



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday evening, December 4, 2024

Day 78

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

First Session

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United Conservative: 49

New Democrat: 37

Vacant: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be seated.
The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to move to one-minute bells for the remainder of the evening sitting, including the first bell of Committee of the Whole.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 35 All-season Resorts Act

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader, the Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this evening and move third reading of Bill 35, the All-season Resorts Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the last time I stood up to speak on this bill was introducing it in second reading, and I shared a personal story about my time when I grew up in Ontario, about a trip I took to New York City. That was apparently a problem for the members opposite. They couldn't fathom that a member of this Chamber had been to another jurisdiction.

From that time I learned how sport tourism works. That was really fantastic because it was something like that that helps us to attract those kinds of events right here into Alberta. It was something that I saw just this past week in Lethbridge, where we welcomed four division 1 basketball teams to Lethbridge to play six games over the course of three nights. It's a great product, Mr. Speaker, something we're able to do right here.

Again, I was amazed that we somehow managed to politicize a story about a trip that I took as a 15-year-old. It was almost reminiscent of the days when the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona was the leader, a time I try to forget, when they were swinging at every pitch, but I digress.

I'll tell you what, it's a great time in tourism. I'll tell you another story. Growing up in Ontario, my first trip to Alberta to visit my cousins, I went skiing at Castle Mountain. Now, Mr. Speaker, I thought I had it great growing up in Ontario, skiing in some of the places in Quebec like Mont Tremblant and Saint-Sauveur, but it wasn't until I came to Alberta that I saw what real mountains look like. I'll tell you that that was a life-changing experience for me, and it was that experience and the same kind of experience that visitors to Alberta for their first time get to have, and we want to . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. the Government House Leader has the call.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it.

I was just trying to explain how amazing Alberta's Rocky Mountains are and how much of a privilege it is for me as the minister to help promote those Rockies to visitors from around Alberta, around Canada, and around the rest of the world.

It's that plan for increasing visitation that I believe will help us chart our path towards reaching \$25 billion of visitor spending by 2035. This legislation represents an important part of our government's commitment to reach that goal, and it shows the rest of the world that Alberta is open for business.

Now, Mr. Speaker, everyone in this Chamber can agree, I hope, that Alberta boasts some of the world's most iconic attractions, yet we lack sufficient year-round opportunities for people to stay and to play. The resorts we do have are located primarily within national parks, where we're not able to do anything when it comes to growth. I guess that's a fact that was actually lost on the members opposite, particularly the leader of the NDP, Naheed Nenshi, who thought for some reason that this bill would give us license to develop within the national parks. Like the hon. Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services, we might have to have a bit of a re-education of the members opposite on jurisdictional lines. Again I have strayed from my topic of conversation.

The resorts act is a made-in-Alberta solution to this problem, and it's modelled off the very successful model in British Columbia, which was put in place over two decades ago, when they recognized the importance of visitation. The act will create jobs, diversify the province's economy, and provide more opportunities for Albertans to explore their own backyards, all the while continuing to position Alberta as the best place in the world to live, to play, and to visit. I've heard members opposite talk about how this will create accommodations only for the rich. Au contraire, Mr. Speaker. Au contraire. I tell you that this will allow us to develop more product for visitors of all economic status because it's for us to explore our own backyards, and this will allow us to do that.

Now I'd like to take a moment to respond to some of the other comments that were raised during this debate on this important legislation. During the debate the members opposite asked what was being done to ensure Alberta has the workforce that we need to support a growing tourism sector. Once again, Mr. Speaker, had the NDP been paying attention, they'd know that we're already taking decisive steps and action to ensure that we have the workforce needed to help Alberta's tourism economy grow.

In February we built people and careers into our provincial tourism strategy as a key pillar because we recognize the value of building long-term career paths for Albertans in this important sector. Last spring, indeed, we launched the new tourism and hospitality immigration stream with my hon. colleague the minister of immigration, a great man, Mr. Speaker, probably one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. With that, it will help those that are coming to our province to work in these industries to gain a streamlined pathway to permanent residency.

We're continuing to work with industry and postsecondaries to spread the message that the tourism industry is a full, rewarding careers place to work, a message that is resonating with Albertans as well as we help to drive more people out of postsecondaries into careers, not just jobs but careers, in the tourism sector. We have some great tourism and hospitality programs in Alberta's postsecondary institutions, Mr. Speaker, and I recently had the opportunity to meet with a number of smart, eager tourism and hospitality students from NAIT and Grant MacEwan who are excited to build careers in this important sector.

