



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 25, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Transcona Railer Express Jr. Hockey Champions

MLA Shannon Corbett (Transcona): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Transcona Railer Express Junior Hockey Club on winning the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League championship. This incredible accomplishment has brought so much excitement and pride to our community, and it is wonderful to see the championship coming home to Transcona.

Junior hockey has deep roots in Transcona going back more than 50 years. From the early days of the Transcona Titans in 1972 to the creation of the Railers in 1976, this team has always been an important part of our community.

When the former Transcona Junior Railers ceased to-operations in 2011, many folks in our community

felt the loss deeply, including a group of former players. These alumni worked together to bring the program back, and in 2012, the Railer Express officially returned to our community.

From day one, the Railer Express has always been about community spirit and creating opportunities for young athletes. Over the years, the organization has created a welcoming and supportive environment for players while strengthening connections throughout our community.

This championship season is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of the players, coaches, volunteers, alumni and fans who continue to support the team year after year. You could feel the excitement across Transcona as the community came together to cheer on the Railer Express throughout their playoff run.

Transcona is incredibly proud of the Railer Express and all they have accomplished. I ask all my colleagues to rise and join me in congratulating the Transcona Railer Express on an unforgettable season, and I ask my—for my guests' names to be added into Hansard.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Griffin Boomer, Dave Brown, Cam Fehr, Derek Gagnon, Don Gale, Jacob Howell, Pierre Landry, Jace Larkins, Tyson Pruden, Bruce Schmidt, Connor Shaw, Jerry Sodomlak, Declan Whiteman.

Stefanie McKim

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Today, I want to recognize the outstanding achievement of Portage la Prairie's Stefanie McKim. Stefanie recently received the incredible honour of being named Executive of the Year by the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce.

Having known Stefanie and her family for many years, I'm not surprised she received this award. She is deeply committed, a community leader, and her hard work and dedication to this position is an inspiration to everyone around us.

Stefanie demonstrates the kind of leadership that strengthens Manitoba's economy and helps build confidence in our communities. She excels at creating opportunities, supporting growth in our region,

encouraging innovation and bringing people together. That kind of vision has a lasting impact.

This recognition also shines a positive spotlight on Portage la Prairie and the many incredible businesses and organizations we have in the Portage area. Stefanie's recognition reminds us the Central Plains region is the home to exceptional individuals who are making a difference every single day.

To receive this award from the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce is a testament of respect Stefanie has earned from her colleagues, peers and the broader business community across the province.

As the MLA for Portage la Prairie, I want to extend my sincere congratulations to Stefanie McKim on this tremendous accomplishment. This award is very well-deserved recognition of your hard work and dedication to our region, and we are proud to celebrate this milestone.

Please join me to recognize Stefanie McKim for the great work she has done here for Manitoba.

Thank you.

Pink Bisons Flag Football Team

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I rise today to recognize the extraordinary U10 Pink Bisons Flag Football team.

The Pink Bisons initially started as a way for fathers, some of them former professional football players, to introduce their daughters to the sport of football. These young athletes made it clear they were building something entirely on their own. They stepped onto the field with confidence, courage and undeniable talent.

As the only all-girls team competing in the U10 Manitoba flag football winter league, the Pink Bisons played with an intensity and heart impossible to ignore. Week after week, these young, fierce athletes showed up ready to compete, uplift one another and leave everything they had out on the field. Their season was extraordinary.

The Pink Bisons went undefeated in the regular season with a 9-0 record, and then they continued to make history, completing a perfect 11-0 season by taking home the U10 Manitoba flag football winter season championship.

These young athletes are learning leadership, teamwork, resilience, strategic thinking and confidence to use their voices both off and on the field.

These athletes continue to inspire in the way they support one another and lead with both strength and joy. They are challenging outdated ideas of who belongs in sport and showing young girls across Manitoba there is absolutely nothing and no limit that they can achieve.

To the Pink Bisons, we are so proud of you. Congratulations on your undefeated champion season, and I ask my colleagues to help me in congratulating them.

Pink Bisons team: Leah Bighill, Mya Black, Posey Butler, Remi Fitzpatrick, Aveyn Hartleb, Eve Makie, Hannah Pacheco, Raquel Popiel, Charlotte Wolfe.

Coaches: Adam Bighill, Brad Black, Kelly Butler, John Makie, Eugene Pacheco, Sean Wolfe.

Parents: Kristina Bighill, Laura Fitzpatrick, Arther Hartleb, Michelle Popiel, Jenn Wolfe, Meaghan.

* (13:40)

The Speaker: The honourable—oh, the honourable Minister of Families.

MLA Fontaine: I ask that the guests of my names be included in Hansard.

Valerie Christie

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I rise today to recognize an extraordinary pillar of the Charleswood community, a woman whose profound empathy has transformed local lives for decades, Valerie Christie, and the organization she represents, the Westgrove Family Resource Centre.

In 2017, Valerie was formally presented with the Governor General's Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers, a prestigious and well-deserved recognition of her commitment to lifting others up. It is truly a lifelong mission; nearly 10 years after receiving that medal, Val's devotion to our community shines as brightly as ever.

For 17 years, Valerie has served as the co-ordinator of the Westgrove Family Resource Centre, located right inside a Manitoba Housing complex in Charleswood. Under her leadership, the centre has become the ultimate neighborhood living room, offering a clothing depot, public computer access, adult literacy and math programs and a community kitchen.

Alongside community helper Karly Evans and colleague Gerry Verscheure, who join us in the gallery today, Valerie has helped shape this space into a true

safe haven, ensuring every neighbour has the tools to succeed.

Her service to Charleswood is broad in its scope. Whether volunteering at her children's schools, dedicating time to her church or managing the Westdale community food bank, Val's priority has always been human dignity. At the food bank, she is celebrated for her profound kindness. And I have personally witnessed her warmly greeting clients by name, ensuring they feel welcome, seen and valued.

And Val's compassion does not stop with her human neighbours. Alongside her daughter, Emma, she has dedicated countless hours to volunteering at the Winnipeg Pet Rescue Shelter, extending her kind heart to vulnerable animals in need of care and a second chance.

Val has walked alongside our community through times of sadness and triumph. Reflecting on her years of service, she remains continually amazed by the resilience of local families.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Val, Gerry and Karly and the Westgrove Family Resource Centre for the incredible work they do for the community of Charleswood.

Recognizing St. Vital Student Athletes

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Well, it is my pleasure to recognize the outstanding student athletes at our high schools in St. Vital. This year, Dakota Collegiate claimed not one, not two, but three provincial championships.

First, the varsity girls basketball team, who defeated top-ranked Vincent Massey Trojans 78-73 in an instant-classic final. I was in the stands myself for the game, and I can assure you that these girls can hoop.

Provincial MVP Emilie McLean finished with 23 points, and all-star Quinn Kelly scored 25. Your victory was an accomplishment through—made through honest commitment, discipline and well-executed teamwork, so shout-out to you all.

Next, the championship girls indoor soccer team secured a hard-fought 2-1 victory over MBCI in the finals. Hayden Horechny led the offence to seal the championship win, and captains Holly Kerr and Kamryn Horechny and Ajla Balic demonstrated outstanding leadership both on and off the field throughout the entire season.

In addition, shout-out to the championship flag football team, with outstanding notable athletes Amy Smith, who made 29 touchdown passes, and Aubrey Smith, who scored 103 points and 12 interceptions, both girls setting all-time records in the WHSFL Girls Division. Simply incredible.

I also want to acknowledge the Glenlawn Lions women's hockey team, whose provincial championship was already recognized by the MLA for Riel. Congratulations.

So that's four provincial championship teams in St. Vital.

To every coach, parent, supporter who helped these athletes reach this moment, thank you.

And to the remarkable athletes joining us in the gallery today, your hard work and dedication and success is an inspiration to us in St. Vital and people right across Manitoba. I hope that this sense of accomplishment carries you into your future.

So please join me in recognizing these talented athletes for the work they do.

Thank you so much and congratulations.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Crime and Public Safety Government Record

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Manitobans simply do not feel safe under this NDP government. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) shows such disrespect for this entire province and your safety that he decides to play a video game on his phone for 30 minutes when being asked questions about safety and justice in this province.

Random violence is increasing and far too often we are hearing about unprovoked assaults, break-ins, and robbery attempts. Regardless of whatever stat the Premier (Mr. Kinew) or the Minister of Justice wants to say, the facts of the matter are that Manitobans do not feel safe under this NDP government.

Instead of addressing the issue and making residents feel safe, the NDP government have decided to force through a drug consumption site in north Logan when residents do not want it there.

Why has the Premier or the failed Minister of Justice done nothing to get a grip on the increase in violence in this province?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, Manitoba has the best Minister of Justice in the country. The Minister of Justice has been working

tirelessly to address safety concerns across Manitoba that not only went unaddressed for seven and a half years by the failed PCs, but they were actually made worse by the failed former PC government.

Under the leadership of our Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), we are seeing Manitoba's communities become safer, and that work will continue.

So the Leader of the Opposition can get on board with Manitobans and our government and start supporting the initiatives led by our great Minister of Justice.

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

Location of Safe Consumption Site Potential Increase in Criminal Activity

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): This Minister of Justice definitely is not the best Minister of Justice in the entire country. He's a failed minister of Justice who wants to play games on his cellphone for 30 minutes when asked questions. He might be the best minister of Candy Crush since he's playing it even right now in the Chamber, Honourable Speaker. He might want to cherry-pick his own data to make Manitobans think that crime is on the decrease when, in reality, it is on the increase in the province.

This Minister of—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan:—Justice refuses to listen to Manitobans. This Premier (Mr. Kinew) refuses to listen to Manitobans and the residents of Point Douglas and north Logan. They do not want a drug consumption site in their neighbourhood. Drug consumption sites have proven time and time again to be failures, to have increase of violence, an increase of drug trafficking, an increase in prostitution in the area.

When will the Minister of Justice or Premier listen to Manitobans and—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, we will stack up our record to the failed PCs' record on justice any day of the week.

On that side of the House, including when the Leader of the Opposition was around the Cabinet table, they fired 55 Winnipeg police officers, Honourable Speaker. They fired the officers who keep Manitobans safe.

On this side of the House, what has our Minister of Justice done? Hired 36 new Winnipeg police officers to keep our communities safer. And in our budget we brought dollars there to additional—to hire an additional 12 Winnipeg police officers to our communities across Manitoba.

This government is serious about keeping Manitobans safe. We are serious about doing the work that wasn't done for seven and a half years—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Crime and Public Safety Bail Reform

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Let's look at the facts under this NDP government: Rural crime is up; city crime is up. Under the NDP government, homicide rates have jumped 25 per cent in just their first year. Nurses are being assaulted at work, and that's why three hospitals—the first time in the history of this province—are greylisted under this NDP government.

