting now to confront it not just when it comes to elections but in other areas as well. These measures reflect our unwavering commitment to preserving the integrity of Alberta's elections and our democratic institutions. Our job as legislators is to ensure that we protect the trust of our democracy, and Bill 23 accomplishes exactly that.

I move third reading, Madam Speaker, and I encourage everybody to support this bill to ensure that Albertans can continue to participate in the democratic process with absolute confidence.

Thank you.

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise and address both this bill and those comments. Oh, I don't even know where to start. Preserving the integrity of Alberta's elections from the minister of gerrymandering. It is ridiculous. It is ridiculous. This minister is in charge not just of all of the ridiculous changing of rules and slanting of playing fields that have been done for the separatists, not only for exempting himself from rules that apply to everyone else and giving himself a get-out-of-jail-free card – you know, what's interesting to note is that the proceedings of the Law Society occur in two stages. At the first stage the proceedings aren't public, so I have to say that I'm real curious why the Minister of Justice exempted himself from those rules. Is it something he already did or something he was planning to do in the future? But I digress.

This bill for the fourth time trots before the House. The Minister of Justice is like: "Oh, yeah. The process wasn't working. There's lots of red tape around that Referendum Act." Who passed the act, Madam Speaker? Who passed the act? It was that same minister.

Yeah. I mean, it wasn't very good. That's true. He's had to come forward and rewrite it four times. For that minister to rise in the House and say that he is doing anything to preserve the integrity of Alberta elections while this government is cheating and rigging the map is absolutely absurd. It's absolutely absurd.

You know what, Madam Speaker? I think Albertans are way too smart to fall for it. I think that this government can use all the rhetoric and the bluster and the absurdity that they want. They might be convincing their own members, but they're sure not convincing anyone else. Albertans are smart. They know how to read. They can read the electoral boundaries map and conclude that the statements made by the government members are transparently false. They are not only not preserving the integrity of Alberta elections; they are attacking the integrity of Alberta elections. They are divesting people of their right to vote.

This government, who claims that the changes they are making in this bill, in every subsequent – what is this? The fourth, fifth time they've had to come before this House with this Referendum Act because they just can't get it right? This government is claiming that they are about democracy while they take away the rights of Albertans to vote. That right is protected by the Charter, and these folks can't use the notwithstanding clause on that right. It only applies to individual rights and freedoms, and I'm sure the government is very sad about that. Really, it seems to be their favourite thing.

12:00

You know, once upon a time, they were libertarians. Not so much anymore. I don't particularly agree with libertarians either, but, yeah, I feel like this is the nanny state. It's taking away people's rights. It's divesting Albertans of the ability to have an opinion because – oh, and then trying to mislead them about it because, apparently, they think Albertans are stupid enough to buy this absurdity.

The Minister of Justice rising in this House on this day and saying that he is preserving the integrity of Alberta's elections, I mean, might be the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard said in my entire – it might take the cake. In 47 years of people saying ridiculous things that are totally, completely the opposite of the truth, this probably actually wins it. This probably wins it, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice trying to claim to preserve the integrity of anything, particularly elections, on the day when they move to take away the voices of Albertans, to take away the votes of Albertans, to cut this province up like a pizza so that they can dilute votes so that they don't have to hear from people.

The point of an election is for the voters to pick the politicians. Not with the UCP, though. They want to pick their voters, and we have seen how this has played out in the U.S. We have seen it. We have seen how it has basically completely eroded faith in their democratic institutions to the point of their current President. That's where this road ends. That's where this road that the UCP are starting right now, that's where this road of cheating, rigging elections – that's where it ends.

So, yeah, the Minister of Justice is not preserving the integrity of anything. He is taking it away. He is taking away the rights of Albertans. He is trampling over the voice of every single person that presented to the independent process. That was an independent process.

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, hon. member. I'm going to rise to steer you back to Bill 23.

Ms Ganley: Madam Speaker, I believe, and perhaps the table can correct me, that within the ambit is Bill 23 but also the comments

that were just made by the Minister of Justice. I mean, he put it into play.

In any event, I am happy to talk about the changes in Bill 23 that override democracy, which is to say that once again we see this minister coming forward with changes to the Referendum Act. Why do they keep changing the Referendum Act? Because they thought that their separatist friends were going to lose, because they were surprised to discover that Albertans are Canadians and that we stood up for Canada. They thought their separatist friends were just going to be able to roll over it. They thought that they could use this weird word salad about sovereignty.

They thought that Albertans would forget – that they would forget – that sovereignty association was the same thing Quebec said about it, right? This isn't – Quebec's separatist referendum was literally sovereignty association. That's what they called it, but this government trots forward in hopes that Albertans are stupid enough to forget that sovereignty association in Quebec's case was a separatist referendum and that if they keep saying "sovereignty," maybe people will be confused by the word and not realize what they mean.

Yeah. Honestly, it's disappointing. That's what I have to say about it. It is deeply disappointing because, Madam Speaker, I have very little faith in some ministers of this government. This doesn't surprise me about many of them, but there are members on the other side of whom I definitely would have thought better. I definitely would have thought better. I mean, this is embarrassing for them, really. It's incompetence. It's deliberate manipulation of the electoral system. It's a complete disrespect for Albertans, for their voices, for what they want. It's a complete disrespect of our democratic institutions.

This distinction that ministers opposite keep trying to draw between democracy and the rule of law as though these are forces that stand in opposition: it's funny. I said this in a member's statement in this House. The government keeps trying to say: "We're all for democracy, and those people like the rule of law. Nobody likes the rule of law or judges. Rights and the rule of law and judges are silly things. We're all about democracy over here at the UCP." I pointed out that they are taking away people's rights. The right to vote is exactly that. It's a right, and, oops, here we are today with them taking away Albertans' right to vote.

I really think that this bill is, you know, emblematic of all of the problems. I have put on the record the one part of this bill that I agree with, mostly because it's nearly impossible to agree with anything this Minister of Justice does, so it's nice to say when we can.

Oh, what else does the bill do? It also changes the disclosure rules. While this government is running around severing people from AHS to achieve their political whims and to try and crash the public health care system so that they can bring in private health care, they don't want Albertans to see how much money they're spending on severance for the people they fired in order to try and tank public health care, so they've changed the disclosure rules so that Albertans don't see that. Yeah. That's also highly – highly – problematic.

I think, at the end of the day, this is a pretty disappointing bill. It is a pretty disappointing bill, though, Madam Speaker, it is not nearly as disappointing as what has happened in here today, and it is not nearly as disappointing as hearing the Minister of Justice stand up and say that he is preserving the integrity of Alberta elections. I genuinely think he should be embarrassed for saying something so untruthful in here.

I think, Madam Speaker, with that, I will conclude my remarks by simply saying that this bill is disappointing. This government is disappointing. Albertans have the right to vote. You know,

ideological differences aside, I kind of thought that the UCP would have agreed with us on that, but it turns out y'all don't.

The Deputy Speaker: Any others on Bill 23? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to join the debate on Bill 23, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. Like many of the bills brought forward by the UCP, this bill is another omnibus bill that changes four acts: the Citizen Initiative Act, the Recall Act, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act. I just like to always identify this because certainly when we were government in 2015 to 2019, if we put, you know, more than one act in a bill, the opposition, which was the UCP, was outraged by that. But this is cavalier. This happens all the time. Here are four acts being changed by this one piece of legislation. Oftentimes to really be able to make your concerns or support or opposition to any bill, it's good to have those separated out, actually, in distinct bills.

Having said that, I will now look at this legislation specifically and debate it. The minister just said, you know, that this is about protecting democracy. My colleague from Calgary-Mountain View just talked about that extensively. The title in their news release is about "improving democratic processes and protections." You know, this is a really clear example, Madam Speaker, of sort of smoke and mirrors, like saying something is something that it is not. This bill is not protecting democracy. Rarely – rarely – does this government do anything that protects democracy. Mostly they say that they protect democracy, but they undermine it at every turn. This is just another example of the UCP government doing this once again.

12:10

Sadly, we have had way too many examples of this, and one example of that is just how they've eroded the authority of independent offices of the Legislature, and they did that with the Child and Youth Advocate office. It's an independent office that is supposed to make their own decisions, but sort of like this legislation, the government has put in an advisory position that weakens the office's autonomy and can endanger children. Those are the words of the advocate herself talking about the erosion of her authority.

I mean, that's the cool thing about democracy, that governments have independent offices. What does that mean? That means that there are checks and balances because we know that it's not good for all the power and decision-making to be only in one aspect like the Executive Council of government. It's good to have those independent offices. It's good to have the judiciary. It's good to have all those other aspects of a democratic process so that there are checks and balances, but of course here we have a clear example of the erosion of that, so Executive Council is getting to make decisions without those checks and balances.

Weakening independent offices is a good way to do that. I mean, the Premier herself has talked about how she wants to control the judiciary, and she has already been found by the Ethics Commissioner to have tried to do that when she interfered with the Minister of Justice, wanting him to intervene in a case regarding a friend of hers regarding some charges due to his actions at the border crossing with the U.S. in southern Alberta. This government has shown time and time again how cavalier they are about really caring about democracy, so it really flies in the face of what is actually happening that they would say: oh, yes, this is all about

making democracy stronger. We know that that is not the case with this government.

Like, with the office of the Chief Electoral Officer we know that they delayed funding, you know, the government majority committee, in the late fall last year because of all the recall petitions. There was a significant uptick in that because the changes in legislation that the UCP government had brought in made it much easier to bring forward these recall petitions. Of course, that meant there was so much more work to do, and they needed more financial support to be able to do that, but the committee, which was controlled by the UCP, delayed that, so the work of the commission could not go ahead in a timely manner, and it was delayed until that was approved some weeks, a month or so later.

You know, another erosion in our democratic process is just that, you know, the Ethics Commissioner has said that he's willing to stay on and complete his investigation into the corrupt care scandal, but the UCP has told him no, and they're going to have someone else come and take that position. They could have easily let it go ahead because there wasn't that much more to do on it, but no. The UCP are kicking him out of that job. That's just another way to erode democracy so that an independent officer of the Legislature cannot complete their work on a very important corrupt care scandal, that we're all concerned about in Alberta, with the misappropriation of funds.

I guess I'm just trying to demonstrate very clearly that this legislation purports to be supporting democracy in our province, but in fact that is the furthest thing from what it's doing. It's also not – I don't know – the MO of this government. They have done thing after thing to erode democracy, so this is just another one.

Then, as my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View talked about earlier, you know, there've been several changes to this legislation because somehow they can't get it right over there, and it's just been the last year. In May 2025, through Bill 54, the UCP lowered the threshold of required signatures – of course, that encourages these recall petitions and encourages all of that – and created more time to extend the signature collection period. They made it easier, and now they're going to be making it harder again, limiting when these petitions can come forward, so which is it? It's like: who's actually thinking things through? Who's thinking things through over there? It doesn't sound like anybody is.