The NDP said that Alberta needs to become a destination for international travellers. Mr. Speaker, we're already doing that. We're already doing it. Imagine that. In 2023 we saw record visitation from international travellers, injecting an all-time high of nearly \$3 billion. That's billion with a "b," reminiscent of the kind of "b"s we'd see in the members opposite's deficits they'd run, several billion dollars. But this is a positive billion; \$3 billion of

international visitation expenditures from international visitors, and we're working diligently to see that number keep increasing.

We know that more than 85 per cent of international travellers visit Alberta by air, Mr. Speaker, so we're working with our airline partners to develop new direct routes to our province and increase seat capacity. Through Travel Alberta we've secured more than 300,000 direct airline seats from key transborder markets in the last year alone. Just last month I was at the Edmonton International Airport to celebrate WestJet's summer 2025 schedule that included new direct routes to Salt Lake City and Chicago with key connector destinations in America. I was proud to be joined by my colleague the Member for Leduc-Beaumont. Also, I was joined by the opposition member – I would love to give credit where credit is due – the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, and it was a pleasure to have her there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP stood in this House erroneously and claimed that the jocks of the government would make up the new regulator because it's the house of the Ministry of Tourism and Sport. Wrong again. I'm not sure why they'd use the word "jocks." Maybe I'm sensing a nerve of jealousy. I don't know. Who am I to say? What I can say is that, if passed, recruitment will begin immediately to hire a team of land management and environmental experts to staff a new sole life cycle regulator within the Ministry of Tourism and Sport. These experts won't be working in isolation; they'll continue to collaborate with their colleagues in the Ministry of Forestry and Parks and Environment and Protected Areas to ensure all the environmental regulations, Indigenous engagement, and consultation requirements are met.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again because there seems to be some confusion from the members opposite. The All-season Resorts Act does not replace existing standards for the development of Crown lands in Alberta. No existing environmental or Indigenous engagement standards will be replaced. The claims being made that this legislation will change these standards, Mr. Speaker, are unequivocally false: false, erroneous, erroneous on all accounts.

7:40

Member Ceci: Au contraire.

Mr. Schow: I hear the members opposite chatting about it. I wouldn't say they're heckling because I think that would be a false claim, but I would say that I'm excited to hear their response to this speech. I know they're waiting anxiously for an opportunity to chat about it, and you'll get that opportunity very shortly.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to compromise any environmental standards.

Now, the NDP has said that we'll be increasing red tape, and the NDP clearly wants us to do that. To be fair, Mr. Speaker, it's their specialty. They love red tape. Instead, we're including the pre-existing standards and regulations in the bill's schedule. This approach guarantees that every standard and requirement would remain as is, unaltered. There is no logical reason to pass superfluous amendments to reiterate what is already included in the bill.

During debate members of the opposition, including the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, rose to muse on the potential economic impacts of this bill. Let me be clear. This legislation will welcome billions of dollars of private investment into our province.

Mr. Nicolaides: We can use that.

Mr. Schow: Billions with a "b."

Mr. Nicolaides: Wow.

Mr. Schow: That's right.

Mr. Nicolaides: So excited.

Mr. Schow: I hear the hon. Minister of Education echoing this claim, and he's as excited about it as I am, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite don't seem to understand how great of an industry tourism really is, but I'm here to educate. I'm here to help. I'm here at your service. The industry is a vibrant one, Mr. Speaker. Establishing a clear, straightforward resort development approval process will increase investor confidence and stop seeing hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of projects pick up their bags and go to other provinces. To quote Darren Reeder, the president and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta, there are resorts already in existence in Alberta that are looking to extend operations to a year-round basis, resorts that are on land zoned for mixed use and with more interested investors but who have been stalled for more than 10 years in this mess of the current approval process that is disjointed and confusing and drives investment away. This legislation will help them to build these resorts and future resorts, help them get up and running towards operating to all-season, four-season resorts.

Mr. Speaker, our land is vital to our future and our beautiful landscapes that make us the envy of the rest of the world and what people from across the globe come to Alberta to see. Sustainable development is how we ensure that generations of Albertans and visitors alike can enjoy this beautiful province now and well into the future. The All-season Resorts Act is how we ensure that those who share our government's vision for sustainable tourism development can create unparalleled experiences right in our own backyard.