* (13:50)

And now a recent survey of teachers says that 55 per cent of teachers say violence in their schools is making their job difficult. Teachers are speaking up about not only the conditions under this NDP government but the safety of themselves and their students.

Honourable Speaker, under this NDP government, repeat violent offenders are being let out time and time again.

Simple question: Where is the Premier's promise of bail reform within the first hundred days when crime is out of control in this province under this—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, our government is doing the real work of keeping Manitobans safer.

Just last week, the Minister of Justice stood with community groups, stood with the City of Winnipeg, to announce \$2.2 million towards safety programs in Winnipeg's downtown community, expanding to the West End, expanding to the Exchange District.

Honourable Speaker, we have forty—almost 50 new Winnipeg police officers across Manitoba as a result of this government. Our government is serious about keeping Manitobans safe. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: That's why we see the metrics on safety getting better across Manitoba, not worse like it did for seven and a half years under members opposite.

On that side of the House, they need to get on board with our government and Manitobans, stand on the side of safety and get out of the way of our budget.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Safe Consumption Site—Public Safety Concerns Community Recommendations to Government

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): You want to talk about metrics and stats? I will congratulate the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) for reaching his personal best on a new level in Candy Crush. Honourable Speaker, 30 minutes he plays video games on his phone when members are asking—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —questions about safety in this province.

In March, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) said that his drug consumption site was on indefinite hold until serious public concerns had been addressed. He committed to having specific targets for Aboriginal Health and Wellness to meet in order to address those concerns.

Unlike the Premier or the minister responsible, I attended those public safety meetings. Residents are concerned about the safety of their families, their children and their communities.

Will the Premier admit today, or will he table today for the House, the recommendations that the community made to Aboriginal Health and Wellness that he promised he would get before he opened this drug consumption site?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, our government is doing the work of listening to experts, working with community to make sure that Manitobans have access to the care that they need. This is really about health care. This is about access to primary care. This is about making sure that people live long enough to access recovery and treatment.

Those are services, and that's an approach that didn't exist under seven and a half years of the failed PCs

that took an approach that they still take today, and that is to shame and stigmatize the very people who need care, compassion and help. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition for making it harder for Manitobans to get care.

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

Mr. Khan: You want to talk about access to health care and recovery? How many RAAM clinics have the NDP opened since they've been in government in three—almost—years? Zero.

How many did the previous PC government open? All of them. All eight of them in this province were opened by the previous PC government. That tells you their priorities.

On our side of the House, we prioritize recovery, compassion, empathy, meeting Manitobans at where they're at.

On that side of the House, they want to give you a site with a needle and inject you with drugs, Honourable Speaker. The residents of Point Douglas say no. The families say no. Manitobans are saying no.

When will the Premier—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —come forward with his revised protocols, procedures that he promised Manitobans that he would come forward with before he opens this drug consumption site? Or is it all just empty promises?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know that when it comes to care and compassion, our government is the government they can count on to deliver that. What they also know is that the Leader of the Opposition is an example of the exact and extreme opposite of that. The Leader of the Opposition sits on a side of the House that attacks some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. The leader continues to stigmatize and shame people who need compassion and care to feel empowered to access the services they need.

Honourable Speaker, we'll take no lessons from a callous person on that side of the House who wants to shame Manitobans away from the services they deserve. We're investing in that care, we're working with experts and we're keeping Manitobans alive—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: –to get the services and this dignity they deserve in Manitoba.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Safe Consumption Site Youth Access Concerns

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I guess the NDP and the PCs have a very different definition of care and compassion. On that side of the House, they want to provide a place for youth—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: –to consume drugs. On this side of the House, we don't want youths to do drugs.

And what is more telling is this own minister from the NDP government says, in a document that they released to Health Canada, that they support youth using a drug consumption site, Honourable Speaker.

Manitobans, there you have it. The NDP want to provide a place where youth who look as young as 16, who will not be ID'd, to access a drug consumption site.

On this side—[*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: –of the House, we say no to drugs: no to drugs for youth; no to drugs for any Manitoban.

We want to provide recovery, help, support, compassion, care. Giving someone a needle full of drugs is not compassionate care, Honourable Speaker.

When will this NDP government come to their senses? Follow the lead of Saskatchewan, Alberta—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, nobody takes the Leader of the Opposition seriously. Everyone looks at the Leader of the Opposition and thinks, man, this is somebody who is leading his caucus in the opposite direction of what our government is leading this province.

We are leading our province together in unity and making sure that no matter who you are, you get access to the compassionate care you deserve.

But the Leader of the Opposition is also leading his caucus to stand in the way of Manitobans having a more affordable way of living: PST off of all groceries,

which is also a health measure to address food insecurity.

Will the Leader of the Opposition do something right for once in his career and support BITSA and get out of the way of making life less affordable for Manitobans?

Safe Consumption Site Health-Care Staffing

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): The NDP promised this drug injection site would stay on hold until there was a safety plan. Now, suddenly, they claim they're ready to go.

Manitoba already has a massive health-care staffing shortage. So where are these workers coming from? Where are the people supposed to go to get recovery and treatment? There is no room.

Honourable Speaker, why has this NDP government been completely absent from the community through this whole process?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): We held 11—or, nine consultations. There were two that were held by community; I was at each one of those. I will continue to have my door open for anyone that would like to come and speak to me about supervised consumption sites.

Right now, there is an epidemic. We see people with rise—HIV. This is why we need to get the supervised consumption site open as soon as possible. It's a medical-aid model where people are going to be led to treatment and recovery.

I don't why—know why members opposite won't get out of the way to members getting access to supports and services and on to a road of recovery.

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

Community Consultations

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, it's a simple question. Where will these people go if they want in to recovery?

The NDP hasn't done any meaningful consultation. The minister skipped the biggest community meeting, ignored residences and businesses and expects Manitobans to just fall in line. Aboriginal Health and Wellness admitted that they had only met with the owners of one business—restaurant. They haven't consulted with any other businesses affected.

Is this consultation or political cowardice?

Ms. Smith: You know what political cowardness is? Members on the opposite side. They have not met with Aboriginal Health and Wellness. They have not gone and actually spoken with folks that have—that are dealing with addictions. Have they gone and visited even one supervised consumption site across Canada?

I can tell you that this is a made-in-Manitoba—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Ms. Smith:—model that's being led by medical experts, that's going to be led by Aboriginal Health and Wellness who has decades of experience in the community from trusted community members.

* (14:00)

Members need to get on board, help support businesses who are seeing this in their doorways, help support families who are dying to get their loved ones into a supportive place where they can get treatment, recovery—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Safety Targets

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, I'll start my questions again with this simple question: Where can people access these recovery sites? There are people all over the province looking for recovery sites; there is none available for months and months and months.

The NDP got stopped the first time by united community, so this time, they ignored residents, picked a building, pushed ahead. They promised clear safety targets before moving forward.

Will the minister release those targets today or admit the promise was never going to happen? Which will it be?

Ms. Smith: What I can tell you is, under the former failed PC government, 78 per cent of people who presented at RAAM clinics were turned away. Under our government, we brought that down by over 50 per cent.

We brought over 1,200 new services into the system. We are getting people connected to supports and services, on to a path of recovery. That includes parts of our Your Way Home, 26—or, 16 out of 26 people who went into one building are in treatment

and recovery. This is what members opposite are standing in the way of.

What I will say to members opposite is get out of the way of BITSA, help Manitobans have affordability measures. That's what they're blocking—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Violent Crime Incidents in Winnipeg Government Record on Public Safety

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): When it comes to addressing random violence, this Kinew government is all bark and no bite, and the House broadcast actually shows that. What also shows that is the fact that families do not feel safe going about their daily business here in Manitoba. Families are concerned about random violence under this NDP government everywhere within this province, whether shopping at a grocery store, sitting down at a restaurant for a family meal or simply going about their own business.

Friday night, a man produced a gun after being denied service at a bar, attempted to rob some homes and had other weapons when arrested. So why is this minister okay with him being released back into our community to inflict more harm?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Where to begin, Honourable Speaker? First of all, the stats that the member opposite are—is referencing are—he's completely off base.

Crime is down across this province. We're seeing—not just in the city of Winnipeg—not just in the city of—I'd invite the Leader of the Opposition to get off Candy Crush and maybe pay attention because it's—see, the Crime Severity Index, down 4 per cent; 8 per cent, Youth Crime Severity Index; reported crimes are down 4.5 per cent; the knife crimes, down 14 per cent.

Now members opposite saw crime skyrocket under their time, and their reaction was to fire 55 Winnipeg police officers. We're taking a different approach: it's partnering with community. And that's not just here in the city of Winnipeg; it's across this province, including in Brandon.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Balcaen: Last Wednesday, in separate cases, two teenagers were sent to hospital with stab wounds.

What stands out to Manitobans is the first victim, a 16-year-old, was unknown to the assailants. It was 5:30 p.m., and the teen was going about his day when he was stabbed for seemingly no reason.

That is Manitoba under this Knew government, and this minister wants to stand in his place and be proud of that failing record.

I understand the minister has no experience in law enforcement, so I want to make sure he understands random acts of violence are incredibly rare, or at least they used to be until this NDP government came along.

Why is random violence skyrocketing under his watch?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, Honourable Speaker, he's just wrong about the reality that Manitobans are seeing.

And, in fact, what they see is a government that stood with them on the issue of bail. Not only did we bring forward a five-point bail program, which increased the amount of money that goes to WPS, that enhanced the information that we are able to share, worked with our Crown prosecutors and brought back the electronic monitoring program, the ankle bracelets that were cut under the previous government, but we also went to Ottawa and we said enough is enough, and we forced them to amend bill 14 to bring forward a strong piece of legislation that's going to make a real difference in communities.

Now, every mayor in this province of Manitoba is with us, AMM is with us. Why are the members so off base?

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

Mr. Balcaen: Random violence is prevalent, and high-profile incidents are rising under this NDP government. Just last week Winnipeg was once again put on the map for all the wrong reasons. A visiting ball team's bus was burnt, the first time that has ever happened to this transit company. A ball club from outside of Chicago has never had something like this happen down there. But under this Knew government, what was once the unthinkable now seems to be happening all too often.

How many more red flags does this minister need before he takes his head out of the sand, reconsiders his failures and starts to protect Manitobans?

Mr. Wiebe: You know, again, I'd encourage the Leader of the Opposition to—he's switched to a bigger

screen for Candy Crush now. I'd encourage him to maybe focus up and listen how you can be successful in affecting violent crime in this province, and that's with partnerships. Just last week we announced \$2.2 million; that's the Downtown Community Safety Partnership; that's partnering with BIZ organizations.

But we didn't stop there, Honourable Speaker. We're not just talking about the city of Winnipeg: \$300,000 for Brandon; \$300,000 for Thompson; \$200,000 for Dauphin; \$200,000 for Selk—the list goes on and on—Winkler is getting \$100,000 to fight crime.