Is it time yet? Yeah?

Most egregious of all is what we've talked about in QP today, the rejection of the Electoral Boundaries Commission report. Like, nowhere in the rest of Canada has this ever happened. This is an independent office or independent commission designed to get politics out of these kinds of decisions, not giving any preference to, you know, a political party who could gerrymander how things go, making it easy for them to get elected again. Time after time, Madam Speaker, this government has shown they don't care about democracy. They only care about keeping power, and it's deeply concerning to me and all Albertans.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 23, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. You know, it's interesting that today while the minister was up and speaking to this, he talked about their belief in democracy and how this bill will do that. Now, I would be disappointing those at home that aren't following everything that's happening today, so I just want to do a bit of a recap because, specifically, what has happened today is impacting the Justice

minister, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, and, quite honestly, how this government feels about democracy.

You know, he talked about this being the right thing to do and that they want Albertans to have access to democracy and that this piece of legislation will do that, yet today on the government Order Paper, the notices under Government Motions, is a motion that directly speaks to the Electoral Boundaries Commission and their rejection of it. To be clear, Madam Speaker, there is only one report from the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and supporting that is the only fair thing for our democracy. Period.

We have a Justice minister that stood up and talked about how important democracy is, then at the same time put forward a motion that is clearly the UCP wanting to rig the next election. To be clear, not adopting the commissioners' report is cheating, so when we're talking about this legislation, Bill 23, and the government is doing something that, you know, is along the lines of gerrymandering and antidemocratic, it's really concerning that they can stand up in this place and do two things at the same time.

Now, this piece of legislation is not actually democratic. Despite what the minister has said, it shows that they've continued to amend it, and they're simply annoyed that Albertans have used their own legislation against them. They're taking the opportunity while putting forward a piece of legislation that they're claiming is democratic, that is putting all of the power and the autonomy of the chief electoral office in the minister's office.

12:20

So here we have, you know, a government that is talking about the importance of democracy and elections, and they are eroding it and making it fit their agenda, which is to retain government and power, not to allow Albertans to have voice, to vote. It's absolutely mind-boggling that this is where we are. In 2026 we have a government that is continuing to exert power, to blatantly gerrymander and cheat and put forward legislation like Bill 23 that essentially limits Albertans' access to democracy. I think when it comes to all members of this Chamber, I know that on this side of the House we believe in democracy. We believe that all Albertans should have voice and be able to vote in an election that has not been rigged to support the governing party, the UCP. So when every member in this House is looking at what brought them to this place, it was an election; it was listening to their constituents who brought them here.

Going forward, accepting that this is the process that this government is doing, questioning integrity and the right of the Alberta voter to have voice. Thousands of Albertans came forward to the electoral commission and brought forward their ideas.

The Deputy Speaker: Member, I'm going to steer you to Bill 23. I know members want to talk about lots of other sorts of things that have happened today, but let's get to the bill at hand.

An Hon. Member: Hear. Hear.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think that it's unfortunate that we can't talk about what's happening in the province, about democracy, when a bill is before us.

An Hon. Member: Do you need an orientation?

Ms Goehring: You know, I hear them chirping on the other side.

Ms Ganley: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View on a point of order.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Ms Ganley: Yes, Madam Speaker, I think it has been very clear in this Chamber that insulting a specific member and, I believe, saying to a member who was making appropriate comments having to do with the business of this House, on a very difficult day I might add, "do you need an orientation?" as that member just did, is something that is pretty clearly likely to cause disorder. I don't really think that we need male members of this Chamber telling female members that they aren't smart enough to be in here, and I would ask that member to apologize and withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Williams: Madam Speaker, we have rules that govern this House. Those rules are laid out in the standing orders and precedents. Nothing cited by the member opposite breaks any rules. What the member said as a chirp is normal and commonplace within Legislatures for crosstalk. There was nothing about it that had any relationship to gender or sex or condescension, and I find it absolutely despicable that members opposite grab for the nearest bludgeon to try to intimidate people from speaking in this House by accusing us of some sort of inappropriate action. This is not a point of order. I ask members opposite to quit being so sensitive and to please debate the substantive answers.

The Deputy Speaker: I've waited all day to say things about both sides of this House that make us all look like a bunch of whiny babies. I'm serious. These are unhelpful comments on both sides of the House. It's unhelpful to not talk about the bill at hand. I can appreciate, like I said in my previous ruling, that we want to talk about other things, but the Orders of the Day say that we are talking about Bill 23, and that's what we're talking about right now.

Unhelpful comments trying to insult members from the other side of the House or members that are speaking are not helpful. It's Thursday. We're about to go home. We're going to take a breather. We can be mad, but in this House we're going to be orderly, and I'll call you all out.

We are on bill 23. The only member who has the floor is the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, who may proceed.

Debate Continued

Ms Goehring: On Bill 23 and the incredible democracy of Alberta being eroded, I would really encourage all members to actually consider what this government is doing when it comes to our democracy and vote against it.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to speak to Bill 23?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 12:26 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Johnson	Sawyer
Armstrong-Homeniuk	LaGrange	Schow
Boitchenko	Long	Schulz

Bouchard	Lovely	Sinclair
Cyr	Lundy	Singh
de Jonge	McDougall	Stephan
Dreeshen	Nally	Turton
Dyck	Neudorf	van Dijken
Ellis	Nicolaides	Wiebe
Fir	Nixon	Williams
Getson	Petrovic	Wilson
Glubish	Pitt	Wright, J.
Horner	Rowswell	Yao
Hunter	Sawhney	Yaseen
Jean		

Against the motion:

Arcand-Paul	Ganley	Renaud
Batten	Goehring	Sabir
Chapman	Hoffman	Schmidt
Deol	Irwin	Shepherd
Eggen	Kayande	Sigurdson, L.
Ellingson	Metz	Tejada
Elmelligi	Nenshi	Wright, P.
Totals:	For – 43	Against – 21

[Motion carried; Bill 23 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

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

Bill 18 Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act

The Chair: Are there members that wish to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair. As we know, the government put forward this legislation, and for the most part they communicated that they're doing it to help Albertans with disabilities, but they're doing far more with this bill than what they claim. We do have some amendments, and I do have the requisite number of copies of the amendment.

The Chair: All right. This will be known as amendment A4.
Hon. member, you may proceed.

Mr. Sabir: The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall to move that Bill 18, Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act, be amended by striking out sections 9, 11(1)(a)(iii), and 14(e). We are on record supporting a practitioner's right to refuse to offer MAID. That's not at issue here, but creating an exclusion zone around a publicly funded facility is an unreasonable limit to MAID access in Alberta.

12:40

Currently exclusion zones are not a common practice in Alberta health care facilities, and in fact when facilities tried to set up exclusion zones, a number of scandals followed. Individuals signed MAID forms on sidewalks and in bus shelters and faced horrific transport situations like taxi rides to arrive at hospitals that would provide MAID. It doesn't create any safeguards for individuals seeking this service. It may create some safeguards for UCP ideology, but that's not something that we are talking about.

When you're creating these zones outside publicly funded hospitals and facilities, you're making it difficult for Albertans to access that service. As the government claimed that they want to put safeguards with this bill, I don't think that's a safeguard. That's creating more restrictions, creating limitations, creating hurdles for individuals seeking this service, and it inflicts harm to and violates the dignity of those terminally ill Albertans who are seeking this service. So I hope that government will think about this amendment.

A practitioner's right to refuse is not at issue here, but you're restricting Albertans' access to their own publicly funded facilities. For that, I urge everyone to support this amendment.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to the hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall for proposing this amendment. However, I cannot support it, and I would urge members of this Assembly to do the same.

The whole purpose of the exclusion zone was to give medical practitioners and facilities the ability to exercise their rights if they agree or disagree with a particular medical procedure, including MAID. And we know that many doctors have certain beliefs that compel them not to offer MAID. Now, the hon. member for the NDP said that he supports a physician's right to choose. Well, how could it follow, then, that they do not support an exclusion zone around the very facility where the doctors choose not to offer MAID services, provisions, and otherwise?

Now, we know, Madam Chair, from experience that in other places where there is no exclusion zone, there are services being offered right in the parking lots or in front of the very medical facilities that choose not to offer MAID provision, and that is a real problem. One of the perfect examples is St. Paul's hospital in Vancouver, where somebody set up a Sea-Can right outside of the facility and is offering MAID services when that facility does not. We don't think that that is supportive of the spirit of the intention of making sure that physicians have the right to choose and making sure that facilities have the right to choose. By including an exclusion zone, we can protect the ability for physicians to make that choice and to make it without having others set up in the parking lots of those facilities and offer those MAID services.

For that reason, I think it would be appropriate that this Assembly reject this amendment. Thank you.

The Chair: Any others on amendment A4?

Seeing none, I'll call the question on amendment A4 as moved by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Chair: Any other members on Bill 18? The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to actually move another amendment. Again, the UCP claims that they are putting in safeguards by bringing forward this legislation, safeguards in the MAID process. Again, government is doing many things that are not safeguards but rather making it difficult for people to access the service and also interfering with the autonomy of medical professionals, their decision-making. I can also say this with confidence, that government didn't bother consulting any medical practitioners whatsoever on this piece of legislation.

With that, I will move an amendment.

The Chair: Members, this will be known as amendment A5.
Hon. member, you may proceed.

Mr. Sabir: The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall to move that Bill 18, Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act, be amended as follows: (a) in section 4, (i) by striking out subsection (1), (ii) in subsection 2(c)(i) by striking out “within 12 months of the date of the opinion”, and (iii) by striking out subsections 2(e), (3), and (4); (b) in section 11(1)(a)(i)(C) by striking out “; (e)”.

Madam Chair, what this amendment does is that it takes out the requirement that the UCP is legislating, that a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or sibling must witness MAID so long as the practitioner is able to find them.

There are a number of concerns with this provision. The first is that in Alberta we do not require consenting adults to have their family witness those decisions. I do recognize that in many cases family members are the most important and meaningful circle of care that any individual has in their life, but for some others that may not be the case. They may have estranged family members. They may have suffered abuse, neglect at the hands of family members. This is just another one such requirement that the UCP is inserting in the name of a safeguard that doesn't belong here.

The next thing it does is that the Criminal Code provision for MAID says that two practitioners should independently provide an opinion about the reasonable foreseeability of death. I think that's a decision that is best left to medical professionals, not politicians. They should determine when death should occur, and putting this limit I don't think has any basis in scientific research, scientific evidence, or physician opinions.

With that, I would urge all members of this House to support this amendment.

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

Dr. Metz: Thank you. I rise to speak to this amendment which removes the limit of 12 months from patients who are otherwise eligible for MAID legally because they meet all the criteria, including that they have a serious and incurable illness or disease, they are in an advanced state of irreversible decline, and their natural death is already reasonably foreseeable.