With that said, I urge all members of this Assembly to support Bill 35, the All-season Resorts Act, Mr. Speaker. With that, I move third reading. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport has moved third reading of Bill 35, the All-season Resorts Act. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen. Is he hoping to join in the debate?

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill 35, the All-season Resorts Act. I must say that we all on this side of the House also share the minister's real enthusiasm for developments and resorts that bring billions of dollars into the province. Of course, the proviso is, as the minister seems to share, that it is done properly, that it's done with the protection of the environment in mind and ensures that there are guardrails and rules and regulations that are respected and enforceable so that the major attraction to those visitors who are bringing all those billions of dollars into our province is maintained and is pristine. What in the world do people come here for when they come to a resort, an all-season resort, which primarily in Alberta right now are in our mountain parks? We think of Banff, Jasper, Lake Louise, Marmot Basin, Waterton Lakes, and so forth. They're pristine, natural areas, primarily within our national parks.

Of course, this contemplates the development of all-season resorts within provincial lands. We support the concept of developing all-season resorts, but indeed we do have serious concerns about the willingness of this government, of the UCP government, to put in place laws and regulations which will make sure that those investors, those multibillion-dollar investors in many cases, are sticking to the rules when it comes to environmental protection. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we do not have and Albertans do not have a lot of trust or faith in this government's track record or future ability to contain the investments that are

proposed in major projects to make sure that they comply with environmental laws and regulations.

The minister swears on a stack of Bibles that he will not do anything in this bill, under this legislation, that would derogate from the requirement to follow proper environmental assessments and that all guardrails will be up. But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at other things in this province, I think of tailings ponds, for example, which of course . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Hon. members, I know that you all had a wonderful break, where you had the opportunity to use lots of words with members of the public and others. If you'd like to continue those sorts of private conversations, I encourage you to do that in the lounges, the south members' lounge or the many spaces that are available to you, but I think out of respect to the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung . . .

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Respecting your elders is something that Albertans hold in dear regard, and I think that as one of the elder statesmen in this Legislature, I appreciate your intervention.

Now, one thing I also appreciate, of course, is the use of our existing all-season resorts or winter resorts at the very least. The hon. minister mentioned that he enjoyed his time when he first came to Alberta after having visited parks and recreational areas in Quebec and Ontario, where he originally resided. Well, I too enjoyed those parks. In 1971, before the minister was even a twinkle in the eye of his parents, I enjoyed Jasper national park's Marmot Basin on a grade 9 ski trip. I actually got to visit the hospital there as well. We actually had an available hospital in Jasper. Unfortunately, on the first run, or sort of the last run, going to the bus on a grade 9 ski trip and in minus 25 degree weather, with my toes frozen inside lace-up boots and bear-trap bindings, I first discovered moguls. I went flying over one of them and realized that I wasn't going to make it through without injury. Of course, I snapped my leg just above the boot top and got a ride down with the ski patrol. They were most helpful, but I did get a trip in the back of the bus to the hospital in Jasper, where they set my leg. Unfortunately, it had to be reset again when I came back to Edmonton 10 days later. That's another story, Mr. Speaker.

But in any case, I visited those parks. That is to say, we love the parks. We realize the benefit that they bring to the province, but indeed they have to be developed very, very carefully. Those dollars that are brought in by the investors are not dollars that come without rules.

We've seen this minister and his government look at doing things which are contrary to anything environmentally sound. We've got one of the ministers, the minister for parks I think it is, who, to study wolverines, wants to trap them and kill them. That's one thing. He wants to now shoot cougars in provincial lands. He wants to basically take a shot at most wild animals that move because it satisfies his need to get the hunters in the province and those who might come to hunt, bringing dollars into the province. But, indeed, to shoot or trap all the animals in our natural areas kind of defeats the purpose.

I mean, I think of California, Mr. Speaker, where the only bear left in a park or anywhere in California is the one on their flag. That's maybe what the minister, this particular minister, wants to happen. If indeed that kind of thing happens, the subjugation of our wildlife and our natural areas to degradation will limit in a very, very strong way the attractiveness of anybody willing to build a resort, all season or not, in this province.