That's the kind of work that we can do in partnership with law enforcement, with community—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Violent Crime Incidents in Winnipeg Government Record on Public Safety

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The minister screaming and shouting from his seat isn't doing anything to help Winnipeggers feel more safe. Winnipeg police responded to no less than eight serious incidents of violent crime over the May long weekend, including two stabbings, a shooting, two violent robberies and three serious assaults. Eight violent crimes in a 72-hour period with multiple victims requiring hospital care.

Why is the NDP allowing violent crime to run unchecked in the city of Winnipeg?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): So the member opposite was advising Heather Stefanson while crime was on the rise. And, you know, the record is clear: Winnipeg had the highest homicide rate in Canada for five straight years under their watch. Robbery in Winnipeg tripled other big cities from 2016 until 2023. Shoplifting over the—was—over the five-year average was up 54 per cent under members opposite.

Now we're turning the corner. We're making changes, and that means partnering with law enforcement, partnering with community. We're making a difference, and that's why we had the lowest homicide rate in 20 years here in this city because of the work we're doing. Members opposite have no credibility—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: I don't know why the minister doesn't want to talk about the acts of random violence that are happening today under his watch, and that's what has

Winnipeggers concerned. On Wednesday, last week, at supertime, a 16-year-old was stabbed on Alfred Avenue by an unknown group of people. And later that same evening, another teen was stabbed on Pritchard Avenue by a group of people they didn't know.

Why is this NDP government not taking any measures to keep Winnipeggers safe from being randomly stabbed on the street?

Mr. Wiebe: You know, it's important that members—I know it's not her critic role, but she should spend the time reading the public safety strategy to understand the work that we're doing at a fundamental level.

But she doesn't even have to go that far because she could look at the legislation that's before this House right now. And when we're talking about the street weapons act, that's going to make a real difference for police officers to be able to address the violent crime in communities right now.

Honourable Speaker, she could spend a little bit of time talking to Greg Burnett and the folks over at DCSP, the people that spend time on the streets addressing crime in a real way. She could spend time with the chief of police. She could do any of that but, of course, she doesn't, because she has no leg to stand on when it comes to public safety here in this province.

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

*(14:10)

Mrs. Cook: The minister should spend some more time talking to the people of west Winnipeg, because just this last Friday, an intoxicated man entered a restaurant in west Winnipeg, was refused service and then began waving a handgun around. The staff and the patrons had to evacuate the restaurant. I'm sure that's never happened to the minister, but I'm sure it is a terrifying experience.

Later on Friday night, the same man smashed the windows in a nearby apartment block while holding a handgun. Police arrested him, but he was released on an undertaking. Whether they're going out for dinner with their family or relaxing in their homes, Winnipeggers deserve to feel safe.

Why is the safety of people in west Winnipeg not a priority for this NDP government?

Mr. Wiebe: You know, members—the members, again, I've talked about the partnerships with the BIZ organizations. We've talked about the security rebate program that's available to businesses, to restaurants. It's about keeping employees safe. It's about keeping the public safe.

We have put this stuff in, Honourable Speaker, in a fundamental way, not just coming from here on Broadway, but spending time with community and listening to their needs. And that's why they understand that we're actually making a difference.

Now all of this, though, of course, is tied to funding, and we've set that escalator 2 per cent increases year over year while they kept it flat. But it's all tied to the budget and to BITSA.

And who's standing in the way of BITSA? Who's standing in the way of the budget in this province? Only one party doesn't stand for public safety and it's all the members opposite.

Government's Record on Crime and Public Safety Impact on Economic Growth and Small Businesses

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, during the last election, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised Manitobans tougher bail reform because he admitted that repeat offenders were making communities unsafe. Today, Manitoba is seeing more businesses closing than opening, and we can see the consequences everywhere downtown.

Earlier this year, the owners of the Ashdown Market, an Indigenous-owned downtown grocery store, said they were forced to close because of crime and safety concerns.

How many more businesses need to shut down before this government admits its failures on crime is hurting the Manitoba economy?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): You know, again, look, if you can't study the documents and be up on the issues, at least read the paper. Because we were just downtown last week. We were partnering with the Downtown Community Safety Partnership, and, of course, they're doing incredible work in the downtown.

But we've gone further than that. That's \$750,000 for the DCSP. We've got \$750,000 for the Downtown Business Improvement Zone. We've got \$300,000 for the West End BIZ, \$250,000 for the Exchange BIZ, \$150,000 for the West Exchange BIZ. The list goes on and on, literally, Honourable Speaker, and we're doing this across the province.

But, again, what he fails to mention is, is that we have hired 36 new officers who are out on the streets. At—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, it's not as simple as just handing out money. We need action from this minister.

Honourable Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says Manitoba small businesses are facing rising theft, vandalism and security costs, and that costs are getting passed down to everyone else through higher prices, less investment, fewer jobs and businesses simply shutting their doors.

If NDP regulations aren't chasing businesses out, crime is finishing the job.

Why has this government failed to deliver the safer communities and tougher bail reform it promised Manitobans?

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, it's about partnership with businesses, with homeowners. The homeowner security rebate program: massively successful. The \$10-million business security rebate program: ongoing and being accessed as we speak.

We also have a \$1-million security enhancement fund that is for places of worship, for faith communities to ensure that people are safe to worship as they see fit anywhere that they are in this province.

All of that layered on top of the fundamental work that we're doing on bail, and that's real change: \$4 million invested in bail here in the province of Manitoba. The National Police Federation has said that we are leading the country. That's the RCMP, for the member opposite's information. RCMP is saying that we're leading the country. Other provinces should follow our lead. And we're advocating—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, crime is no longer just a justice issue. It's an economic issue. It's an affordability issue and it's making Manitoba a harder place to invest, operate a business or create jobs.

Business owners are spending more on security instead of expanding their business, workers do not

feel safe, customers avoid areas affected by crime and more storefronts are sitting empty.

Will this Premier (Mr. Kinew) finally admit that rising crime and failed bail reform are making Manitoba less affordable and driving businesses out of our province?

Mr. Wiebe: So, again, drop the rhetoric and get real about the actions that we're taking here in the province of Manitoba.

The National Police Federation backs up our work on bail reform, on the steps that we can take, and that's why we're starting to see some success. But, of course, we're not letting Ottawa off the hook, and Bill C-14 makes important changes all around the bail system, many of which were identified by the federal minister as coming straight from Manitoba because we were at the table.

Members opposite pick fights; they pick fights with municipalities, with community groups and even the federal government, when they need the federal government on board. They need to listen to Manitoba. We've started to get them to listen, and we're not done yet.

Portage Regional Health Centre New Mammography Services

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): Honourable Speaker, every single member on this side of the House can say with confidence that we believe women, we protect their choice and we respect women's health.

For years, the PCs forced women in Portage la Prairie to travel long distances just to access breast cancer screening—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Dela Cruz: —services. But our government is expanding diagnostic services. Just last week, we had an important announcement for women in Portage la Prairie along with the surrounding area, Honourable Speaker.

Can the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care please tell Manitobans more?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Great question from my friend from Radisson about women's health.

Honourable Speaker, unlike the previous callous PC government, we're investing in women's health care.

That's why I was so proud to join local partners and advocates in Portage la Prairie to announce that the new Portage regional health centre will provide both screening and diagnostic mammography services for the first time for women in Portage la Prairie and suburban communities. Now thousands of women across southern Manitoba will be able to access care without travelling to Winnipeg.

We've lowered the breast cancer screening age, we're expanding mammography services and we will never stop fighting for women's health care and for women's right to choose of what they do for their own health.

Much done, more to do. Let's keep working together.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Crime in Rural Manitoba Long-Term Impacts and Government Response

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Let's talk about the reality that many Manitobans are seeing across the province, and that is the increase in crime. And in rural Manitoba, criminals are becoming increasingly bold: entering yards, farms, garages and even occupied homes.

At what point will this NDP government acknowledge that rural crime has reached a crisis level and make significant changes to help combat the reality that many Manitobans are facing here in Winnipeg, but right across our province of Manitoba?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Yes, just misinformation on the record.

In 2021, rural Manitobans faced the hot-highest homicide rate for rural areas anywhere in the country under their watch, the highest physical assault rate for rural areas anywhere in the country. We had some of the highest crime rates, in general, anywhere in the country under their watch.

Honourable Speaker, we've brought those numbers down. There's more work to do; we are the first to admit that. We're going to keep working. We're going to keep fixing the failures of the previous government. But we know that under their watch, property crimes increased 40 per cent, and yet they did nothing. They cut officers and they cut—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Byram: The minister and I have met with one of my constituents on an issue related to rural crime, and he knows that it doesn't just affect property alone. It impacts mental health, it impacts the economy, the well-being and the sense of security that families deserve.

* (14:20)

And I'm now hearing from constituents that sometimes don't want to report crimes because they feel nothing will be done by this NDP government. A camera alone does not prevent a crime.

How will this Minister of Justice rebuild confidence in the justice system that he has failed in rural Manitoba?

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, again, Honourable Speaker, I'll just lead through some of the—read through some of the rest of the communities that are receiving funding for public safety this summer: Selkirk; \$200,000 for Portage la Prairie; \$200,000 for Steinbach; \$100,000 for Morden; I mentioned Winkler, Brandon, Thompson.

Our friends at Keystone Agricultural Producers have endorsed our budget, have said that they see the impact of our changes in public safety. The list goes on, Honourable Speaker. We're partnering with community in a real way. AMM is on board, municipal leaders are on board, mayors are on board. The only people that aren't on board are the members opposite because they completely ignored the issues when they had the reins of power.

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

Ms. Byram: Producers are also seeing the impact of rural crime in our province under this NDP government. And Manitobans are frustrating—frustrated seeing repeat offenders arrested and released back into these communities within days and—only to reoffend. And, at times, same property owners are hit again.

What is the Minister of Justice doing so that these repeat offenders are held accountable and face real consequences?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, Honourable Speaker, we talked a little bit about the 36 new officers who are here in the city of Winnipeg, but what we haven't talked about are the 12 new officers that are going to be deployed across the province. These are specifically targeting those areas where we see retail crime, where we see other property crime, because we know that these impact communities across the province.

Now, not only did we lose 55 police officers here in the city of Winnipeg under members opposite, but in fact, our vacancy rate in the RCMP—that's communities represented by many members opposite—was at a record-high 30 per cent across the country. This is the highest rate by far, and that's because there was a lack of funding.

So while they froze and cut—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Restrictions on Youth Access to Social Media Individuals with Disabilities—Policy Considerations

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Manitoba is considering restrictions on youth access to social media, but has not yet outlined the proposed age limit, enforcement approach or timeline.