12:50

The existing legislation does not have a time limit for very good reasons. It is because physicians and nurse practitioners do not have the ability to give precise control reads of how long a person will live. Our prognosis is limited. When a person has an incurable condition, we can predict that their eventual outcome will be death from that condition unless something else happens in between, but we are not able to predict when that will happen. Unfortunately, if you are unlucky and you get a disease like ALS or Parkinson's disease – ALS is Lou Gehrig's disease, or motor neuron disease – we know that eventually it will kill you. We also know that you won't die suddenly and that you will have a slow, progressive decline or maybe a faster decline. There will be ups and downs in the course of your disease.

This legislation already requires that you be in an advanced state of that disease, but a person can still have periods of relative stabilization along with periods of rapid decline. We cannot predict them, but we do know that there will be a great deal of suffering that goes along with those later states of the disease. People with ALS typically die within two to five years; but during that time they go through loss of mobility, loss of ability to speak, loss of ability to swallow, and progressive loss of their respiratory function. These don't happen in a specific order. You could lose your ability to speak while you are still walking. You could be unable to swallow while you are still walking. We cannot predict it.

We know that the trajectory of Parkinson's disease is also very unpredictable. A person can, at the end, have absolute immobility, meaning they cannot turn over in bed. We know that there can be a great deal of pain associated with Parkinson's disease, and a person can lose their ability to swallow, their ability to speak, and sometimes their cognition. We know that each person follows a different pathway with these periods of worsening and periods of plateau. We know that these progressions are often influenced by their underlying health, and a healthier person may progress more slowly, but that is not just getting to severe disability. They may live in that state for a longer period of time.

If the government would have looked at the data from the sixth report that came out of the federal government, they would know that most people who receive MAID are older than age 75. They would also know that two-thirds of the people who receive MAID have cancer, but neurologic, respiratory, cardiovascular diseases, and others make up the rest of the people who receive MAID.

This bill will have an enormous impact on people that have progressive life-ending conditions, particularly the ones known best to me, which are the neurologic conditions. It is critical that we not put a time limit on this so that people have to suffer longer when they are in a state of readiness to die, when they have reached the point where they realize they're not able to do meaningful things with their life and they are continuing to suffer. I say suffer. It is a horrible suffering that these people and their families go through, watching them suffer, as time goes on.

Now, a person with these conditions may choose to apply for MAID before they're ready to receive it. They have this, and that helps them greatly emotionally, that they know that if things continue down this pathway, that burden of the whole assessment has already been completed and they can move on to the stage of receiving MAID when they are ready.

Now, this bill, called Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act, really has many problems, starting with the naming of this bill. What they are doing here is not a safeguard. It is forcing people to live in a state of often severe suffering until they are at a point where it's pretty clear that they're going to die within 18 months. That could be a few years for some people, and that is not a safeguard. This bill removes the rights of Albertans. Of course, that is something that this government repeatedly does. We saw this again today with their plan to redraw the electoral boundaries and kill democracy.

This bill is also an intrusion into the relationship between physicians and patients. We support the concerns of the disability community. We agree that there must be adequate safeguards around track 2 MAID. However, this bill also intrudes very significantly into track 1 MAID, as MAID has been provided to people legally for several years now without this 12-month time restriction. Those that were advocating for the safeguards trusted this government to do that without trampling on everyone's rights, including their own.

We already know this government does not care about people with disabilities. They refused the bill proposed by my colleague from St. Albert to develop disability legislation, and they are clawing back the \$200 federal disability credit. They are moving many now on AISH to this new program called ADAP, and this uncertainty adds to the uncertainty in the lives of vulnerable people. I strongly support removing this 12-month limit instead of including it here as this government has done, which shows another measure to fail Albertans.

This bill removes the rights of individuals to access MAID. Very egregiously, they are prohibiting care providers from discussing MAID unless a person raises it. If we have a person that has one of these progressive conditions, they're getting worse. They're

wondering what can be done. They've already tried anything that might alleviate their suffering. They're aware that they're only going to get worse, live in pain, live unable to move, unable to swallow. These people have no ability to hear about MAID if they do not already know about it. This disallows even this legal option.

Now, it seriously intrudes on the ability for a physician or a nurse practitioner to care for people, as providing all of a person's options are an important part of that care. Will the government's intrusion next extend into prohibiting physicians from talking about resuscitation? Where will this go?

1:00

This week we heard from the minister that section 10, which states that physicians would be not allowed to talk to patients about MAID unless they raise it – he said that this is seeking “to prevent and block activists from promoting or encouraging MAID to vulnerable Albertans.” Well, that legislation does not actually say that. It very explicitly prohibits physicians and care providers from talking about MAID to their patients. This is either another example of how this government is bad at their job, or they are totally mischaracterizing this bill.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

The 12-month rule is another example of mischaracterizing this bill as a protection when, in fact, it is taking away a right from patients. We need to be able to have the necessary discussions, and we need to be able to be honest about what the prognosis is when we really do not know. Even the Alberta Medical Association and many other groups have been calling for this legislation to be paused and go back to the drawing board. This amendment, that will limit the time limit, is one of those features that needs to be looked at again. It is arbitrary, it doesn't have any meaning in medical care, and it is one of the things that needs to be stopped and removed from the legislation. This government needs to consult widely on a bill that will provide safeguards but not have many consequences that might be seen as unintended. We don't know. Perhaps these are all part of a package of what is actually intended to happen.

With Bill 18 I would like to also state that the Parkinson Association of Alberta has also come forward very strongly and is opposing this bill. People with ALS are also very much speaking out against this bill. I've also heard from many family members of people who received MAID for progressive, severe, lethal neurologic conditions who have told me how their ability to have the option of MAID in their back pocket was critical to their well-being and living up until the point when they could not live in this way anymore. The things that are often not recognized are that patients and families have an opportunity with MAID to be able to say goodbye together and to have control over their life.

We know that the people that choose to have MAID tend to be people that have more education and a higher degree of control in their life, are the people that tend to move forward with this decision. By removing the ability for people to decide when they're ready, when they are suffering too much – they're still going to die from this – we are limiting that control. By preventing physicians from being able to speak to patients about this, we are limiting the ability for people who are not clear on what the laws and the rules are from hearing about that option even when they are in that end, the 12-month rule.

I would like to strongly recommend that all of my colleagues support this amendment. I hope that the members on the other side will understand and will have heard from groups that know the lived experience of these diseases can be absolutely horrible at the end of life. We've had a way of allowing people to manage that, but because

we cannot predict precisely how long a person has to live, by bringing in this limit of 12 months, we are significantly taking away rights of Albertans for no good reason. They should rethink this and support this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Chair: Any others wishing to provide comment? The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the two members from the NDP for their comments in this debate on this amendment put forward by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall. Unfortunately, I must ask members of this Legislature to vote down this amendment as well for many reasons, much of which I'd like to get into now.

Now, the Member for Calgary-Varsity spoke at great length about the process of reasonable foreseeability or her opposition to reasonable foreseeability, but that is inconsistent with what we've heard from members of the NDP themselves, Mr. Chair. Members of the NDP have gotten up in this House and argued against track 2 MAID themselves, but the Member for Calgary-Varsity spoke for a good 10 minutes about track 2 MAID. That is inconsistent with what their own members believe, and it certainly is inconsistent with what our members on this side of the House believe in.

Bill 18 includes a witness requirement, and that is for good reason, Mr. Chair. This is a bill to ensure safeguards for people who are in positions where they are seeking MAID eligibility. What we've heard time and again is that a primary concern about those who are seeking MAID sometimes do so because they are suffering from things like poverty, from things like loneliness, and other things like depression. We can never allow people who are in a state of despair to feel alone. They must have the supports that they need. They must have family members nearby. That is essential. We think that making sure that those who are considering MAID have the support of loved ones is absolutely fundamental to the safeguards being imposed in Bill 18.

Now, the other part of the conversation spoke about this timeline, but you can't have it both ways, Doctor. There either has to be a reasonable foreseeability of death, or there has to be a scenario where death is not reasonably foreseeable. Members on both sides of this House have already agreed that where there is no reasonable foreseeability of death, both parties reject that concept, at least at the very beginning. Now it seems like there's a little bit of dispute in their ranks. In any event, when it comes to track 2, which is where death is not reasonably foreseeable, Mr. Chair, Bill 18 does not allow that to happen here. That's what disability groups have been advocating for. That's what Inclusion Canada and Inclusion Alberta have been pushing for. Once again, inconsistent between what members of the NDP have put on the record here before and what the Member for Calgary-Varsity spent 10 minutes arguing about now.

I am happy that Bill 18 gets rid of the activism, I am happy that it prevents activist doctors from pressuring and coercing individuals into seeking MAID, and I am happy that it has the exact impact of making sure that those safeguards exist because activist doctors pushing people towards MAID where there is no reasonable foreseeability of death is completely inappropriate, and it is rejected by the people of this province.

Let's talk just a little bit about what areas or what jurisdictions have a timeline. Australia has a six-month timeline. New Zealand has somewhere between a six- and 12-month timeline, depending on the situation. The United States has a six-month timeline. So for the Member for Calgary-Varsity to get up and say that there are no jurisdictions that have timelines: it's simply untrue as well. We

know that there are timelines in other important jurisdictions that we're monitoring, and we certainly think that making sure of a timeline here of 12 months is a reasonable approach, more generous than many other jurisdictions across the world.

For these reasons, Mr. Chair, I would implore members of this Assembly to vote against this amendment, allow the safeguards to protect people, and make sure that they are not coerced, pressured, or influenced into seeking or obtaining MAID prematurely. That's what this bill is about. This amendment does exactly the opposite of that, and the inconsistencies of the NDP are absurd.

Thank you.

1:10

The Deputy Chair: Any others wishing to make comment on amendment A5?

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

The Deputy Chair: We are back on the main bill, Bill 18. Any further comments, questions, or amendments? The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's unfortunate, what we heard from the Minister of Justice. He was trying to discredit what an hon. member said in this House, and might I add that the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity is a leading physician and neurologist. She has done and been involved in multiple clinical trials, has done amazing works on MS disease, and the list goes on and on. What really was absurd: a person with no medical background, experience, or consultation was trying to discredit a very renowned and respectable physician, researcher, and neurologist. Before they used to call judges activists when they don't agree with their opinion, and now we have another set of activists, doctors, who don't buy into their conspiracy theories. Now those will be labelled as activists. The minister should be really ashamed of himself.

Now I also move another amendment, and this is the one that will deal with available options for Albertans accessing MAID. I do have the requisite number of copies.

The Deputy Chair: The amendment will be referred to as amendment A6.