So the basic and fundamental reason that I'm standing up tonight is to make sure that the minister and Albertans know that we in the

NDP Official Opposition caucus, the government in waiting in this province, really stand behind development in our natural areas but very specifically guided development targeted with the long-term sustainability of the lands involved. We're not looking at poisoning our rivers with selenium. We're not looking at having mountainsides blown apart by coal mines. We're not looking at unsustainable development.

7:50

I think of things like the Abbott Pass hut, which was developed in 1922 by the Alpine Club of Canada and which recently, unfortunately, started sliding down the mountain and is no longer in use. I climbed up to that hut, Mr. Speaker, and believe it or not, I made it up with this tubby little body, and it took me six hours. It was all of a six-hour climb. I stayed overnight there. That Abbott Pass hut was commissioned by the Banff Springs hotel in an effort to bring over mountain climbers in 1922 to enjoy our wilderness areas and bring their tourism dollars with them. That's the kind of sustainable development I'm talking about, where for decades and decades and decades that existed, brought tourists in, yet it stayed a pristine environment.

No matter what the scale of the development is, Mr. Speaker, or how many billions of dollars there are, that fundamental philosophy has to be the underlying crucible of our development policy here in Alberta. Anything that is done has to be making sure that we maintain the pristine natural environment that is drawing people to come here in the first place. Without that, you don't have the attraction, and that's basically throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

No matter how the minister enjoyed our mountain parks and our resorts when he was a younger person and was thrilled and attracted to come to move the province, that actually needs to be maintained with rules and regulations enshrined in legislation that make sure that people who want to develop and bring investment into pristine natural areas like the Three Sisters resort in Canmore, which is developing over top of mine shafts in Canmore, ultimately ending up getting approved over the resistance of the local Canmore town council – unfortunately, it was supported by a legal ruling and is now apparently going ahead. But those types of abrogations of responsibility should be denied by the legislation we put in place to protect our pristine areas so we have land able to attract developers and people who want to invest to put in this type of tourist-attracting all-season resort.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: I stand before you today to address a matter of profound significance, not only to the Indigenous peoples of our province but to the very principles of justice and equity that we all hold dear as Albertans, the denial of the amendment to Bill 35, which simply seeks to clarify the rights of Indigenous peoples in this province when it comes to this bill and the future development of the all-seasons resort on Crown land in this province.

The amendment states:

Nothing in this section is to be construed as in any way derogating from or adding to the rights of aboriginal peoples recognized and affirmed under Part 2 of the Constitution Act, 1982, or the rights of Indians under the Transfer Agreement as defined in the Public Lands Act.

If this bill, as the minister claims, will uphold Indigenous consultation, then explicitly state so in the bill itself. Passing the amendment should have been done but, sadly, was not.

The denial of this amendment is deeply concerning and a clear disrespect of treaty and Indigenous rights on Crown land. This is a severely troubling development as it permits all-season resorts to be built without the meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities, the chiefs of Confederacy of Treaty Six, the chiefs of Treaty 7 and Treaty 8. This blatant denial of rights recognition is a clear moment that calls upon each of us to reflect upon our commitment to reconciliation, our commitment to the 94 calls to action, specifically under section 45(iii) of the royal proclamation and covenant of reconciliation:

Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.

Furthermore,

Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation, including the recognition and integration of Indigenous laws and legal traditions in [negotiating and implementing] processes involving Treaties, land claims, and other constructive agreements.

Bill 35 is about development on Crown lands, and it negates to uphold these very principles upheld and outlined by the TRC calls to action.

It is also time to reflect about how this government upholds the rule of law, specifically the constitutionally protected rights of section 35. Ultimately, one must question this government's commitment to good relations with the Indigenous peoples of this province, whose lands we share and to whom we owe a historical debt of honesty and respect. Treaty rights are not just words on paper. They are solemn, legally binding agreements underpinned by historical promises of respect, recognition, and a shared stewardship of these lands. Respecting these treaties means more than an acknowledgement on a Monday morning. Respecting treaty is about acknowledging the deep, enduring connections Indigenous communities have to the land. The connections are cultural, spiritual, and foundational to our identities.

The treaty is a sacred covenant. Every year we go to the treaty gathering, where we lift the pipe, the same pipe that my great-grandfather smoked at the signing of Treaty 6. When we lift that pipe, we are reminded that treaty is an agreement between the Crown, us, and through God the Creator it is a sacred covenant. We are reminded that we have a responsibility and an obligation to co-exist in peace and friendship as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. Evidently, we have a clear misunderstanding of what it means to be treaty partners.