As many constituents in Dawson Trail with disabilities rely on tools like ChatGPT for communication and daily support, could the Premier (Mr. Kinew) share how the government plans to ensure these individuals are considered as this policy is developed?

An Honourable Member: Doubt it.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, you know, it's interesting; the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) just heckled me standing up to answer this question. And he said, doubt it.

And I know that he takes that position because when he was the Education minister, he did nothing to make sure that kids across this province were considered in every policy decision that was being made. He didn't care about families. He didn't care about kids with diverse needs and abilities. He didn't care at all, and that's why he's sitting on that side of the House.

On this side of the House, our government is taking an approach that factors in the needs of all kids and their family, which is why we're listening to families. We're bringing forward policies that are going to make a difference and we're going to work with families and educators to get that right.

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

MLA Lagassé: As Manitoba is looking at models such as Australia where social media companies are required to restrict access for users under 16, could the Deputy Premier outline how Manitoba intends to adapt this approach in a way that balances youth safety with accessibility, practically—particularly for

youth, young people with disabilities who are depending on these digital platforms?

MLA Asagwara: The MLA for Dawson Trail is asking a very important question. And I appreciate that he's asking this question because I know that he has families that he's bringing their voices into the House, but we all represent Manitoba families and kids who are navigating real challenges and deserve to have the supports and resources in place that are going to help them be successful.

This social media ban, like the ban that we brought forward for phone use, is taking, first and foremost, into mind the well-being of all of our kids and their families, and working together to meet their needs.

So our government is always going to keep putting kids first. We're going to make sure that all kids have access to the services, the education and the tools they need to be successful. And we're going to work with our—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Dawson Trail, on a final supplementary question.

MLA Lagassé: As government continues to explore this policy, many families and advocates are seeking reassurance that their voices will be heard.

Will the Deputy Premier commit to engaging with the disability community and stakeholders to co-develop safeguards or exemptions, ensuring that residents in Dawson Trail can continue to access essential AI and online supports?

MLA Asagwara: Our priority as a government is, of course, always to make sure that the needs of kids—all children and their families—are met and that all kids have access to a quality education in Manitoba.

We work across departments in government to make sure that that is, in fact, the case. Whether it's universal nutrition, whether that's the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), who's responsible for disabilities, working with our Education Minister, myself and others across government, we are taking an all-of-government approach to make sure that kids, no matter where you live in Manitoba, have access to the education that you deserve, and that your needs are met by giving you and your family the right tools.

So, of course, we're going to keep listening to Manitobans. We're going to make sure that we support them in having the best education possible. And we're

going to keep hiring educators so that you've got more folks in the classrooms to meet your needs.

The Speaker: Order, please.

The time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: But there's a guest in the gallery. I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Patricia Johnson-Castle, who is the guest of the honourable Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism (MLA Kennedy).

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

Petitions?

PETITIONS

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

* (14:30)

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

Honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition has been signed by Nicole Anderson, Patrick Anderson and Peggy Pelypiw and many, many, many other Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on to the next reader, I'll just remind all petition readers that you read three names at the end and you have two repetitions of the word many.

The honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk).

Sorry, we can't quite hear you. Do you have headphones you could use? Or a headset?

Sorry, we can't hear you. We got to—we'll move on and try and come back.

Petitions?

Arlington Bridge

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) On November 21, 2023, the City of Winnipeg—the City—closed the Arlington Bridge to all traffic indefinitely.

(2) Over 13,000 vehicles per day cross the Arlington Bridge, which serves as a vital link for vehicular and pedestrian traffic between north Winnipeg and the downtown.

(3) The current structure has been declared unsafe and it has deteriorated extensively, is now functionally obsolete and is therefore no longer suitable for further life-extending repair.

(4) In 2016, the City initiated a study to explore options to replace the Arlington Bridge, and in 2019, the better bridge for Arlington study presented two options for a replacement structure.

(5) In 2019, the City placed the Arlington Bridge replacement project on a list of unfunded capital projects.

(6) The results of a \$850,000 study exploring the feasibility of a comprehensive rehabilitation of the bridge are expected to be presented to the City in November of 2024.

(7) The City undertook extensive public consultation regarding the fate of the Arlington Bridge and found that the communities on both sides of the bridge were supportive of a replacement structure being built.

(8) Approximately 13,000 vehicles per day are forced to use alternate routes to travel from north Winnipeg to downtown.

(9) The Main Street underpass, the Slaw Rebchuk Bridge and the McPhillips Street underpass are overstressed by the increased traffic from the Arlington Bridge closure.

(10) A replacement structure is estimated to cost over \$300 million. This, combined with the unfunded \$912-million waste water biosolids removal project and the \$2.2-billion combined sewer overflow replacement project, is leaving the City with a massive infrastructure funding deficit.

(11) The Premier has a duty to direct the provincial government to provide financial assistance to the City so it can complete this long overdue, vital transportation link.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier to allocate funding to financially assist the City of Winnipeg in building a new structure to replace the Arlington Bridge.

(2) To urge the provincial government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction.

This petition has been signed by Reed Sutherland, Bill Rivers, Dylan Bell and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (14:40)

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision and

opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

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

This is signed by Robert Bryson, John Bergen, Ije [*phonetic*] Hesketh and many, many more Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance; and

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Placement Vetting for Elderly Persons Housing

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

The background to this petition is as follows—

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, Member. Could we just have your mic brought down to your mouth? Thank you.

Mr. Wowchuk: Yes, okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

This petition has been signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on to the next reader, I'll just remind all members to read out at least a name from the list of petitions. Often it's three.

Phoenix School

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (14:50)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by Mindy Cole, Devin Rosger, Dusty Cole and many, many other Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: So I'll just—I apologize to all members. You don't usually hear my voice this much during petitions, but I will clarify my last guidance. The member must read the full text of the petition and may read the names of the first three petitions—or petitioners.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This petition is signed by Victoria Epsy *[phonetic]*, Sophie Collier, Debbie Johansson *[phonetic]* and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I hope you can hear me this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, your audio seems good. You can move ahead.

Mr. Piwniuk: Okay, I can go ahead? Okay, thank you. Sorry about that.

I wish—honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Dana Fehr, Olga Braun and George Martens and many other Manitobans.

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

* (15:00)

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

This petition has been signed by Sheila Sarkonak, Eric Besselt, Donna Besselt and many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on to the next petition reader, I'll just direct all honourable members to the public gallery where we have seated, from Riverdale School, 15 grade 7, 8 and 9 students under the direction of Ryan Thiessen. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk).

And you—we welcome you to the Chamber.

Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This is signed by Shelley Ronnie [*phonetic*], Greyson Nelson [*phonetic*], Christine Baudry and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard).

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

An Honourable Member: I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with the high-efficiency—

The Deputy Speaker: Apologies. I recognized the wrong member from Brandon, so you will have to restart your petition.

The honourable member for Brandon West.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

* (15:10)

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition has been signed by Emily Kay, Jazmin Dulek [*phonetic*], Candace Mariasn and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to immediately—to urge the provincial government to fully

implement recommendations in the Bridging the Gaps report.

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

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

This petition is signed by Farell, Darlene Reddy [*phonetic*], Branden Chartrand, Tamara Fontaine and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follow:

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

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

This is signed by Shannon Gaultier, Don Gaultier, Barrie Nichol and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

* (15:20)

Programs for Adolescents with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

This petition has been signed by Glen Rideout, Ray Ferrier [*phonetic*] and Al Vancouver [*phonetic*].

Thank you.

Intersection of PTH 75 and PR 305

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

And, honourable Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Solange Lapointe, Gérald Lapointe, Gloria Baudry and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

Provincial Road 210

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (15:30)

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

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

This petition has been signed by Ron Dueck, Wyatt Nault, Isaiah Unrau and many, many other Manitobans.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility

buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Trey King, Sandy Scott, Murray Scott and many more fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Honourable Deputy Speaker, can you please call all stages of Bill 53.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 53—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

The Deputy Speaker: We will now resume debate on Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker, colleagues. It's, again, a great honour to get up in this Legislature every day

and try to do better for Manitobans. And that's why we're going to have this discussion on Bill 53 today.

We know that Manitobans haven't had the opportunity to really get up to speed on what BITSA is all about, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, so it's incumbent upon us in opposition to ensure that we can, I guess, try to get it to a point where Manitobans will have a better understanding of exactly what this NDP government is doing with this particular piece of legislation.

And for that, I'm just going to go through some of the areas, and I'll start with the explanatory note, first of all, honourable Deputy Speaker. And, basically, for the record, the bill implements various tax and other measures announced in the 2026 budget—Manitoba budget. This is the part that Manitobans have to be concerned with. Additional amendments implement and support the summary budget and make various amendments to tax legislation. So, essentially, a four-line explanatory note on a very important piece of legislation that Manitobans won't have the opportunity to debate or come and talk to their minister or their MLA and share their concerns.

And I'm just going to run through some of them here for everybody watching on TV today. Some of the amendments they're looking at—and it's broadly known that the government is looking at putting \$1,600 in school tax back up to \$1,700 and raising it—certainly a measure that is helpful, but it takes away from what the previous government, PC government, were doing and really eliminating the education tax off of property, which really is the right way to go.

You know, this is basically just window dressing for Manitoba taxpayers. And we know that the cost of public education is going up, and it's unfortunate that Manitobans—and their properties are going up—but it's unfortunate that they are going to be the—essentially the folks that are going to be paying the price when they get their tax bill.

I know, talking to many city of Winnipeg folks that received their tax bill a couple of weeks ago, and they saw a massive increase in the education portion of their property tax. As a matter of fact, it was so bad that the City of Winnipeg had to actually put an explanatory note inside—which was longer than the explanatory note in BITSA bill—inside the tax bill to say, look, whoa, this isn't us that's raising your municipal tax. This is actually the Province; they're raising your education tax on your property.

So they can—what they've done is they've gone to all the school boards and said: you guys do it; we're not going to do it. Nothing to see here in the NDP Education Department. We're not going to be raising anything here. You guys go ahead and do it; don't worry; we got your back.

And that's kind of what's happened with this particular increase that they're touting is good for Manitobans. They raised it—the property up from \$450,000 to approximately a million. So now your property valued at a million, you'll probably see this measly amount coming back based on the fact that you would have got 50 per cent of the old education property tax removed completely and eventually totally gone off of property, which makes sense.

There is no other jurisdiction that's doing this other than Manitoba. That's why, when Manitobans asked us to remove it, we did, and we moved forward. And now the NDP have put it back, so—and also allowed—well, actually, forced—school boards to go ahead and raise taxes at whatever rate they feel they need it—in some cases 30 to 40 per cent over the last two years.

People are feeling it now. They're seeing it come in their mailbox and they're really feeling it. And as we go through the summer, more RMs will be also getting their tax bills out with probably explanatory notes in there as well saying, hey, whoa, it's not the RM of this municipality that's raising your tax; it's actually the government that's raising your education portion on your tax bill.