The member can proceed.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you. The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall to move that Bill 18, Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act, be amended in section 8(3) by striking out "direct the individual, or their representative, to a resource that the practitioner or operator reasonably believes would provide accurate information about all available medical options" and substituting:

direct the individual, or their representative, to a practitioner that the practitioner or operator reasonably believes would provide the health service at a health care facility the operator of which the practitioner or operator reasonably believes would permit the provision of the health service.

Again, while we do recognize and have supported health care professionals', providers' right to refuse to provide MAID, we believe that it's of profound importance that providers connect the individual seeking MAID with a practitioner who will provide that service, not just any information. The right to refuse must be met with the patient's right to access. This is the current practice in Alberta. This is working for physicians. This is working for Albertans seeking MAID. And now here the government is just adding some vague language instead of just making sure that those who are seeking MAID can get access to that service and information about that service, not just options. Again, a pretty common-sense amendment.

One more comment I think I will make about the minister's earlier comment. We said from day one that we do support this bill insofar as it addresses the concerns raised by Inclusion Alberta, Albertans with disabilities, and disability organizations across Canada. We do support insofar as this bill helps those individuals with disabilities, but we do also know and have heard from the medical community – many professionals, many individuals, many providers – that this bill is making changes that will restrict the provision of the MAID service in this province.

Earlier the minister also said that my colleague from Calgary-Varsity was commenting about track 2 MAID while the amendment was squarely about track 1 MAID, and the criminal code provision doesn't set that 12-month limit. That's the limit this government is introducing without any medical evidence whatsoever.

So, again, this amendment at hand: all it's doing is making sure that those who are refusing this service, which right we recognize, direct individuals to the facility, to the provider where that service is available to them and not interfere with people's rights under this service and under what's allowed under the federal legislation. I hope that all members will look at this amendment closely and support this amendment. Safeguards are one thing; denying health care procedures to people in publicly funded services is quite another. This will make sure that they get the proper referral.

The Deputy Chair: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, once again, and thank you for this third amendment, but I have to regretfully ask members of this Legislature to once again vote it down.

We'll go back into the debate since the member wanted to go back into the debate. The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall got up and gave a speech about how they were opposed to track 2 MAID. The Member for Calgary-Varsity gets up and says that doctors can't really predict when somebody might die all the time. Well, that's the exact definition of what track 2 MAID is. I'd suggest that the NDP caucus clarify their confusion within their caucus before they get up and debate with ours.

On the actual amendment itself the proposal is to move from the requirement that doctors refer patients to resources when they do not provide MAID provision or assessments to having those same doctors refer patients to another practitioner. I must say that is not the process that currently takes place here in this province. When a doctor doesn't provide services, he or she does not impose on the patient the requirement to go to another doctor. They refer them to resources so that the patient can then decide and choose where to go and processes to take.

What is the appropriate requirement or the appropriate process actually exists within the bill right now. It is that a doctor who does not provide assessments or provision of MAID refer the patient to information resources so that that patient can make an informed decision. That includes referring the patient to something like care co-ordination services, perhaps another facility, resources, materials, or other things that the patient might need.

What this amendment is seeking to do, then, is to limit Albertans and their right to choice. It prevents them from reviewing information that might give them other options, data, and the opportunity to choose their own doctor, because what they're asking for is that one doctor refers directly to another. That's not how it works here in this province, Mr. Chair. We would like for the bill to remain the same, and that is to allow patients the ability to seek resources, get information, and then make their own decisions about what doctors they go to for assessments or provision or further information on MAID.

For that reason I don't think that this amendment is appropriate. I think it would take away from the safeguards that we're trying to make sure are available to Albertans here, and I would ask all members of this Assembly to vote against this amendment.

1:20

The Deputy Chair: Any others wishing to provide comment? Seeing none.

[Motion on amendment A6 lost]

The Deputy Chair: Back on the main bill. Any other comments, questions or amendments on Bill 18?

[The clauses of Bill 18 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: Any opposed? That is carried.
Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise and report Bill 18.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 18. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Acting Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. That is so ordered.

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 26

Immigration Oversight Act

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill 26, Immigration Oversight Act.

Off the top, I would like to share with you section 95 of the Canadian Constitution Act which lays out jurisdictional authority for matters of both agriculture and immigration. It says:

In each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from Time to Time make Laws in relation to Agriculture in all or any of the Provinces, and to Immigration into all or any of the Provinces; and any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration shall have effect in and

for the Province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.

So off the top we already know that immigration is a shared responsibility. Since Bill 26 was introduced, I've already heard and seen members of the opposition suggest that we are overstepping into federal lanes. That, Mr. Speaker, is entirely inaccurate.

With section 95 in mind I do think any Albertan, or Canadian for that matter, should and could really think that management of the immigration was done in collaboration with any province. In fact, when the federal government opened our borders to 2 million people a year, nobody asked the provinces what they thought. Nobody asked about the impact that would have on our housing, our classrooms, and emergency rooms, and nobody asked how flooding the labour market with foreign entry-level workers would affect young Albertans trying to get their foot in the door and get their first employment opportunity.

The fact remains that immigration has always been part of Alberta's success. However, it must be done economically focused, sustainable, and balanced as we look at the population growth and labour market demands. The unfortunate truth is that none of that has happened under the federal government's management. Decisions like cutting the number of provincial nominees nearly in half to strip control away from the province or a program that allows the province, which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, is a program that allows the province to have direct say on what industries need immigration: the federal government has reduced that by thousands. In the midst of all this mismanagement I've already laid out the impact on our public services along with our labour market, but it is also important to recognize the impact on newcomers, given we see some serious cases of employers, immigration consultants, or foreign recruiters who take advantage of or mislead people looking to immigrate to Alberta.

In Alberta we have a reputation of being amongst the best places in the world to live, to work, and to raise a family. That is something we want to protect with Bill 26, and it does that. There have been situations, even here in Alberta, that tell us that there are people who prey upon foreign workers and take advantage of the system. Reported in the news this very week is an Ontario man who organized people working illegally in Banff and Jasper; a group of restaurant owners in Calgary demanded tens of thousands of dollars from temporary foreign workers, disguising it as fake government fees; and international recruiters who demand anywhere from \$30,000 dollars to \$45,000 in exchange for employment that never actually existed. These are real cases that happened right here in Alberta, and it is situations like these that degrade trust in our system for Albertans, Canadians, and newcomers alike.

Bill 26 rebuilds that trust, and it does this by requiring employers who hire foreign workers to register with the province. Not only will this increase accountability, but it will also provide our government with more information about industries that are using programs such as the temporary foreign worker program. Furthermore, Bill 26 will require immigration consultants and international recruiters to be provincially licensed, ensuring they are in good standing, allowing us to weed out the bad actors.

These are changes that take effect and take aim at bad actors who abuse, take advantage of, or mistreat newcomers. Bill 26 allows the province to take quick action and respond when newcomers in the immigration system are being abused. It prohibits practices like providing false or misleading information to newcomers about immigration processes and requirements, misrepresenting employment opportunities and terms, retaining passports or other official documents or property, threatening deportation without lawful cause, or retaliating for complaints to or co-operation with

government officials, and exploiting newcomers' fear, trust, inexperience, or inability to understand processes.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to say this. Alberta has always been and will continue to be strengthened by immigration. Most employers, consultants, and recruiters are abiding by the rules, but for those who aren't it is important to have the tools that allow us to respond appropriately. With that, I would encourage all members to support this bill.

I hereby move second reading of Bill 26, the Immigration Oversight Act.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any others wishing to speak? The Member for Calgary-Acadia.

Member Tejada: Calgary-Klein.

The Acting Speaker: Calgary-Klein. Right.

Member Tejada: We'll get it one day.

Thank you, sir. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today to Bill 26, the so-called Immigration Oversight Act. I will start by saying something very clearly at the outset. Alberta is stronger when people who live and work here are treated with dignity. It is incumbent upon us as legislators to ensure that they are also protected and treated well in their workplaces. We are stronger when newcomers are welcomed, protected, and given a fair chance to thrive. We are also treaty people, owing to a long history of people settling here. It is no exaggeration that Alberta, the Alberta that we know, would not exist were it not for newcomers coming here with hope and promise of making a better life.

1:30

As I look at the members in this House, I would say that the vast majority of us have an immigration story in our family histories. I heard one particularly poignant one just yesterday from the side opposite. Yet time and time again this government chooses a problematic path, one rooted not in evidence, compassion, good governance, consultation, or even a sense of history. Instead, what we see is a predictable pattern of stoking division, weaponizing fear, scapegoating, and political theatre.

Sadly, I think that Bill 26 is not about oversight. It is not about protecting workers, it is not about creating more jobs for Albertans here at home, and it is certainly not about fixing real challenges in Alberta's immigration system or addressing the pain points that Albertans share with us every day. Bill 26 is about control. It is about jurisdictional overreach, intrusion masquerading as oversight, and leaning heavily on anti-immigrant narrative to distract from this government's own policy failures.

They will blame Ottawa, they'll somehow blame the NDP from 2015, and they'll blame immigrants for this government's refusal to invest in health care and education. They will justify all manner of heavy-handed policy decisions by blaming the vulnerable for the work they refuse to do. For a government that waxes poetic about freedom and small government, what we see here is an obsession with control and what looks like a great deal of red tape for businesses in Alberta and certainly for communities who struggle with workforce issues. Sadly, this legislation leaves the door open for more abuse.

We'll talk about what Bill 26 does. It's a 12-part bill that creates a provincial registry requiring employers to register before hiring foreign nationals; a licensing regime for immigration consultants and recruiters; new investigative and enforcement powers under a politically appointed director; broad authority for the minister to create regulations, exemptions, and even selection programs; and

penalties that are grossly disproportionate, reaching up to \$1.5 million or prison time.

The government claims that this bill is about protecting foreign workers, fixing labour shortages, and providing more opportunities for Albertans to find jobs. However, when you read the fine print and when you look at what already exists in federal and provincial law, it becomes clear that this bill duplicates existing systems, adds red tape, and centralizes power in the hands of the minister.

We can talk about this provincial registry under Bill 26. Employers must obtain a certificate of registration from the province before they can hire a temporary foreign worker through federal programs like the LMIA process. Now, just to take the jargon out of there, LMIA is a labour market impact assessment, and that is how cities are judged to be a place where temporary foreign workers can be hired.

Here's the problem. That information is already collected by the federal government. Not only that; the federal government has made sizable cuts already to the temporary foreign worker program. Employers already do undergo rigorous screening. That's not to say that there aren't bad actors. Job offers are assessed and meet stricter rules now under labour market impact assessments, and those are tied to unemployment rates in each municipality, which I mentioned before. Employers now have to post jobs for eight weeks as opposed to four, which was just a few weeks ago that that change was made. This bill really duplicates that work, and the businesses that rely on temporary foreign workers know that.