The impact of denying consultation is profound. It marginalizes Indigenous voices. It undermines rights, paving the way for development that could threaten sacred lands, disrupt biodiversity, ecosystems, migration patterns for many species, specifically the calving sites of caribou. I would like to remind this government that the woodland caribou are a protected species in our province.

Crown lands are sites of medicines, animals, rivers, lakes, all of which we share life with. They have sustained us as Indigenous peoples for generations and are where we continue to access and practise our inherent rights as Indigenous peoples. Consultation is not simply a procedural step. It is the embodiment of our commitment to mutual respect and understanding. It ensures that all stakeholders, particularly those with deep-seated connections to the land, have a say in the decisions that will have impacts for future generations. I have been on record warning this government that the ramifications of this decision to deny the amendment will be far-reaching and detrimental to the relationship with Indigenous peoples in this province.

This government has shamefully denied the values that make our province strong, the values of inclusivity, the values of respect, and

the values of shared prosperity. It is most unfortunate and a tremendous step backwards in the work of reconciliation.

I would suggest to this government that reparations could start with the passing of Bill 209, Reconciliation Implementation Act, brought to this House by the Member for Edmonton-West Henday. It is in all our best interests to foster dialogue and collaboration. By engaging Indigenous communities as partners, we create a foundation for projects that empower and benefit all Albertans while respecting treaty and Indigenous rights.

Hay-hay.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Kasawski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for her powerful words that she just shared and her concerns for Bill 35. I've been thinking about this bill and resorts. I'm a big fan of *Yellowstone*, and that whole narrative is people of Montana wanting to block resorts coming into Montana. I find it fascinating and interesting that this party is bringing forward this resort bill. Just to quote John Dutton, the star, if it is progress you want, then don't vote for the UPC. We are bashing our heads against the UPC, wishing for progress, and we're just getting pushed back on so many fronts culturally in our society.

Then we're led by this minister to believe that progress will be made on tourism, progress that can be good for Albertans. It is incredible to have a group like this come forward with this new mission of progress when on so much of what we've been debating in this House has been a lack of progress by this government and moving in the opposite direction. So I hope the minister will lift his head from his phone and listen and maybe even take an intervention or two here.

8:00

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities we were learning about how important accessibility is in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have an aging province; accessibility is more important than ever. We cannot be building resorts simply for the able-bodied people, so I'm wondering from the minister if he has thought about how to make these the most accessible resorts in the world.

No intervention yet, but I welcome it, Minister.

Minister, I also have questions on behalf of the municipalities who will have to provide services to these resorts, who won't have a say on if these resorts are brought into their area. Who is going to be providing the fire service? Who is going to be providing the police services? Who is going to then be providing all the water and waste services for these resorts that are being brought in? It will fall to the municipalities.

We've seen with this government too many times that when the municipalities say, "We need more resources to provide those services," this government just turns around and says: figure it out; tough on you. So, Minister, I am wondering how you are going to enable municipalities to provide services for these world-class, accessible resorts that you're going to be bringing into Alberta.

Back to *Yellowstone*, Mr. Speaker, where the biggest concern is that there is going to be massive economic leakage in that state from the resorts that are being brought in by the large hedge funds to build these impressive places that will become the playgrounds of the rich from out of state. Great model of tourism, but what does it do for the local housing pricing, and what does it do for the local workers? What I'm wondering from this minister is what he's going to be doing here to make sure that it's Alberta jobs and it's Alberta entrepreneurs that are going to be able to benefit from these resorts. Or will it just be temporary foreign workers that are coming in to service the resorts so that people can come in and enjoy our

environment and our wilderness and no longer Albertans can enjoy it?

Mr. Speaker, we have great concerns. Members on this side have brought forward really important concerns, especially the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, and I'd like to have some responses from the minister on those questions that I've asked.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't let this bill pass without one more opportunity to just really hammer some things home. As the MLA for Banff-Kananaskis I live tourism every single day that I'm at home, and I witness and am part of a community that is what it is because of a thriving tourism sector. I'm appreciative of that, and I've been involved in all-season resort conversations and land-use planning conversations and tourism management conversations from a time well before I was an MLA because that is where I live and those are the constituents that I represent.