So I'm sure the phones will be ringing off the hook, as they probably are already, and emails are coming rapid. And certainly we know that Manitobans are not going to sit back and just take that for sure.

A couple of things that—other things that they put in here that, you know, quite frankly, Manitobans need to have a discussion about and they should—their voices should be heard. And I know during a bill briefing we talked about The Captured Carbon Storage Act. We know that we—when we met with the minister's office, we—unfortunately, the minister wasn't available, so the deputy minister took over. And there were some assurances there that, you know, the public will be consulted thoroughly.

* (15:40)

This is a newish technology here in Manitoba where, basically, the government is looking at clarifying that there are no restrictions under the act on the

activities that may be conducted on the surface of the land above the carbon respiratory area.

So, essentially, what's going to happen is they're going to eject carbon into the ground. Certainly we don't have an issue with that. We know that the federal government still has a carbon tax on high producers, and some of the biggest industries here in Manitoba are suffered—are suffering with that. And we know that we support the government to move forward.

But then they get into putting this into a bill that Manitobans can't debate, which is the whole process. That's—in Manitoba, we're fortunate that we can come as regular taxpayers, business owners, stakeholders, you name it, come down to the Legislature, make an appointment, come down and sit and listen to the minister and ask questions of the minister and say, okay, what's going to happen here? What's going to happen is this—and they're also saying enabling rent and royalties to apply to a reservation or a licence.

So these are costs. These are going to be costs that are going to be incurred by industry and by folks that are taking on and injecting carbon into the ground and these are things that need to be talked about. Industry needs to know. I certainly don't know anything about it, but I'd be happy to pass on the information that was provided to us, which we have, but now they've added some additional carbon capture information here. So, again, Manitobans deserve the opportunity to talk about that.

They're also talking about community child-care standards, which we know child care is needed everywhere; it's needed all across Manitoba. And, again, we certainly support that, but I think stakeholders would like to come and talk about, okay, how can we do better? How can we open up additional units? How can we help with the—with Manitoba kids and families that simply just don't have a place to go?

And certainly we know that there are folks out there that maybe want to have a licensed or a home daycare to support their community and their region, particularly in rural Manitoba where we know, you know, getting—driving 45 minutes to a daycare in the city and then going to work is a challenge, especially in today's affordability crisis. And gas is through the roof; we know that and it's costing Manitobans a lot of money to run around and try to find child-care space. So they may have some ideas and some options for us to discuss at committee as well, which we will not have the opportunity to do.

The Education Administration Act, division 3: allowing the minister to construct a child-care facility or upgrade a school or child-care facility. Of course, we don't disagree with that, allowing the school board to use school or child-care facilities constructed by the minister before school board assumes ownership of it.

Okay, so we know that we were building child-care spaces at record speed when we were in government. The PC government was building them right across the province. We know again, as I talked about, the rural areas are really suffering with this. So, again, they can't come and talk to the minister about, hey, we live here; we know this area well; we know how many children are not getting to daycare; we know how many parents are having to stay home, adjust their schedules to take care of their child when they need to get to work in this terrible affordability crisis time that we're currently in.

Another area here—and again, this is one of the shortest BITSA bills we've ever had to debate, too, as well. There's not really a lot in here, particularly when it comes to affordability, but The Municipal Act, it says here, and I quote: enabling a municipality to directly impose an accommodation tax on the use of short-term accommodations within the municipality.

Well, I know that the former minister of Municipal Relations, and working with 137 municipalities, I know there were a lot of concerns and I know that times are really tough in rural—in communities across the province, not only in the city of Winnipeg, but with heavy costs on infrastructure, sewer, water; that we know the capital region, for instance, is really suffering with growth. They can't grow anymore because they simply don't have the funds or the infrastructure.

So we would say to the AMM, we would say, come, listen, talk to the minister. The minister is trying to move forward here with this enabling the ability to impose an accommodation tax, but now the mayors, reeves and councillors have to go to the people in their community and have a conversation with them.

What does that look like? What is Super 8, the owners of Super 8 in a small community, you know, going to say about that? How is that going to affect their business? There's so many unanswered questions when you start to really dive and take a deep dive into Bill 53.

Public Schools Act says streamlining the process for long-term borrowing and the issuance of securities by school divisions. You know, I think Manitobans

would kind of want that broken down a little bit more, watered down a bit, so to speak, so that we can understand what long-term borrowing looks like.

We already know that Manitobans under the NDP are running record deficits and debt right now. We know not only here in—on Broadway but at Manitoba Hydro, we know that there's tens of billions of dollars in debt and deficit running. I know the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) will tell you, well, hope and a prayer, we need some rain. Well, we certainly do need some rain; there's no doubt about that. But I don't think rain is going to get us out of the trouble that the province are in, particularly Manitobans that rely on the services every day, like health care, public education, social services. Those are the areas that need to be focused in on.

So what are they borrowing? We don't know. Manitobans don't know. But this bill will pass because the NDP do have a majority government. So it's our job to ensure that we're getting as much information out there as possible.

This is another area, and this is the last part of the actual bill itself under the explanatory notes. So I just wanted to cover this part off. Red River College Polytech act and Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act. We know there's been a lot of debate about the NDP closing the Institute of Trades and Technology, and we know that that, over four decades, provided Manitobans—young Manitobans—with all sorts of great opportunity to move on with their trade or whatever the case may be. Just fine—a fine-tuned educational opportunity for them. We know that the NDP closed it.

So what they're doing here, after probably taking some heat, is authorizing Red River College Polytech to grant senior years technology education diplomas to qualifying schools. They got to clean that up because, quite frankly, they were closing it down and there were still students there. So they have to get through their education and get their diplomas.

So, thankfully, they picked up on that and, again, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology would—if the minister determines that it is a—in public interest, then he can appoint somebody to do that. So, again, it's falling squarely on the minister's desk to ensure that this poor decision of closing the institute was made under the NDP government.

So that, really, folks, in a nutshell, is the bill. But, you know, we're here to talk about Bill 53 again and to talk about actually what Manitobans are talking

about. Manitobans are under real pressure right now, and BITSA really doesn't provide anything as far as affordability measures that can really stick and really say, hey, at the kitchen table, they're sitting—mom and dad are sitting around and they're saying, we can do this now. We've got, you know, we've got some—the government's going to help us out in a meaningful way—not pennies, but in a meaningful way with adding a simple thing like increasing the basic personal amount or the exemption that we were calling for.

We know that Manitobans will probably not see the benefits of pennies at the grocery store on chips and pretzels and other junk food areas, pop drinks and those kind of things. We know that they need real support to ensure that they get—you know, they can put food on their table, and not just a bag of chips, honourable Deputy Speaker. We know that they—they're looking for more relief, and BITSA just simply does not do that.

Some of the areas that, again, were talked about—pardon me, was—excuse me for a minute. The government could certainly look at implementing some really solid tax measures and put money back in Manitobans' pockets very quickly if they heeded what we talked about as far as increasing the basic personal amount, and really be leaders for Manitobans and lead the country for that matter in ensuring that we can—with a larger basic personal amount coming back, folks are going to come back here.

As we talked about—I remember talking about last week, Saskatchewan licence plates are coming here, but they're putting on a Manitoba one now because they know that, hey, this this is a place that I can raise a family because the government has got my back. They're going to go ahead and move forward with raising that personal amount so that I keep more money at the kitchen table, essentially, when, you know, when right now they're not and they're struggling.

Again, up to \$30,000 would be a great, great, great way to finish that off. Folks would be saving a lot of money and they could, again, go to school—pardon me—go play hockey; they can go to dance. They can afford to do all these things and even fuel up their car, because you can't do it with the pennies that the NDP are offering, for sure.

* (15:50)

You know, again, this is—two-income earners would receive up to 3,000 bucks a year if we could move this into Bill 53 and work collaboratively

with the government to make sure that they get—Manitobans get real effective of what measures would work for them at their kitchen table every single day. We know that this would definitely help, and that's what Manitobans are telling us. They sent us here to say, hey, we need to get the government to listen. Groceries are up, everything is up and it's getting tougher for families each and every day.

Again, with Bill 53, if, you know, if—I think they will. I think the members are going to start to understand, over the coming days, that we need to do something. We need to amend this bill to ensure that we get real tax measures for Manitobans. We know that it's something that they've been asking for and, quite frankly, this is what they should get. Work with the opposition. Work with us and work with Manitobans, for sure, and that way we can certainly do it.

It's not only families; it's seniors and young kids just starting out that are having a real challenge. You know, first of all, they want to maybe work in a restaurant situation or something like that, but restauranteurs, well, they're not benefiting from anything in Bill 53 either. We know that ready-made sandwiches are going to be PST exempt at Safeway or Sobeys, but at the local restaurateur who's supplying lunches everyday, you know, ready-made sandwiches or soup or a salad, somewhere along those lines, the PST's still going to be on that item.

So guess what, honourable Deputy Speaker? They're not shopping there anymore. They're going to Sobeys or they're going to Safeway because the NDP want to obviously provide more opportunity for large grocery chains than they do for the owner here, the local owner of a small restaurant that's been in business for 30 or 40 years. The NDP don't have your back; we know that for sure.

You know, again, we're just here to work together. We know that we can't always agree, but I think we can agree on this. We can agree that real affordability measures will make a difference for Manitobans right across the province. We know for a fact because just over the weekend, I remember talking to folks up in Grand Marais, and they said, you know, we're not going out as much as we were anymore; we're not—there's some nice restaurants right up there, in Grand Marais, beautiful part of the province, and I think he had maybe 20 people drop by his facility over the weekend and that was it. And it's shameful because people need real affordability measures.

And it trickles downhill. So if we can help Manitobans at the kitchen table, think what does at the restaurant table; it's going to help all the way along. Even going to movie, honourable Deputy Speaker, is almost off the charts now for families. Families are struggling: \$200 a month away from bankruptcy. It's absolutely awful, and it's terrible out there, and we need to do something that is meaningful, something that will, again, pay dividends now, not a year from now, not two years from now like the education property tax the NDP are claiming they're going to give you back, but it won't take effect 'til next year, 2027.

So what are we doing today? We're here to talk about Bill 53. We're here to look at ensuring Manitobans' voices are heard because they cannot get to committee based on Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. We know that it's going to be a challenging summer for a lot of people. They're not going to be able to go to their cottage, their camper or even just simply tenting and going fishing because these are the little things that we take for granted, we can't take for granted anymore.

Manitobans need real change. They need real support and they need it today. And—you know, and that's why I'm really pleased today, and at this particular time, I move, seconded by the member from Riding Mountain,

THAT this motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following: this House declined to give second reading to Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that the bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

Thank you for the opportunity, honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: So I will ask the House if there is leave to consider the amendment as printed and not necessarily as shared by the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton).