The Alberta Hospitality Association has warned that Bill 26 will add unnecessary red tape for employers who are already struggling with rising costs, labour shortages, and thin margins. I have received lots of e-mails from some of my colleagues who have high-tourist areas. Businesses are struggling to attract and retain workers, and the federal government's tightened restrictions are already presenting a challenge for them to meet their business goals and to operate. The province is adding now to that stress without making clear pathways for how residents here might move into those jobs. This government claims to be pro business, yet here they are creating more red tape, bureaucratic gatekeeping, and another layer of uncertainty.

Worse, Mr. Speaker, the criteria for approving or cancelling a registration are vague and subjective. A director appointed by the minister can deny or revoke a certificate that they believe is contrary to the public interest or that the applicant may not act with integrity. These terms are undefined. They are not objective, and they invite political interference. At worst, this risks becoming a system where politically connected friends are rewarded, and businesses that haven't made the right connections might suddenly find their certificates of registration or licensing cancelled by the whims of a politically appointed director, all in the name of the public interest.

Further, when we look at what this bill does, it creates sweeping powers without oversight. Bill 26 gives extraordinary authority to a director appointed by the minister, again, and this director can, according to the legislation itself, launch investigations without a complaint. In fact, the wording in the section of the bill means that investigations can be launched if a business is believed to be connected with the "hiring . . . of foreign nationals," incredibly vague language that could impact any workplace and any worker. They can enter workplaces, access records and electronic data, suspend or cancel registrations immediately, impose severe penalties, and make determinations based on criteria that will later be set entirely through regulation.

How many pages of regulation-making power does this bill include? Five pages; 59 separate regulation clauses. That is not transparency. It's not accountability. It's legislation by blank

cheque. Albertans are being asked to trust this government, one that is knee-deep in allegations of corruption, conflict of interest, one that has floated the denial of critical services to immigrants with sweeping discretionary powers over immigration-related matters that they have no jurisdiction over. Albertans have every right not to trust that.

This government says that the bill is necessary because there are concerns about people working unlawfully and being exploited. But if that is the concern, then why is this bill silent on existing enforcement mechanisms, some that, as referenced by the minister – he referenced the case in Ontario. That man was already penalized for his actions, and that was through a federal process and enforcement.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act already makes it an offence to employ a foreign national without authorization, misrepresent job offers, sell labour market impact assessments, charge illegal recruitment fees. There are already significant criminal penalties, fines, prison terms, and bans from hiring foreign workers under federal law, and here in Alberta we also have an Employment Standards Code, which gives the province broad authority to inspect workplaces, access employment records, interview workers without the employer present, and order unpaid wages. They can impose administrative penalties, persecute violations. Those powers already exist, Mr. Speaker.

You may recall that Alberta workers were owed approximately \$3.7 million in unpaid wages last year. That's work that Alberta workers performed that they were never paid for, an 84 per cent increase from unpaid wages owed to workers the previous year. There's definitely a need for better employment standards enforcement and holding bad actors to account.

My question is this. Why is this government choosing to create a new registry instead of enforcing the rules we already have? The answer seems clear. This bill is not about enforcement. It is about sending a political message. It's about suggesting that immigrants are the problem. It's about placing suspicion on foreign workers and the businesses that employ them. And I'd say that, given the language in this bill, which is so vague, it opens the door to discrimination regardless of immigration status. It's dangerous rhetoric, and legislation that grows out of rhetoric like that is also dangerous.

Around the talk of worker protections, these are false promises. Mr. Speaker, the UCP likes to point to part 5 of this bill and say that they are protecting foreign workers, but let's be honest. Most of the prohibited practices in Bill 26 are already illegal: withholding passports, making false statements, threatening deportation, misrepresenting employment, exploiting vulnerability. These protections exist in federal law. They exist in provincial law. They exist on paper. The real problem is that they have never been enforced. Yet this bill does nothing to improve access to complaint mechanisms, protect workers from retaliation after filing a complaint, provide legal support or advocacy for vulnerable workers, or outline how workers can be protected to the workers. There is no antireprisal protection, there is no guarantee of anonymity, and there is no funding commitment.

1:40

I can also say that this government has a poor record when it comes to protecting workers after they've spoken out; in particular, workplaces where temporary foreign workers are most likely to be. This was clear when they turned a blind eye to unsafe conditions for workers during COVID-19. It was ministers of this government that assured their workers that their workplaces were safe, and those decisions resulted in deaths for those workers. What they need to

do is protect them from harm and ensure that our provincial labour codes are respected.

The fact that this bill leaves so much room for arbitrary exceptions and exemptions is extremely concerning. How does this bill make workers safer instead of more afraid? How will we measure that safety? Many of the exceptions and exemptions that the government has made possible through this legislation: how can we trust as Albertans that instead of protecting workers, this government won't make exceptions that are politically motivated?

In speaking to the penalties, the minister asserted that there are bad actors, and we know that. Worker safety and dignity are critically important, Mr. Speaker. I'd love to see this government take meaningful measures to ensure workers are safe. While we absolutely need to address bad labour practices, the penalties under Bill 26, while extreme, don't actually address exploitation. There are fines up to \$1.5 million, potential jail time, immediate suspension of licences. Yet we know from years of reports and testimony that harsh penalties alone don't stop exploitation when workers are afraid to speak up and enforcement is inconsistent.

Education campaigns are also helpful. I'm especially thankful to some of the worker advocacy groups that have created campaigns in multiple languages to ensure that workers are aware of their rights at work.

I'd also offer that because we know that this is federal jurisdiction, there are cases where this legislation wouldn't have the reach to enforce, with the example of the case where a man in Ontario was recently convicted of unlawfully employing workers and sending them here to Alberta. He was captured because of successful federal procedures.

I'd just like to talk a little bit about constitutional overreach and political motives. Immigration is a federal jurisdiction, and despite this government's separatist fever dreams they are governing a province, not an independent nation. Yes, provinces play a role. Yes, co-operation is possible. We haven't seen too many examples of that from this government to this point. But this bill goes far beyond co-operation. It gestures towards programs that might be politically motivated, expanded data collection, and unilateral control without any agreement with the federal government. Even Quebec's unique system exists through explicit federal-provincial agreements. This government, on the other hand, is rushing ahead even while planning a referendum on immigration in October.

If they truly believed in listening to Albertans, they would wait. If they truly believed in collaboration, they would negotiate. If they truly believed in worker protection, they would enforce existing laws. Instead, we get Bill 26. Alberta can do better, Mr. Speaker. This bill is not about oversight. It's about political overreach, increased surveillance, duplicated bureaucracy that will cost us, and feeding a narrative that pits Albertans against newcomers.

Alberta's New Democrats can do better. We believe in protecting workers through enforcement, not fear; paying all workers fairly; supporting employers, not burdening them; respecting jurisdiction and the rule of law; and building an Alberta where newcomers are welcomed, not targeted. For these reasons and on behalf of countless newcomers, workers, families, businesses, and the people who support them, I urge all members of this Assembly to reject Bill 26.

The Acting Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak? The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to speak to this bill. The minister started his remarks that immigration is a shared jurisdiction under 95. Sure. It is, as long as "any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration

shall have effect in and for the Province as long [as] and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.” It means that if there are laws that are made by Parliament and a province or a provincial Legislature, in the event of a conflict federal law will prevail. That’s what the Constitution provides.

When I think about this legislation, I think about a presser that the Premier and the minister held a few months ago where they announced a number of referendums, essentially going to Albertans to ask what services immigrants, their kids, or people who are working here should get and should not get in relation to health, education, and other services. In those pressers the government, including the Premier, were asked: how much do you think that is a burden on our health system or on our education system? They couldn’t provide any number whatsoever.

Before that, before dropping the budget, they also shifted a lot of blame onto the immigrants, that they are the ones responsible for their failures in health care, their failures to build schools, and many other things. Again, when they were asked how much they think that they are costing the economy or their services, they had no answer because all those things were based on political rhetoric, not facts. In fact, there is enough data to show – and I will quote Mayor Farkas of Calgary. He spoke at the Report to the Community event a couple of weeks ago, and he said about the same rhetoric that this needs to stop, that immigrants are taking anyone’s job or immigrants are taking anyone’s education. He said that it’s most likely that not only are they not taking your jobs; they are creating jobs here in this province, and they do contribute in the economy and in every aspect of the life of this province.

The minister claims that this bill will give them the ability to get to those actors who prey on foreign workers and take advantage, but nothing of the sort is accomplished by this bill. This bill simply, as the minister stated, gives government the ability to collect more information about immigrants, foreign nationals that they think that they need to further their anti-immigrant rhetoric.

What this bill does: this bill creates a new licensing requirement for businesses to employ foreign nationals, and foreign national is defined broadly as anyone other than a Canadian citizen and a permanent resident status person. They could be people who are legitimately on work permits, students who are authorized to work in this province, temporary foreign workers who are legally authorized in this province. They just want to gather that data so they can surveil better from a government standpoint.

1:50

As my colleague mentioned, the hospitality industry already said that this is just additional red tape for the businesses who employ foreign nationals. There are many areas of this province where the only workers are those who are on work permits, who are temporary foreign workers, and they play a critical role in the survival of that industry in those spaces, particularly in the Bow Valley area, Canmore, Jasper area, and those places. They play a very significant and important role.

Then it also creates another additional licence for immigration consultants. It creates another licence for foreign recruiters and gives the minister and their department huge powers to, essentially, go to any business place, collect information, data, data storage devices, and all those kind of things. It’s a director who reports to the minister who will have those powers.

When we look at some other legislation – for instance, federal legislation – federal legislation prohibits any employer from employing a foreign national who is not authorized to work. There are serious, significant penalties and provisions, summary conviction, indictable conviction provisions. We have that already in place, that

businesses cannot employ those who are not authorized to work in Canada, in Alberta.

Another thing is that the Employment Standards Code also requires businesses and employers to collect information about individuals, very specific information about their pay, hourly rate, earnings, time instead of overtime pay, and a lot of things. Employers are required to collect and retain that for three years. Also, the Employment Standards Code requires them to keep an updated record of each employee, including name, address, date of birth, the date that present period of employment started, the date on which a holiday was taken, and a long list of copies of documentation relating to their leaves, temporary layoffs. Section 15 requires that these records must be retained for three years.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Madam Speaker, section 77 gives an employment standards officer the ability that at any reasonable time they can enter a place they have reason to believe that an individual is employed and inspect employment records and make copies of that. Government has the ability to get information from any business under existing provisions, and that’s provincial legislation, the Employment Standards Code. They have wide authority in regulation as well to make regulations if they need additional information.

Again, this is more about sending that message, sending that message of fear, creating that fear in immigrant communities about the government and its surveillance powers. I have not seen, or at least I don’t recall, in 11 years any legislation that has penalties like \$1 million, \$1.5 million. Their own legislation, the Employment Standards Code, has penalties of \$100,000 and jail time, and that’s considered quite severe. Here, again, the penalty is not proportionate to the offences, but it sure is proportionate to carry the message of fear that this government intends to send with this piece of legislation.