So I want to start by saying that I know that the tourism industry has been asking for all-season resort legislation for a very long time. I was at first excited that we were going to be debating all-season resort legislation in this House because it is something the sector has been requesting, but when I read the bill and got into the details of it, I became gravely concerned. My colleagues, many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle, have raised those concerns; I don't need to repeat them all, Mr. Speaker. But what I will offer is 3,402: that is the number of e-mails that I have received opposing the All-season Resorts Act. I know that the minister has also received those e-mails because he and I are CCed on them. So it is not just myself and my colleagues that stand here today raising these concerns; it is 3,402 Albertans. Oh, no, wait; 3,403. E-mails continue to come in.

We have gone over those concerns. The minister can stand here and say that the highest environmental standards will be applied, the Land Stewardship Act will be applied, the regional plans will be applied, but the legislation creates an opportunity for the office of the minister to not require those things. So if the legislation creates a hole, that hole will be used. If there's anything I've learned, Mr. Speaker, about large development companies when they want to build something on Crown land, they look for those holes in legislation, and they pursue them.

The minister need only look to Three Sisters Mountain Village for what happens when the province thrusts an all-season resort on a community that is unwilling. TSMV is a development that is over 30 years old, and the reason why it hasn't been built is because the community of Canmore never wanted it.

So we really do need to emphasize that legislation like this needs to be prescriptive so that developments don't get caught up in community controversy, battles between municipalities and developers, battles between community members and developers. The certainty and the prescriptiveness of legislation reduces that risk, and this act does not do that. It is unfortunate that I have to stand here and oppose this bill because I was really looking forward to having all-season resorts legislation in this province.

This act creates space for mistakes, Mr. Speaker, and when it comes to management of our Crown lands and the cumulative effects on the eastern slopes, we cannot afford to take those risks. And 3,403 Albertans agree with me. For me, that's a pretty significant number of e-mails to have received in less than a one-week time period.

I stand here today as the MLA for Banff-Kananaskis, and I recognize that not everybody in my riding voted for me but that it is my responsibility in this House to represent everyone who lives in my riding. It is my responsibility, regardless of if they voted for me or if they can vote, that I am their MLA, so when the minister didn't want to or anybody on that side of the House, not just the minister, did not want to stand and debate our amendments last night with us, they were essentially ignoring these 3,403 people that have e-mailed me.

Every single one of our amendments came from the concerns that we had from stakeholders and residents of Alberta, and every single one of those amendments was summarily dismissed without even so much as a conversation. I thought we were here to debate legislation, Mr. Speaker. That usually involves going back and forth. It also usually involves a willingness to listen and compromise, something which I do not see exhibited by this party on the other side of the aisle.

When I go home, the one thing I hear from my constituents regardless of how they voted was that they sure wish we could work together better. And I say: I wish we could, too. Bringing forward amendments is one of those pieces. Summarily dismissing amendments without even conversation sends a strong message to Albertans that while we are trying to collaborate, some other people are not.

I also just want to say that amendments make these pieces of legislation better. That's the whole purpose of them, Mr. Speaker. The whole point is to say, "This piece of legislation is okay. It could be a lot better. It could serve the people better. Here are some ideas on how we can do that," but we don't talk about that in this House. We don't talk about how to make it better, and that's very disappointing for me.

So I do stand and oppose this bill, much to my own dismay, because it doesn't do what it says it's going to do. It doesn't even provide certainty for the industry, because what the industry wants is certainty and predictability, and what this bill does is create a whole lot of exemptions that become up to the minister and the minister's office, and there is no certainty in the minister's office, because the minister is not the minister forever. The Ministry of Tourism and Sport may not even exist the next time there's a cabinet shuffle. It could be another ministry. When we don't have prescriptiveness in legislation, we actually remove certainty and predictability from the law, and that is not what investors like.

8:10

I'm disappointed in this act, and I know that it will pass because that's what happens because we don't work together. I do think that what will result is that some people of Alberta will be very frustrated, and we will see protests against developments when they come forward because there's a big portion of the population that doesn't support this bill right now. That's a shame, Mr. Speaker, because that will truly influence investment and the success of all-season resorts.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call on the minister to close debate.

Mr. Schow: Sure, Mr. Speaker. How long do I have for closing debate again?

The Speaker: Fifteen minutes if you would like it.

Mr. Schow: I only need one.