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Red River North will have to read the amendment again.

Mr. Wharton: I'll try this again. I apologize.

I move, seconded by the member from Riding Mountain,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following: the House declines to give second reading to Bill 53, the budget implementation and stat-tax statutes amendment act, 2026, because this House has not received satisfactory—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

There was another miswording, so I would ask the member to restart at: this House declines.

Mr. Wharton: I'll just start over, honourable Deputy Speaker.

I move, seconded by the member from Riding Mountain,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following:

this House declines to give second reading to Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that the bill—that this bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

Whew.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Red River North and seconded by the honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt),

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "THAT" and substituting the following:

this House declines to give second reading to Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2026 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

And I would advise the House that this motion is in order.

The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Well, honourable Deputy Speaker, where to start?

You know, when we look at this amended motion and we talk about the fact—and it is a fact—that this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

And I think we just heard from the member from Red River North, as well as many members over the course of the last week speaking to BITSA, that Manitoba families are within \$200 of insolvency—50 per cent of Manitoba families. That is striking and that is telling about a government that is not being fiscally responsible or fiscally prepared for 50 per cent of the population here in Manitoba.

* (16:00)

The underdogs, the ones that are fighting for a chance of affordability, the ones that are looking for an opportunity to contribute to the Manitoba economy, aren't having the opportunity because \$200 separates them from bankruptcy. And that often means whether they pay the bills, whether they pay their rent, whether they're able to provide some time with their children or their family for recreational items. That isn't able to happen under this NDP government.

The Speaker in the Chair

We're seeing affordability issues across the province, not just here in Winnipeg but, I know, in my hometown as well, in Brandon. We're seeing affordability issues hit a number of areas and I know if we look at any community across Manitoba, we are going to see exactly the same thing: People are struggling.

And when we look at this bill and we look at the fact that it does nothing to help Manitobans, it's no wonder that we have been forced to bring forward this amendment to talk about real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans so desperately need.

I'm going start out with the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit. And I bring this forward because, this past week in Brandon, the tax bills hit the mail, and I opened mine and, again, I was shocked and surprised at how much more my education property taxes have gone up since this NDP government has come to power. It's shocking.

And it's difficult to take when I know that our side of the House was on the path to eliminating school taxes completely. We were at 50 per cent with the understanding that that would move to 75 per cent, and our economy was booming at that time. And now,

unfortunately, that 50 per cent is cut, and it's cut not only to residential tax bills but places like low-income housing in Brandon.

And I will point out that the Spruce Woods Housing Co-op is a prime example of that right in my own hometown of Brandon; it actually falls under the member for Spruce Woods (Mrs. Robbins), who has done a large amount of advocacy for the Spruce Woods Housing Co-op. But what happened when they changed that 50 per cent reduction is it cost tens of thousands of dollars for the housing co-op because they eliminated the PCs' process of giving 50 per cent back on their tax credits for their educational tax credit.

And now, this is a true definition of low-income, modest-income housing in Brandon. This group has been a constant advocate for the people that live there. They've brought proof forward that families that have lived there have been able to build up a small nest egg so that they could then go on and buy their own home or perhaps a mobile home and be able to leave Manitoba—sorry, the Spruce Woods Housing Co-op, so another family could benefit from that same action that happens there.

But now this same group is forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars more because the NDP government shows no regard for these not-for-profit housings and the ones that are trying to provide real relief to people in my hometown.

And it's disappointing. And I know I heard from many people this past week across Brandon when they opened up their tax bill and they looked at it and they were absolutely shocked with how much this is going up under this NDP government.

Basic personal exemption is another area that I would like to talk about during my short time that I have to talk on this amendment. And, of course, this amendment is talking that—because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitoba desperately needs.

And that's important to make sure that we keep bringing that forward and that our government was forced. Their hand—our hand was forced to bring this forward because Manitobans expect more. Manitobans expect the opposition to work with government to bring real affordability, and we're willing to do that. We've tried, we've reached out, we've talked with the various ministers and said, lookit, let's work together, but let's make sure that there's real affordability and

real savings for Manitoba during this affordability crisis. And at each turn, at each avenue, at each fork in the road, barricades were put up; we were turned down and said no.

We started with a \$30,000 exemption, and I think that's important to note that that is what our government would offer or what our side would offer regarding this. There is true savings in that—raising the basic personal exemption. The savings puts an additional \$1,535 per year into Manitobans' pockets. And a household with two incomes—and let's face it, almost every Manitoban now has to have a dual-income household in order to afford this NDP government. So with a two-person income, the savings—the combined value—would mean \$3,070 in immediate increase to their earnings. This isn't pennies on the dollar; this is thousands of dollars that each of these families could use to buy things like healthy food.

And when we talk about healthy food, Manitoba has the worst food inflation in the country. And that's sad. I have two children that are raising very young families. And I know, even though they all have good jobs, they struggle at times with the grocery bills. And now that they got their tax bill in the mail and their education property tax went up exponentially, they're going to have to work hard to make sure that their family is taken care of.

I know that the additional \$3,070 in their pocket would be well served in moving forward to buying healthy food for the family or maybe even registering kids into sports programs or having the opportunity to down-pay their mortgage or do different areas. It's up to each individual. We won't interfere with how they spend that money. They'll just be able to spend it. And with that, it also will stimulate our economy.

So I'm perplexed at why this government would not want to see Manitobans have more money in their pockets. And I actually feel for the minister responsible for our economy. I feel for the minister that has to listen to his Premier (Mr. Kinew), put this rhetoric forward and then he has to support it. I know that he likes to work with Manitobans. I've worked with him many, many times, and the Finance Minister likes to make sure Manitobans are taken care of, but in this case, he's being pressured by his Premier and, of course, by his entire caucus to bring this—these measures forward.

* (16:10)

The amount of money that has been collected on up-taxing our citizens over the last two and a half

years is absolutely mind-numbing when we look at that amount. And that's not giving Manitobans relief, Honourable Speaker. What it's doing is pushing Manitobans further and further into the hole. And so instead of talking about 50 per cent of the families being \$200 away from insolvency or bankruptcy or making those decisions on where they need to spend their money, I dare say that next year at this time, we'll be talking about 75 per cent of the families being \$100 away or even less.

I've seen the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) many times in this House bring up information about businesses that are closing and the number of businesses that are leaving Manitoba as compared with coming into Manitoba, and that impacts our economy, Honourable Speaker. And that's why we had to bring this message forward, that this House declines to give second reading to Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

And I go back to what the member for La Vérendrye has brought forward—our critic of the economy—has brought forward many times, is the number of businesses that are fleeing our province or that are not starting in our province simply because it's not affordable for them to start here. And not only that, they have so many roadblocks being put in their way.

Now, if the NDP government would actually consider a lot of our advice and a lot of our motions that we've brought forward, our resolutions, our discussions, we would be seeing Manitoba thriving.

But right now, Manitoba receives the most transfer payments from the federal government of any provinces east of the Maritimes. And that's quite embarrassing when we look at Manitoba's neighbour in Saskatchewan, who are starting to thrive under their mining and under their ability to work in a strong economic environment. Alberta has been doing so for years and years, and we look at the fact that these are the provinces that are now sending money to Manitoba to make sure that we can keep our heads above water.

And that's disappointing. It's disappointing that we have so many of the critical minerals, so much of our ability to provide finances and stable—stabilize our economy here in Manitoba, yet roadblocks are put up every single day whenever this is brought forward within the House.

Having the removal of PST on, I guess, junk food is what we're saying; we're seeing a lot of the stuff because grocery items are already PST exempt. But want to focus a little bit on the prepared food side of that because it is really unfair to restaurants within Manitoba. And this is, again, another area where the NDP government are picking winners over losers.

And they're putting up roadblocks; they're putting up walls and barricades around restaurants that, again, ensure that our economy thrives here in Manitoba, making sure that it is one of the biggest areas that employ youth across our province. And what better way to stimulate the economy than to have youth participating in the wage earning and then going out and making sure that some of that money is saved for college or for university or post-secondary education. But also, we know that these youth will go out and spend some of this money that they have earned and stimulate our economy.

Now, it's unfortunate that probably 50 per cent, or better, of that money will be saved for post-secondary education, that they won't be able to use at places like MITT because it gets closed down by this government. We have an economy that is absolutely screaming for skilled workers, and, again, it is being shut down by this government when this is the time that we need it most. And we look at the apprenticeship ratio as well, and when we should have a two-to-one or a three-to-one apprentice ratio in some of these areas, again, shut down by this government because of ideology, rather than looking at our economy and knowing that this is important for us to thrive within Manitoba, to have these areas that are training our future leaders, that are training our future wage earners, that will make sure that these individuals go into either small businesses or help these small businesses thrive. And I can see why because, again, the NDP are often against small businesses and people that want to be out there working hard for their dollars and contributing to the Manitoba economy.

Honourable Speaker, I think it's important to note that one of the major factors that draws business to a community is crime and having crime under control, making sure that you have a very safe area. And this government has failed to do this over the past two and a half years. As a matter of fact, they've only managed to make it worse. Affordability issues are a root cause of crime. The minister himself has said that: We're going to look at the root causes of crime. But on the flip side, all he does is make sure that affordability goes down so that crime goes up under his watch.

So, really, it's hypocrisy when we hear them talking about the root causes of crime and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) just looks at the fact that we'll keep people down, we'll push people down, we'll increase crime in Manitoba and make sure that it's not a safe and affordable place to live.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) wants to talk about taking tax off of a Slurpee, but the way this Justice Minister is running his department and the way crime is crawling up in this province and in this city, the 7-Elevens are fearful that they won't even be around as of July 1 in order to offer that savings on a Slurpee.

We're seeing mass closedowns of businesses, restaurants in different areas because of crime. You just open up a newspaper any day, and you will see that these are areas that Manitobans are deeply, deeply concerned about—you know, the theft that is taking place and the shoplifting that is going on. Red meat is becoming the new gold. It is becoming the bargaining chip for people going in and stealing these high-commodity cuts of beef and being able to trade them for cash or for drugs, for anything else. Because people do not have the affordability to go out there and purchase these on their own because those families that are \$200 away from bankruptcy or \$200 away from insolvency don't go out and buy these cuts of meat. They can't afford it, and it's just absolutely crippling our economy, the way that this NDP government has chosen to not look at real and true affordability measures here in our province.

I think it's important—and we've heard many of our members talk about it, but we need to work together here in this province. We need to have both sides come together, but that includes co-operation from both sides. It's not just give, give, give, give; there has to be a little bit of give and take.

And so, when I talked earlier about our \$30,000 basic personal exemption, there was a discussion and there was an opportunity for this government to agree to a starting point of \$21,000 personal—basic personal exemption, and that would really help out. Even \$1,000 put into the pocket for each of these individuals—not the pennies, not the \$10 that you might save over two months at the grocery store with no PST, but real savings for individuals.