When the government talks about irregularities in immigration, we are all for it if the government takes steps to make sure that foreign workers are not exploited and preyed upon, if immigration laws are not skirted, misused, and abused, but this is not what this bill is doing.

I represent a riding where I have a lot of newcomers. I have a lot of students who do interact with my office on immigration issues. When we hear about irregularities or delays in the PNP, provincial nominee program, what we hear is that sometimes the provincial government is sitting on individual applications, waiting for their permits to expire so they can throw out their applications. There is no procedural fairness as such in that system. If they want to kind of fix their program, they could also legislate their PNP program. Some other provinces have legislated those programs if they want to curb irregularities in their provincial nominee program.

We also have heard of irregularities when it comes to labour market opinions or job offers. As my colleague indicated, under IRPA, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, selling or trading LMA is forbidden, and it particularly requires that it needs to be based on a genuine job offer. If the job offer is not genuine, comes in misrepresentation, that will be offside the provisions of IRPA. If the government really wants to kind of curb those kinds of irregularities, we are all for it, but that’s not what the government is doing.

This bill is not an oversight in any way, shape, or manner on anything that we hear that there are irregularities which people want to see fixed in the immigration system. That’s not what this bill is doing. This bill is, rather, an immigration surveillance act that will help government collect information, help supplement their anti-immigrant rhetoric, and

send, I guess, fear waves in those communities that now the government is cracking down somehow on something illegal or something that is irregular. That's not what government is doing. Government is just collecting data. Government is just seeking more information, creating more red tape for businesses, who now will have to pay for another licence and now will have to process another licence.

When it comes to licensing, instead of making an objective, reasonable criteria, they are giving a director the ability to refuse those licences where they think it's in the public interest to do so. The legislation doesn't define that discretion, how that will be exercised. There are other provisions that will also give the director ability to refuse those licences on completely arbitrary grounds. That's not good governance.

As my colleague mentioned, there is an at least five- or six-page long regulation-making authority giving the government, essentially, every power under the sun that they could have with this piece of legislation if they need to, I guess, ramp up their anti-immigrant rhetoric. I don't think this bill does anything to address irregularities or provides any oversight. This bill is just about sending fear waves, sending signals that there will be government surveillance, creating more red tape for businesses, and, essentially, making life difficult for those who are newcomers to this place.

I think it's quite possible that the director may go in and start asking people for their immigration documents at their employment places, which people often don't carry with them. I don't think that's the kind of thing we want to see in this province. The government needs to think hard about the benefits of this bill and whether it's worth it for them or not.

With that, I will urge all members of this Legislature to look at this bill, think about its implication, and vote against it.

2:00

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others that would like to speak to Bill 26?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

(continued)

Bill 24

Alberta Whisky Act

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pretty good day when the Edmonton Oilers have solved their goaltending woes, the UCP is up 17 points in the polls, and I move third reading of Bill 24, the Alberta Whisky Act. You know it's going to be a good day.

Now, I want to begin by recognizing the discussion that we've had in this House. Members from across Alberta have stood up to highlight the distillers, the farmers, and the local businesses in their constituencies. We've heard about small producers, family-run operations, and entrepreneurs who are building something right here at home. That has been an important part of this debate because this bill is about every distiller in the province and the incredible products that they make. It's about taking what they've already built and giving it a clear identity.

Madam Speaker, Alberta whisky is already earning recognition both nationally and internationally. Our producers are creating exceptional products backed by skill, innovation, and pride in what they do. But as we've heard throughout the debate, there has been

a gap. There has not been a clear, legislated definition of what makes Alberta whisky distinctly Albertan, and without that clarity it becomes harder for our producers to stand apart, harder to tell their story, and harder to compete in a global marketplace.

That is exactly what Bill 24 addresses. It establishes in law what it means to be called Alberta whisky, not as a marketing exercise but as a clear and credible standard, a standard that reflects what many of our producers are already doing today. Madam Speaker, the definition is straightforward but meaningful. To be labelled Alberta whisky, the product must be made entirely in this province, from mashing and fermentation through to bottling. It must use 100 per cent Alberta water before distillation and at least two-thirds Alberta-grown grain.

Now, that's important, and I've heard some people ask the question, rightfully so: why not 100 per cent Alberta grains? The fact is that we have world-class grains in this province, Madam Speaker, that go to destinations like Kentucky and Scotland to make their whisky. But the fact is that if we'd gone 100 per cent, we're not sure that all of the larger distillers in this province could participate. If we were to have a bad crop, you can't have some of their products as Alberta whisky and some as not when it's the same SKU and the same bottle. So we listened to industry and we listened to the grain growers, and everybody landed at two-thirds. That's the number that they can commit to being able to deliver on so that the bulk of the grains in this product is going to be Alberta grown, because, like I said, we have world-class grains.

It must meet clear standards for aging, alcohol content, and, of course, limits on additives. We all know, Madam Speaker, that you don't need to add a shot of vanilla into really good whisky. It stands out on its own as having a unique flavour profile that doesn't require any flavourful additives.

In short, it must be made right here, and it must reflect the quality Albertans expect. We heard during debate that consumers are not just buying a product; they're buying authenticity. They want to know where something comes from and what it stands for. This bill ensures that when someone picks up a bottle labelled Alberta whisky, they can trust what's inside.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is about opportunity. It supports our farmers by creating more demand for Alberta-grown grain, it supports our distillers by giving them a stronger identity in the market, and it supports our communities by creating the conditions for growth and tourism and local economic activity. We've heard members speak about the potential for an Alberta whisky trail, about visitors coming to experience our distilleries, our communities, and our products first-hand. These opportunities start with having a clear and credible brand. This bill lays out that foundation.

Madam Speaker, I also want to be clear about how this legislation is implemented. Participation is voluntary. Producers can choose whether to use the Alberta whisky designation based on what works for their business. Those who opt in will gain a meaningful and protected label. Those who do not can continue operating as they always have. Compliance will be overseen by AGLC using existing authorities, ensuring that the designation is used properly and maintains its integrity.

Madam Speaker, at its core this bill is about recognition: recognition for the farmers that grow the grain, recognition for the distillers that refine their craft, and recognition for a product that deserves to stand on its own. Alberta whisky is already something special. This bill makes sure the world knows exactly why.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 24, the Alberta Whisky Act.

I encourage all members to support it. Cheers.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others who would like to participate in this debate? The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the minister of red tape reduction for giving us the opportunity to talk about Alberta whisky. I'm happy to support bolstering and distinguishing Alberta whisky and growing this part of our economy. I think there's really great potential here, so I am truly supportive of the bill, and I'm thankful to the minister for bringing it forward. Overall, in my consultations with craft distillers I know that they view this bill as a positive move. I also understand that the minister has consulted with craft distillers on the contents of the bill, and I'm always appreciative of public consultation.

I am very lucky to have three amazing distilleries in my riding of Banff-Kananaskis: the Bragg Creek Distillers, Wild Life Distillery in Canmore, and Park Distillery in Banff. All of them make great whisky.

Mr. Nally: Hear, hear to all three.

Dr. Elmeligi: Hear, hear to all three.

They all have potential for growth, to distribute and share their product more, and to be honest with you, I want to see all of their products on all of the shelves in all of the liquor stores and bars across Alberta and across Canada because it is worth sharing.

Bragg Creek Distillers has a booth at every single market in Bragg Creek. They make an amazing maple whisky that enhances my market shopping experience. Wild Life Distillery also makes a great whisky, but they also make a crabapple gin, which is really interesting because they used crabapples from fruit trees in Canmore. It was part of a program that they did one year to reduce human-bear conflict, with bears eating fruit trees. They collected people's crabapples and made a gin out of it. It was a really great local community-building event where they're thinking more broadly than the distillery. Park Distillery makes an incredible vodka, as pure and crisp and clean as the mountain streams of Banff national park. Everybody in the world should be able to appreciate these products.

I guess what I'm trying to say there is that for these distilleries it's about a lot more than whisky. These are small-business owners in rural communities creating community, providing opportunities for people to spend time and to connect with each other. It's about growing local business. It's about innovation like the crabapple gin. It's about diversifying our rural economies. They all also make really great mocktails, right? Not everybody wants to consume alcohol, and there's growing recognition of that. I really feel like our distillers are creating this inclusive array of products for people to appreciate and enjoy. So before I really get into the debate on the bill, I just wanted to thank all of the distillers across Banff-Kananaskis because I think that they've really enhanced our overall Bow Valley tourism experience.

As a riding reliant on tourism as the foundation of our local and regional economy I do truly understand that tourism is this really great opportunity, but it has to come with intentionality to be effective. It also is really diverse in and of itself. Tourism is not an industry; it's a sector. It involves all kinds of things: hotels, restaurants, guides, the food that people eat and the whisky that they consume when they get there. This bill is a great start, Madam Speaker, but it doesn't quite go as far as I was hoping it would have and as some stakeholders hoped it would have.

2:10

The bill defines what can be labelled and sold as Alberta whisky, and that's great. It also, of course, gives the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission the authority to inspect, revoke, and

designate products under the act. That's great. There are pieces in here that will foster collaboration between distillers and Alberta grain growers. I love that. I love this idea of Albertans working together to combine ingredients and expertise and perspectives to create an incredible product, but I'm not convinced that an ingredient list is the same as intentionally creating a tourism program around Alberta whisky.

The minister talked about how this is going to grow Alberta's reputation and grow tourism in this growing sector of, like, distillery tours, and Kentucky has a Bourbon Trail and whatever. Maybe it will, but this bill doesn't actually do that. The bill just defines the ingredients. The bill doesn't really create viable tourism experiences. Kentucky and Tennessee both have very similar legislation around bourbon, and they've been successful not only in defining the contents of the whisky but also fostering industry and creating viable tourism experience. The main difference is that their legislation and policy included capital investment incentives and credits that when enacted in the legislation actually help the industry grow, right? It attracts investment. It attracts capital investment. They've created a Bourbon Trail. Ireland and Scotland – Scotland has a whisky visitor centre. Those are the kinds of pieces that need to be in a bill or in regulations that actually help the sector grow.

You know, a couple of the stakeholders I talked to were like, "Well, the bill is fine, but it's actually unnecessary," because they feel proud of their product and it can stand on its own merit. It can stand as Canadian whisky. What they're really looking for are incentives and tax credits and things like that that will incentivize capital investment, create some kind of tourism product like an Alberta whisky trail or something like that. That is what we need to create, the world-leading industry that the minister is speaking to. Without that, distillers are concerned that a new designation of Alberta whisky won't work over the long term. Without encouraging and incentivizing that additional investment, is this just an ingredients list for Alberta whisky?