* (16:20)

And, again, even though a compromise was put forward, something that could be, you know, tangible to all Manitobans, something that would really and truly make a difference, that was shot down again.

There is no co-operation here. It's the NDP way or the highway. So when we try and bring stuff forward and it gets shut down, it gets very frustrating.

But we won't stop. I know we'll continue to work with government to do what we can to bring affordability measures to Manitobans, because regardless of ideology, it's us that want to push forward and make sure that affordability is offered to all Manitobans, not just a select few on the NDP side. We were all voted into this House to make things better for Manitoba, and it's incumbent on each and every one of us to do that.

So I would ask my colleagues on the opposite side to really ponder that. The reason that we were brought here, the reason that you were voted into this House, was to work for all Manitobans, and if we can offer real affordability to all Manitobans, my question to the opposite side is, why not? Why is this being turned down? Why are roadblocks being put there? Why is there no discussion on this when we could really save Manitobans thousands of dollars, not just pennies, thousands and thousands of dollars? And that makes a real difference within our economy, Honourable Speaker.

We've talked about it many times and I know the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone) really has looked after affordability issues and talked about this budget extensively even before BITSA was put forward, even before the budget came out. She was instrumental in constantly talking about changes that could happen within government to make better affordability, and you know what? Making sure that her constituents, but all Manitoba constituents, were taken care of under this budget. And, again, it just didn't come to fruition.

So that's, again, why we had to put forward our motion that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word that and substituting the following: this House declines to give second reading to Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill provides real and meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

And it's unfortunate that we had to bring this forward, Honourable Speaker, because Manitobans are suffering and Manitobans need to have some real savings. They're under real pressure right now. Costs are going up across the board in Manitoba and families need relief that really, really, truly matters.

The budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act, or BITSA, will not meet the test without significant changes to the basic personal allowance. Currently, BITSA, as it's in place, offers small changes when families need a great deal more of meaningful support. And that's why, Honourable Speaker, our caucus wants to make sure that there is affordability measures, true affordability measures, real affordability measures brought forward for Manitobans that we all serve.

We have created a serious proposal for this government. The question is: Why won't they act on it? Why won't they take the time to look at this and look at the balance that is there—rather than pennies, saving thousands and thousands of dollars.

And when we're—talk about affordability, we need to talk about these real numbers. As we said before, a \$30,000 personal—basic personal amount would put up to \$1,535 back into the pockets of every Manitoban. And you know what? That's important because that's true dollars and cents that are going into their pockets. That's areas that they'll be able to, again, put money into our economy and make sure that there is savings for them as well as money to spend into the economy.

But I want to talk a little bit in my last couple of minutes about the deficit that our province is facing and, again, why it's important to make sure we talk about affordability, because on the other side is the deficit. And this budget forecasts a deficit of \$498 million. What's sad about that is that we can't believe this NDP's deficit forecast.

The Finance Minister hasn't been able to hit his deficit target since the NDP were elected. And I said it before: He's been put into a very, very bad spot by his Premier (Mr. Kinew) and by his Cabinet members. And I feel quite bad for the spot that he's been put in. He's been off by a little—or, sorry, not by a little, but by a lot on every single quarter. And that basically affects, again, every single Manitoban: \$2.3 billion in debt servicing for this province. Millions upon millions of dollars per day going into servicing our debt.

The total NDP debt since 2023 sits at about \$4.4 billion, plus today's half a billion dollars that is projected. And what do Manitobans have to show for that?

So far, they have higher taxes, a stagnating economy, misdirection from a Premier offering pennies back to Manitobans, while the Finance Minister hikes school taxes and education property taxes, taking hundreds of dollars out of individuals' pockets and

offering pennies back. We're seeing higher gas prices, higher hydro rates and MPI rates. And, well, they fail to—and—sorry, and many of the other areas that are failing to get any benefit from these taxes.

We're getting taxed to death. And I would just hope that this NDP government would look at these amendments to look at real affordability for you, Manitobans.

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Could you please canvass the House for leave to not see the clock until all questions have been put at second reading of Bill 53, Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

The Speaker: Is there leave for the House to not see the clock until all questions have been put at second reading of Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026?

MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader): Yes, could we just have a five-minute recess to discuss?

The Speaker: Pardon me?

MLA Pankratz: Could we have a five-minute recess to discuss?

The Speaker: Is there leave for a five-minute recess to—

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

So, then, the question before the House is the leave request from the official opposition.

Is there leave? *[interjection]*

* (16:30)

So the request for a recess was denied, so we're still active here.

So is there leave as requested?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no. Leave has been denied. *[interjection]*

Order.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): This gives me an opportunity to thank the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) for the reasonable amendment on the motion for the Bill 53, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. *[interjection]*

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

So just for clarification purposes, the request was on the House biz. Otherwise, is that correct?

Okay, so the request from the Opposition House Leader was on House business, and if the honourable member for Turtle Mountain has a headset, could he please use it because we can't hear you.

Mr. Piwniuk: Yes, I do have a headset. I—just one second here. Can you hear me now?

The Speaker: We can hear you now, but I'd advise for future to get a headset.

Mr. Piwniuk: I do have a headset in my ears. My—when it comes to my Apple iPad, it doesn't have the abilities to plug one of those headsets that you guys offered us. So—sorry about that. Sorry for the inconvenience.

So, again, I just wanted to have the opportunity to thank my colleague from Red River North for bringing this reasonable amendment forward on the—the House declines to give second reading of Bill 53, the budget implementation and tax statute amendment act, 2026, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill provides real, meaningful affordability measures that Manitobans desperately need.

And like I said, Honourable Speaker, I know my colleague from Brandon West had indicated that a lot of people now in Brandon have just received their tax bill. And it's funny that this has the opportunity to come up today because we actually have a group chat—texting chat with my family, and my son just moved to Brandon, bought his first condo in September and he actually sent us a text saying—he complained how much his taxes went up. Here's a young person who has just—affordability is a big issue for him, for his age group, for Gen Zs that are trying to maneuver, try to have affordability in this society right now.

And the fact is, you know, between education costs that they acquired, some of his colleagues, cohorts, have got into a lot of student loans. They're trying to start their careers, too, just like he is. He was fortunate that he had opportunity that didn't have as much student loans. But now just to afford a house is even a challenge for him.

And especially, when it comes to back in the day, we—the education taxes that have just increased from this NDP government has gone up substantially, as much as 60–50 to 40 per cent in some of the school divisions that—especially around the city of Winnipeg, because Winnipeg would have received their tax notices back in—I believe I got it about a month ago—stating that there was a huge increase in the educational taxes.

And with our government, we basically try to—lot of provinces right now try to be competitive but—to compete with keeping our young people in this province; they can go to Alberta. And the fact is, just as the—you know, we—I remember being in opposition before, when I first came in, when we got into government, we had wanted to be more competitive with Saskatchewan.

One of the reasons why I basically decided to run is because Saskatchewan had so many—better advantages of having people, especially in the oil patch, when there was such a big boom going on, to go to Saskatchewan because their tax rate was low, a lot lower. Their tax—when it came to their—the tax brackets, they were much higher, so they didn't have to pay taxes on a certain level amount. Their personal exemptions were much higher.

And when we came into government, we tried to increase that as much as we could to have that competition with the other two prairie provinces because, again, we saw a lot of our young people, especially Gen Zs, starting to move and basically—millennials moving out to Alberta because they had such more affordability when it came to the tax treatment.

When a young person buys a vehicle in Alberta, they don't have to pay PST. In some cases, if you're looking at a 30—a \$50,000 vehicle, that's a substantial amount of money that they're saving just in PST. Again, their tax rate is—the tax rates and brackets are much higher. This government has not even considered raising the brackets.

That is so important, especially for this generation who's trying to make a go of it, like my son who got his tax bill saying that his increase is so much higher that he has to either put more overtime in or try and find ways to earn more money—if he can in his field as a financial planner—to be able to pay for this extra cost.

And, you know, my son is also running the marathon. He's running the marathon—a full marathon. He ran a half marathon for the Manitoba Marathon. Fortunately, he has to go to Bismarck, North Dakota,

to run because we're on a fishing trip for Father's Day, so he can't run at the—in Winnipeg.

But the fact is, he's not a person who is going to see a benefit of processed foods that are going to be tax exempt from his budget. The fact is, the food that he buys is already tax free. It has no PST. It's never had PST. And the fact is, for him to buy chips and drinks and Cokes—you know what? It's not going to—that's not going to be a savings to him, especially for a healthy person like himself. They are not going to benefit to see a lower on these type of products. Maybe he gets rotisserie chicken. Maybe that might be a benefit.

But, again, he would sooner, because he's living on his own, he's better to again, buy chicken breasts and stuff—they have a package of them—and make it more affordable and more efficient by having—buying in bulk sometimes and freezing it. So the thing is, the benefit that the—this NDP government is going to do on food is not going to help a young person, like a person who's in—you know, trying to make a go of it.

Again, in the city of Winnipeg, you know, right now, my daughter—and she's looking at—she's going to graduate in June from university with the Asper School of Business. And the fact is right now, it's—you know, she not only went to school, but she tried to work full-time just to—so that she can actually—affordability to maybe, at one day, to buy a condo or a house in the future with her partner. And I'm hoping that at some point they can afford it too.

But this budget, this BITSA budget that the government wants to put forward here, it does not address a lot of those issues of the—of a lot of young people out there who are looking to start out in—right now. And the fact is—you know, a lot of times, too, like I've—you know, we saw this government, too, saying that, oh, we're going to really take care of health care.

* (16:40)

And the fact is health care has gotten worse, wait times have gotten worse. I had a family member who had an—had to get emergency surgery, and the fact is that person had to go to a hospital and wait 16 hours just to be remitted for emergency surgery. That's appalling. That's appalling for one of the major hospitals in Winnipeg right now, 16 hours just waiting for emergency surgery in a waiting room.

And the fact is, Honourable Speaker, it's getting worse. It's getting worse in rural Manitoba. People are having to wait longer periods of time for bones and joints, like if it comes to joints and surgeries. They're

waiting longer and longer, longer times. I know when we were in government, we had to deal with COVID. But we actually, even with COVID, we brought those wait times way down with the challenges that we had to face.

And this NDP government—right now, my biggest concern—like, this is why we're putting this amendment in—seasonal—reasonable amendment—is that if a lot of young people cannot see the benefit of staying here in Manitoba. Saskatchewan and Alberta, which have—are have provinces, who do have the abilities to pay higher wages and giving better tax treatment to young people, especially in the health-care fields, that is really concerning right now.

Because the fact is a lot of these young people, if they can't see any kind of movement of affordability in this province, they're going out west where there's opportunity. And the fact is right now—you know, I have a very good friend who's in the employment service industry right now and he provides a lot of employees, seasonal employees. You know, they come to him and they get some opportunities to get some training in different fields. He provides major companies with extra seasonal employees right now. And their company is almost like the canary in the coal mine. And they're seeing right now that a lot of movement, a lot of those extra jobs, a lot of those extra seasonal jobs and increases in production are not seeing what they see now, especially with this NDP government coming into power.

And when it came to saying right now that when it comes to taxes and when it comes to people moving to other provinces, like, he's saying right now that the production, it—increases are dwindling right now and a lot of companies are not asking for that extra employment. Because it was like with the budget, the very first budget that this NDP government put out forward here was that their slogan of their first budget, join a union, become part of the middle class. And the fact is that scares a lot of investors, a lot of business operators who want to expand in this province, but especially with the heavy construction guys, too, about 70 per cent to 90 per cent of construction companies do not have unionized staff. And now for them to get contracts out there, they have to be unionized.

And the scary thing is that just increases the amount of tendering, the amount of cost of all these projects. I was a minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the fact is, when we put out tenders out there, we wanted to have a very competitive opportunity for companies to invest in this company.

So the fact is—this is why I would say that we need to really look at this. This is why we're putting this reasonable amendment forward here, because the fact is that, you know, this is really going to cause costs to accelerate, especially in the private sectors, the construction sectors of this province.

And the fact is the inflation. This province now has one of the highest inflation rates now of all the provinces across Canada and that is the really concerning—that is going to really affect, especially young people, young people of my children's generation, the generations of millennials, who are—again, are feeling the pinch right now.

And so when they buy a house or buy a condo, like my son, and they get their tax bill and they have a budget they have to work with, and having this bigger increase now, and as much as the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) has indicated, oh, we're going to give another \$100 tax credit to house—homeowners, well, mind you, we would—actually reducing it by 50 per cent of any—on the educational—and they're making a big difference.

And I have—I know a lot of landlords who have complexes, apartments out there, and, again, they actually were able to keep rent low because the fact is, they were getting a benefit of having reduced 50 per cent, eventually going up to 75 per cent, for when it comes to education taxes on property. And now that has been taken away. Those landlords—those investors who build our apartments out there are not going to get that now. But if they are going to be building these apartments, at the beginning, they're going to be passing that cost on to the consumer or the tenants and while those tenants are young people.

So they're going to be slapped with a higher rent, just how it shows in the economy—supply and demand. But when your cost goes up, you got to pass it onto the consumer.

And I don't know if the NDP government here, or any—the Minister of Finance has any kind of economic background to know the consequences of when you provide tax system policies, it does go back—there's consequences. There's consequences for competition, for people to have affordability, to get some relief in this day and age, especially when oil prices and gas prices are so much higher right now—that's going to equate to energy—other energy costs, like when it comes to natural gas. That is going to be impacted, too, by the young people who are buying homes right now, and that is really concerning to me.

And then, when it comes to health care, you know, right now, my wife just retired from management in health care, and the fact was, she said, you know what? And if she talked to anybody—other managers in health care, they always say that it's getting worse because the fact is, as much as there's net-new—they say that there's increased in workers—a lot of cases are that I don't think they take into account how many retirees there are. Right now, my wife, herself, is now a Generation X, first of Generation X start—to start to retire. All the baby boomers are about to retire. One time, baby boomers were the suppliers of health care, and now they're going to be consumers of health care.

And I—we had—what I had—when I was actually at my daughter's graduation dinner for commerce, I met with one of the doctors there, and he indicated to me that, yes, they say there's net-new doctors and stuff like that, but does not realize that doctors, back in the past, sometimes worked as many as 80 hours a week. And now, this whole new group of doctors now—are now saying that—and even, I was talking to one of the CEOs of one of the RHAs in my constituency, and they told me that now with the agreement with the doctors, they don't have to work 40—even 40 hours a week; they can work 30 hours a week and get paid very well.

And the fact is, a lot of them are not—they want—that generation now of doctors want a work-life balance, and they only want to put—a lot of them are very hard coming into rural Manitoba because as soon as they come to a town like Virden or Melita or Boissevain, Killarney, it's very hard to attract those doctors because now they want that work-life balance.

But when they come to small towns like that, they do have to have—have to put more hours in. They have to put more overtime in. They have to cover 24—if it's an ER, that's 24-hour service, they want to be in a larger centre so that they can put as much as the time as they want to put in. And that is the difference now: No matter how many more doctors you say you may have, they may not be working the hours that once doctors used to work.

* (16:50)

And so the fact is health care has been really impacted of the generation that's coming up here, the generation that has choices to move very quickly. And when it comes to competition, and when it comes to tax policies of other jurisdictions, including Ontario, there's a big savings when a person does move to one of those jurisdictions.

And if we're not competitive, especially in Manitoba, then again, with our crime rates and stuff like that—and if we're not addressing those crime rates, even in rural Manitoba, it's gone up as much. We saw here during question period, a lot of my colleagues are seeing increases in crime. And a lot of that money is not being invested. And if it is being invested, it's not being effective. And the fact is a lot of those people could have transfers to other jurisdictions, other provinces where there's more affordability.

And so that's—Honourable deputy Speaker, these are some of the—this is why I believe that we're not happy with the BITSA that they put forward here. That is why we—my colleague from Red River North has put the reasonable amendment here, because the fact is it doesn't go—this BITSA account, which is one of the smallest BITSA bills that went forward in the—since the NDP took power, it doesn't go far enough. It doesn't go far enough, and I believe that, you know, the tax bracket should go up by inflation or—of competition with other provinces near us.

I live, you know, 30 kilometres from Saskatchewan border. And there is definitely impacts of how—the last time we had a Selinger government—that made it very disadvantaged to actually see the population. Moosomin grew—again, I probably said this a number of times—it—they grew by 8 per cent during the oil boom. And Virden barely grew by 1.6 per cent.

And that was very disturbing because the fact is we do have a beautiful province. We have a probably more attractive, more recreational in our—in this side of the border than Saskatchewan. But the fact is we have the ski hill in Asessippi and Russell. These are very attractive locations to live. But a lot of people choose to move into Langenburg, move to Churchbridge, Yorkton. We have a Esterhazy mine not very far from where a lot of people from Russell, a lot of my relatives have moved.

My brother works in Russell at the Esterhazy mine. But a lot of this young, like—my—and I've got two nieces and now they live in—one actually had found—now living in Russell, but the other one lives in Saskatchewan because of the advantage of the tax rates for young people, the ability to buy a home, to have a better tax treatment when it comes to income tax.

And what we put forward here, to have personal exemptions go up to \$30,000, was very, very, very advantageous to a lot of our young people. And you know what? We could have even had a cap on a certain income.

But I believe that this young generation who is working out there—really hard out there, who are very frustrated. And now the statistics show that more and more of young people are leaving with their parents and they're not moving out of their homes. And now, I believe the average is over 30 years of age now that young people are living at home still. And that's concerning to me because the fact is a lot of them are not starting families.

And my son said, I can't imagine—and we just had some visitors come to our place on Sunday. And the conversation we had is: I don't know how I would do it if I was—if we—if I was married and had a family. Because the fact is there's a lot of costs of raising a family. They—as a financial planner back in the day—and I'm sure it's now even higher, it costs over \$200,000 to raise a child from birth to the time that they're self-sufficient like my daughter, who will be graduating from university, and now having a full-time job that she can go to. That costs over \$250,000, they're saying right now.

How does a young person in this day and age—when their tax, even their property taxes, have increased so much and—wanting to start a family? And, you know—and that is something that we're hearing on TV and on talk shows right now is, there's—I forget who this individual is—he's actually on reels now on Facebook saying that the—you know, every major talk show is having him on saying that more and more people, young men, are staying at home now and not even dating anymore.

Because now—like restaurants, for instance—we should have been, like—if you guys are going to—if this government is going to reduce PST—like, other jurisdictions are actually increasing PST on chips and chocolate bars and junk food, and this government is actually reducing it so that our health-care costs are going to go up because of the poor diets that people are going to have now.

I said, you know, the—one of my colleagues who just said it. It should have been focused on reducing the PST with—at restaurants, because there was a point where the—during the federal government was reducing the GST on restaurants, and there was an uptick on restaurant attendance.

And the fact is, don't forget, a lot of the young people—well, I know some people who have careers, but they still go out there working in the service industry at restaurants just to make a—have a second job to earn better tips to help pay for the extra cost of

living nowadays. Well, that could have been an advantage of actually reducing the PST on restaurants.

And that would also stimulate the economy because people would go out more. People would be earning more—the restaurant owners would be earning more. They would be able to hire—keep giving more hours to young people if they want, especially if it's their second job, or even for people who want to just make a living. You know, this gives an opportunity for them to actually have—see more money in their pockets when it comes to additional hours, additional—you know, maybe now people will give that into tips instead of having to pay the PST to the—to this government.

So this is where I would feel that, again, where other jurisdictions are taxing junk food, this government is reducing junk food. And the fact is—a cost on junk food.

And I say, Honourable Speaker, again, I want to still, again, thank my other colleague who—member—the critic for Finance, the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone), who brought the amendment forward before about having to—you know, being the critic, understanding that affordability and bringing up the \$30,000 personal exemption. That would've went a long ways. That would have went a long ways for affordability.

Don't forget: when it comes to members, when it comes to people spending, the economy is run by consumer spending; 65 per cent of the economy is run by consumer spending. For more people to have more money in their pockets, it would really stimulate the economy. It would grow the economy. And I remember when we were in government—you know, it's not so much if—how we—if we can afford all these services that people come to expect, but it's how do we grow—how do we pay for these services? And it was growing the economy.

We actually had an economic committee of Cabinet. I was part of that with the—as being the minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. That really drove the economy by investing in infrastructure.

And the fact is we were being showcased and we were actually putting out there: come and do business in Manitoba; we have very competitive tax treatments here. We were starting to get more competitive than Saskatchewan. We were on our way of really attracting—especially with our green energy, you have the tax policies that we've created. We were actually seeing—like actually a lot of companies were looking at Manitoba to locate or to expand.

And when that last budget, that first budget that the NDP put out there—join a union, become part of the middle class—a lot of that investment money and all that interest had basically went away. And that was unfortunate. I wish we still would have had another minimum of four more years in government. We would have put this economy in the direction and become a have province.

And right now, there's a lot of lip service right now with this government, with this Premier (Mr. Kinew). But the fact is, he's still on campaign mode. He's not running this province. He is not growing this economy. There's—like, there's no substance to what he has to say all the time. It's always talking about—

trying to see what he—and I remember my mother-in-law used to always have a good saying: the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Yes, it's always to have good intentions, but if you're not going to create the economy to grow, to give people hope in this province—

The Speaker: Order, please.

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

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 25, 2026

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