Now, the question always comes up of: well, where's the money going to come from to do that? We did just increase the tourism levy by 2 per cent this year. There was an opportunity for a portion of that tourism levy increase to, say – I don't know – go towards creating an Alberta whisky trail or an Alberta whisky tourism experience. There was opportunity there that this government did not seize this year, and maybe they will next year. I look forward to that.

Another example is that, like, creating a label is not really the same as nurturing an industry. B.C. has created a tax credit for all manufacturing across sectors, and that's another great example of what can be done to increase investment through legislation and policy.

Overall, Madam Speaker, this bill is fine. One of my stakeholders described it as kind of lacklustre because it's just an ingredients list and an enforcement policy. Some other stakeholders I chatted to said that it was kind of unnecessary, but it's fine, you know. It's not bad, but it doesn't actually do the things that the minister is talking about in his remarks about growing tourism and appreciating Alberta whisky on some kind of international stage. It lacks meaningful substance because it doesn't include a robust economic strategy or economic drivers for truly incubating an industry.

As I stated at the beginning of my remarks, I want this industry to grow and flourish because the creativity and innovation that is going into creating Alberta whisky, the flavours and the complexity, is so much more than I ever would have anticipated. I'm so proud of the distillers that we have in Banff-Kananaskis because they're truly providing a unique product, not only in terms of whisky but vodka and gin and mocktails as well.

One of the stakeholders I chatted with commented that it's kind of ironic that the bill is coming from the minister of red tape reduction because it essentially creates a layer of red tape. But that's neither here nor there. It doesn't mean the bill is bad; it's just ironic. That's all.

One of the more interesting comments I did hear from a couple of stakeholders I chatted with – there is a Canadian whisky designation. You know, you can be a Canadian whisky without being an Alberta whisky, but if you're an Alberta whisky, you meet the criteria to be a Canadian whisky, and that's great.

The conversation, Madam Speaker, around separatism in Alberta and the rhetoric around that has put a bit of a chill on our national reputation and our international reputation. There is baggage now that comes with the Alberta branding name, and there's baggage that wasn't there previously, so businesses may choose to just stick with Canadian whisky because they don't want to engage in the baggage that's associated with having the Alberta brand. To me that's just really disappointing.

You know, we talk a lot in this House about being a proud Albertan and a proud Canadian. I am both, of course, and of course my stakeholders are proud Albertans and Canadians also, but we need to recognize that this conversation around separatism is having far-reaching implications for many of our industries, Madam Speaker. It saddens me to think that somebody might choose to avoid the Alberta brand because separatism has damaged our national reputation and comes with a lot of baggage. The Alberta brand can be seen as being more uncertain instead of a mark of quality. We want Alberta whisky to be the more certain, trusted, and unifying brand, but right now Canadian whisky is more certain, trusted, and unifying.

In conversations with some tourism providers, I know that in tourism investment in Alberta some people have pulled out of investing their significant tourism projects in the province because of separatism and because of the uncertainty that creates. We know that the conversation around separatism has put a chill on investment, and it was interesting for me to hear that that chill on investment extends to some of our craft distillers as well.

While I support the bill and I am thankful to the minister for bringing it forward and I'm thankful for the opportunity to stand up and talk about how great the distillers are in my amazing riding of Banff-Kananaskis, I sure wish the bill was accompanied with some economic strategy and some economic and capital investments in helping to make Alberta whisky the strong and reliable brand that it could be that will effectively attract tourists to Alberta. Right now this bill doesn't go far enough.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Getson: Madam Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to rise. As soon as I get used to using these darn glasses here – I'm at that age now where I'm kind of up and down and back and forth and not sure. I'm really happy to be talking about Bill 24. For those following along at home, it's the Alberta Whisky Act.

Now, what is Alberta whisky? Well, I guess in the past it used to be: depended on what your definition of "is" is. Thanks to this good minister here, my friend up in that St. Albert area over there, he's taken over this file. He's listened. He's done the stakeholder engagement. We're defining what Alberta whisky is.

Folks following at home, the Bavarian Act, the purity act, way back in the day did something similar for beer. We've got items down in the United States. They define what their bourbon is. The Scots obviously define what Scotch is. The French define what champagne is. We've got the Irish whisky defining what that is. Alberta is defining what "is" is.

Now, that's a big thing. I've got one distiller out in my area. He brought me up to speed on this whole thing. Beautiful story, Madam

Speaker. Beautiful story. Big shout out to Anohka Distillery. They are killing it on the international stage.

Mr. Nally: Won an award.

Mr. Getson: They've won several awards over in London for best young whisky. I mean, to beat 300-year-old distillers when you're coming out of the trench at three years in the industry: outstanding.

I'm going to digress a little because folks don't necessarily understand what this whole upcoming and burgeoning industry that we have out there is. You've got a young gentleman. He's got a physics background. He's a corporate lawyer, and one night he's looking at this nice, big \$300 bottle of Scotch that he's out with his clients and he's looking at the ingredients. The first thing that came to him is: why are we not doing this here? Next thing he did is that he was kind of looking and seeing what that industry is worth: billions and billions of dollars, and we're not capitalizing on it.

2:20

This young guy took a left turn at Albuquerque, so to speak, and decided to go start a distillery, and his wife – God bless her; wonderful lady – a young family: they got right in behind this. His dad is behind it, and everyone's supporting him on it. He goes off to what he called the Jedi academy over in Scotland, and this is also when COVID was taking place, which was wild to start to do this. Goes and gets trained up by the best in the world. Now he comes back with this knowledge, and a lot of the groups and the processes out there are taking shortcuts. They're using steam to actually generate in the distillation process, but the true ones that he had all used fire.

So now Gurpreet is at home and he's thinking about this and he's looking. Well, he can't buy this stuff. It's made in Portugal. There's a bunch of stuff made. He's going: well, how do I get the old fired ones? Well, they don't really make them anymore. Then he thought: "Well, what is this? It's basically a refinery. What province am I in?" He starts looking around and seeing who else does this process. Well, lo and behold: flare stacks. There's a flare stack company out of that Rocky Mountain House country down there that does tons of great work for flare stacks.

He gets on the phone with them, and you've got, you know, technical people on that side and tradespeople, and he says, "I need you to build me something," and they start going through it. "I need you to build me a flare-type thing. Here's what I'm boiling. Here's what I'm cooking in these copper pots, because I want this coppering." And they're going, "What are you building? Like, this isn't any refinery we've heard of. Well, we're not sure if we can do this." He goes, "Well, I'm trying to make Alberta whisky." "We're in." So it was immediately there: that connection. Right? Like, trying to do something different, novel, and new. They got together, and they had to work out the process because the flare stack guys are thinking flare stack, and Gurpreet is working on this process, bringing old-world tech over here to make it brand new, and they worked it out. They worked out the details.

But Gurpreet wasn't satisfied there. He bought land out in God's country. Just off of highway 16 before you get to Wabamun, hang a hard left if you're going down towards Keephills: he bought 80 acres there. Now, he didn't buy 80 acres of farmland just because it could grow wheat or barley or grain or oats. He bought it also because of the location. Location, location, location. He needed a place where he had the water that ran properly. He needed to have the fields that ran, but he also wanted peat. He looked at all the characteristics from that old country to be able to make this work, and he found the prettiest little spot you would ever find. He takes his grains; he grows them off his field. He's got the areas where he matures it. He's got that peat process, and part of the items in here, one of the items, was make sure

you have Alberta water. You have that. Make sure you have two-thirds of the grain. Well, his lament was: currently we don't have people that can smoke the grain. He actually has to take Alberta grain that's sent overseas and smoked and then bring it back.

So when we get to the point where we can actually get all these components put together – and the other thing that he had advised me of, again coming back to that definition: when you've got people going through this length to make sure that we have that high-value, high-quality product, we want to make sure that they're labelled differently, that they're held to these higher standards. They want to do that, because internationally when we're going out there and doing this, you want to make sure your product has those levels of standards.

To the minister's point here – he's pointing at little Mickey Mouse on his watch, so obviously he wants me to wrap it up, but I'm so excited and given that this minister actually cracked a beer in here one time, I'm going to lament a little on whisky. Otherwise I would have a dram on this desk right now and toast this crowd. I'm sure he'll give me a little latitude on that. So with that we have an opportunity not only to showcase what's taking place in the world because people are paying attention to it. We've got the right attributes of it. We can get the farming community working on it. We can get a number of people growing this, and we've got a value uptick.

The member opposite was talking about our concerns, about the country, and all this kind of stuff. Firstly, this is something that should unify people together, that we actually have a really good, strong brand. We may not be as blessed as the Okanagan to grow grapes, but we can grow wheat, we can grow barley like you wouldn't believe, and we've got some of the prettiest landscapes.

So I would love to be able to take people from abroad that want to come see our country and take them on that whisky trail. I'd love to take them up from my area. We'd have a little tasting, we'd make sure the drivers are in place, and go to each one of the areas around here. We would do that, and I'd even go down to that end and try out their whisky. I would have a taste off with her any day of the week. We could brag the heck out of what we're doing here, and that should be one of the most unifying things that we pass.

So, minister, with that, for supporting these young, burgeoning entrepreneurs that are risking it all, that are seeing that thing, what Alberta is to us, that we can grow another industry: it's just another thing that we can excel at, have that value proposition, and be known internationally rather than sending a ton of our whisky in railcars to the States, which we do now, which they rebrand and sell it back to us at a higher mark, which does happen now. Even good old Jack Daniel's: there's an Alberta product stream that goes into that. Here's a chance for us to be very proud, put that label on it, and support that local economy.

Minister, I applaud you for your efforts on this. I applaud you for taking a look at what we can do here, and Gurpreet and all those other entrepreneurs: let her buck. We're behind you.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do agree that this is a unifying time. It is one piece of legislation that I can actually agree is a pretty fine piece of legislation. I actually get to represent another wonderful distillery that has made Edmonton's first whisky, so I'm very excited to stand up. We can maybe, potentially, from the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, have a trail in between our ridings, my neighbour to the west.

I'm excited that that we have this piece of legislation, Madam Chair, because I do think that it's nigh time that we have it. We have

a long tradition here in the prairies of ensuring that our farmers and our distillers are working hand in hand, and I do find that this piece of legislation, similar to other jurisdictions, is quite wonderful that we have it now.

I do obviously want to ask, maybe, a question about the water used for the AI because this does have an element of using water in the piece of legislation, specifically that it has to be sourced here in Alberta. I think maybe the reason why I find this legislation so sensible is that it was drafted by AI, and I can get behind it because it actually focuses on the brass tacks and focuses on the needs for distillers. I could maybe even go so far as saying that emotion is removed from this, which oftentimes a lot of these bills have a lot of emotions tied to them, particularly for the government. I do want to ask how much water was used because it goes to the crux of creating Alberta whisky here in our province.

I want to take it back to some comments made by the other side, particularly around our water and the existence of selenium and how natural it is in our water systems. I'm curious about that especially in southern Alberta, where the Member for Banff-Kananaskis may have some concerns about selenium being in that waterway. I do think that we have to have that conversation in particular, ensuring that that fine quality of Alberta whisky remains as such without the addition of harmful pollutants.

I do want to focus on another part of this, because when we talk about whisky, I can't not think about the Luke Bryan song, *Rain is a Good Thing*. In it – you can sing along in your head – it's obviously: Rain makes corn, corn makes whisky, yada, yada, yada. Obviously that's in the Kentucky bourbon experience, but here in Alberta we focus on the grains and the cereal that is being used for creating Alberta whisky. When I think of that song, I think of how Kentucky actually expanded its trail and expanded tourism to ensure that those 2.7 million visitors that attend their state have gone through this process already.

In 1964 they had a congressional resolution to move the actual identification of Kentucky bourbon whisky as a protected mark, following obviously very similarly in Scotland, 1988. Scotch, I didn't realize, is as old as I am, at least the designation. It has been made a lot longer. It's been in existence in Scotland since around 1494, where the first exchequer rolls were identified by the friars there. Yeah, I know. I see the Speaker's face about exchequer rolls, but I do think that in creating that industry both in Kentucky for 2.7 million visitors and creating tourist opportunities, we have to look at that in Alberta as well. We have some really wonderful distillers who are doing amazing work both in southern Alberta but also here in central Alberta.

I'm taken back to a time when I got the opportunity to visit Scotland and found out that my favourite Scotch is Speyside Scotch. I got to do the Scotch whisky experience. I'm not much for whisky generally, and I apologize to my distillers. I am more of a wine fan myself, but I do think that when that first piece of legislation was put forward in the United Kingdom in 1988 to create those first recognitions that Scotch has to be those protected classes, they were having these conversations about tourism and ensuring that those opportunities were available because they bring a lot of money to the economies in the area: \$7.1 billion in the UK that the Scotch industry brings in. That's big dollars. That's a big opportunity for us as a province to move this forward and to support our distillers, so I just hope that we have that conversation at some point to ensure that our distillers are supported so in that way . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, I hesitate to interrupt, but the House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 2:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 31st Legislature - 2nd Session (2025-2026)

Activity to Thursday, April 16, 2026

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

Bill 1 — International Agreements Act (Smith)

First Reading — 6 (*Oct. 23, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 77-85 (*Oct. 28, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 109-18 (*Oct. 29, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 133-35 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 184-87 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 250-52 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force November 26, 2025; SA 2025, cI-3.8]

Bill 2 — Back to School Act (Horner)

First Reading — 26 (*Oct. 27, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 27-28 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 29-35 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 35-36 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 37-45 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 45-46 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 47-54 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 28, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on October 28, 2025; SA 2025 cB-0.5]

Bill 3 — Private Vocational Training Amendment Act, 2025 (McDougall)

First Reading — 65 (*Oct. 28, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 135-37 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 187-93 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 215-16 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 334-37 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 371-73 (*Nov. 19, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c17]

Bill 4 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Ellis)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025, passed*)

Second Reading — 193-201 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 216-24 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 289 (*Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 323-34 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 408-13 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 447-55 (*Nov. 24, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force November 26, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c18]

Bill 5 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Schow)

First Reading — 271 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 322-23 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 407-08 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 589-90 (*Nov. 27, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 11, 2025; SA 2025 c23]

Bill 6 — Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Nicolaides)

First Reading — 150 (Nov. 3, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 252-60 (Nov. 6, 2025 aft., adjourned), 289-98 (Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned), 337-39 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., adjourned), 341-51 (Nov. 18, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced), 455-65 (Nov. 24, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced), 504-14 (Nov. 25, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 681-86 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 713-21 (Dec. 3, 2025 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c19]

Bill 7 — Water Amendment Act, 2025 (Schulz)

First Reading — 121 (Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 224-35 (Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned), 298-307 (Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned), 351-55 (Nov. 18, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 480-93 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 536-43 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 661-63 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c27]

Bill 8 — Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Neudorf)

First Reading — 478 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 663-70 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 737-44 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading — 766-71 (Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 11, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c26]

Bill 9 — Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)

First Reading — 319-20 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Second Reading — 378-91 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 493-501 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., adjourned), 549-54 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 676-79 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., adjourned), 815-22 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 855 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 873-80 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Third Reading — 891 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., adjourned on division), 892-900 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 11, 2025; SA 2025 c24]

Bill 10 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Nally)

First Reading — 271 (Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 374-78 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 514-21 (Nov. 25, 2025 eve., adjourned), 543-49 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 670-76 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 728-29 (Dec. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned), 744-45 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 789-94 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c25]

Bill 11 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (LaGrange)

First Reading — 426 (Nov. 24, 2025, passed)

Second Reading — 555-64 (Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned), 590-96 (Nov. 27, 2025 aft., adjourned), 637-46 (Dec. 1, 2025 eve., adjourned), 808-15 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 856 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 867-73 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments)

Third Reading — 913-14 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division), 916-22 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c21]

Bill 12 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (S) (Horner)

First Reading — 478 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 693-98 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned), 731-37 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 745-50 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., adjourned), 850-55 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed with amendments)

Third Reading — 860-67 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c20]

Bill 13 — Regulated Professions Neutrality Act (Amery)

First Reading — 404 (Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 564-73 (Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned), 629-37 (Dec. 1, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 686-92 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned), 801-08 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 cR-13.3]

Bill 14 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)

First Reading — 763 (Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 794-801 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., adjourned), 844-50 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 856 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 880-87 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments)

Third Reading — 922-23 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division), 924-31 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 11, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c22]

Bill 15 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Ellis)

First Reading — 943 (Feb. 24, 2026 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 972-83 (Feb. 25, 2026 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1141-48 (Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)

Third Reading — 1337-44 (Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Apr. 16, 2026 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force April 16, 2025]

Bill 16 — Traveller Protection and Destination Development Act (Boitchenko)

First Reading — 963 (Feb. 25, 2026 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 1065-68 (Mar. 12, 2026 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1148-52 (Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)

Third Reading — 1216-19 (Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026, cT-6.7]

Bill 17 — Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Horner)

First Reading — 1039 (Mar. 10, 2026 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 1210-16 (Mar. 24, 2026 aft.), 1241-44 (Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1270-73 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)

Third Reading — 1273-76 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)

Royal Assent — (Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2026 c3]

Bill 18 — Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act (Amery)

First Reading — 1124 (Mar. 18, 2026 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 1332-37 (Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1462-65 (Apr. 14, 2026 aft., adjourned), 1524-28 (Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed)

Bill 19 — Appropriation Act, 2026 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 1140 (Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)

Second Reading — 1222-27 (Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 1248-58 (Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed on division)

Third Reading — 1278-88 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force March 26, 2026; SA 2026, c1]

Bill 20 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 1197 (Mar. 23, 2026 eve., passed)

Second Reading — 1219-21 (Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1244-48 (Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 1276-78 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Mar. 26, 2026) [Comes into force March 26, 2026; SA 2026, c2]

Bill 21 — Interprovincial Trade Mutual Recognition Act (Schow)

First Reading — 1261 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)
Second Reading — 1344-49 (*Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1404-08 (*Apr. 2, 2026 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1453-55 (*Apr. 14, 2026 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Apr. 16, 2026 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation]

Bill 22 — Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2026 (Sigurdson, RJ)

First Reading — 1299 (*Mar. 30, 2026 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1399-1404 (*Apr. 2, 2026 aft., passed*)

Bill 23 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Amery)

First Reading — 1299 (*Mar. 30, 2026 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1455-62 (*Apr. 14, 2026 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1492-98 (*Apr. 15, 2026 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1520-24 (*Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Apr. 16, 2026 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force April 16, 2026, with exceptions]

Bill 24 — Alberta Whisky Act (Nally)

First Reading — 1329 (*Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1393-99 (*Apr. 2, 2026 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1498-99 (*Apr. 15, 2026 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1532-36 (*Apr. 16, 2026 morn., adjourned*)

Bill 25 — An Act to Remove Politics and Ideology from Classrooms and Amend the Education Act, 2026 (Nicolaidis)

First Reading — 1329 (*Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1465-71 (*Apr. 14, 2026 aft., adjourned*), 1499-1504 (*Apr. 15, 2026 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 26 — Immigration Oversight Act (Schow)

First Reading — 1353 (*Apr. 1, 2026 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1528-32 (*Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed*)

Bill 27 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Horner)

First Reading — 1353 (*Apr. 1, 2026 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1487-92 (*Apr. 15, 2026 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 28 — Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Williams)

First Reading — 1385 (*Apr. 2, 2026 morn., passed*)

Bill 29 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 1420 (*Apr. 13, 2026 aft., passed*)

Bill 30 — Expedited 120-Day Approvals Act (Jean)

First Reading — 1450 (*Apr. 14, 2026 aft., passed*)

Bill 201 — Employment Standards (Protecting Workers' Pay) Amendment Act, 2025 (Ganley)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 154-65 (*Nov. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 274-76 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Ethical Governance) Amendment Act, 2025 (Kasawski)

First Reading — 248 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 276-84 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 427-31 (*Nov. 24, 2025 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 203 — Energy Storage Planning for Investment Act (Al-Guneid)

First Reading — 319 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 431-39 (Nov. 24, 2025 aft., adjourned), 608-13 (Dec. 1, 2025 aft., defeated on division)

Bill 204 — Public Interest Disclosure (Publicly Funded Health Entity Whistleblower Protection) Act (Sweet)

First Reading — 534 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 613-20 (Dec. 1, 2025 aft., adjourned), 1014-20 (Mar. 9, 2026 aft., defeated on division)

Bill 205 — Non-Disclosure Agreements Act (Johnson)

First Reading — 1129 (Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)

Second Reading — 1169 (Mar. 23, 2026 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Families and Communities)

Bill 206 — Accessible Alberta Act (Renaud)

First Reading — 1063 (Mar. 12, 2026 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 1081-94 (Mar. 16, 2026 aft., adjourned), 1166-69 (Mar. 23, 2026 aft., defeated on division)

Bill 207 — Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Dyck)

First Reading — 1269 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)

Second Reading — 1300-1311 (Mar. 30, 2026 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1424-32 (Apr. 13, 2026 aft., passed)

Bill 208 — Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026 (Petrovic)

First Reading — 1507 (Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed)

Bill Pr1 — The Ranchmen's Club Ordinance Amendment Act, 2026 (Ceci)

First Reading — 1269 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills), 1450 (Apr. 14, 2026 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with)

Bill Pr2 — Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 2026 (Sawyer)

First Reading — 1269 (Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills), 1450 (Apr. 14, 2026 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with)

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