Mr. Speaker, it will be a cold day in you-know-where before I take investment advice from the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you right now that it is also an interesting day when members opposite are using John Dutton as a moral compass. This is the same person, a fictitious person I might add, who is involved in diverting rivers, who is involved in desecrating Indigenous burial sites and, of course, complicit in multiple murders. So if the NDP are looking to John Dutton, a fictitious character, for moral guidance, I would advise them to use a lot of caution.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked about industry uncertainty. Industry is asking for this. The CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta, Darren Reeder, stood at a podium and said that he's seen hundreds of millions of dollars walk away from the table because our process for resort development – a very similar process to what B.C. has done for decades: it works, Mr. Speaker. It works. It's made in Alberta.

Now, the member talked about 3,403 e-mails, I believe it was. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that after we look at the master plans of some of these resorts that are being proposed to us, and should they comply with all the environmental and Indigenous consultations that are laid out, that are already there, we'll see that and more on a good day at the ski hill in one day. You can count on thousands of people coming to Alberta. I appreciate the feedback from the e-mails the member opposite is getting. It's important feedback, but I can also tell you that we are taking those things into consideration and it is included in this bill.

I only have 15 minutes, which isn't a lot of time. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't have the time or the crayons to explain to the members how this is supposed to work. So what I will basically say is this. We are making Alberta the best place to live, to play, and to visit by creating an investor-friendly environment for resort development, something that has been done successfully in British Columbia. Now we have a made-in-Alberta strategy right here, and we will continue to respect and honour all the environmental and Indigenous requirements that are needed for resort development.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think I've said enough, and we'll move on and we'll close debate on this and get on to the vote.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Minister of Tourism and Sport has moved third reading of Bill 35, the All-season Resorts Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 35 read a third time]

Bill 31 Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice and the keeper of the Great Seal of Alberta.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move third reading for Bill 31, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.

The amendments proposed in this act would help increase access to justice, secure crime data to assist with decision-making, improve clarity, and update legislation to address the current needs of Albertans.

I want to quickly touch on some of the statutes that would be amended by this bill. First, I will begin with the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. That has been, essentially, the most debated portion of this bill in this House. The changes to that act will increase the number of divisions in Alberta from 87 to 89. Mr. Speaker, an increase in divisions has not happened since 2010, so this is a very important amendment to address the unprecedented growth that we're experiencing here in this province. We've seen examples of that last year, and we're on track to grow just as much

if not more this year. Secondly, by updating the criteria that the commission may consider when developing proposals for the area and boundaries of Alberta's electoral divisions, we're aligning Alberta's legislation with case law and with the legislation of other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard a great deal of debate from members of the opposition about how this would create massive problems. You know, they've likened it to things like gerrymandering and other things. There's no accuracy in any of those statements. We know that aligning the wording of these particular changes in the act is the same as the wording used not only in other jurisdictions, but it also comes from a number of cases and a long history of jurisprudence in this area that provides direction, which we have applied here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation signals that the commission must consider effective representation, and that is our guiding factor here. It's guaranteed by the Charter. It's certainly enshrined in the amendments that we've made here. Adding two new electoral divisions provides the commission with flexibility as they proceed with their work. I look forward to an independent commission being appointed and seeing what they come back to this House with. Of course, once they do, once they table that report, the Legislature will have sufficient time to debate the report and engage in the process.

I also want to speak briefly about other areas that the act amends, and that is to the Public's Right to Know Act. This would help secure crime data from government departments, branches, and agencies as well as municipalities and police services. Mr. Speaker, accurate data will help ensure appropriate budgeting in areas such as police services and corrections, the court system, but it will also help with community watch groups. It'll help inform the public about what's happening in their neighbourhoods, and it'll provide other agencies with relevant information. I think all of those things are incredibly relevant to Albertans, and I can't see a downside to providing greater transparency, greater accounting, and greater information as it helps foster informed conversations and a better understanding of our criminal justice system and the impact it has had on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act portion of the bill, this is a housekeeping matter, and we're simply ensuring that the definition of essential infrastructure is contained in one location, which is the act.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, by updating the Alberta Evidence Act, we would enable the courts to accept evidence in writing that would otherwise need to be sworn or affirmed and remove the requirement for individuals to justify their preference when making a secular affirmation. These amendments will help save Albertans time and money as well as increase efficiencies within our courts, and that's what this government is all about.

I encourage everyone on both sides of this House to support this bill. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall is next.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. As the Minister of Justice mentioned, this bill makes a number of changes that we are not opposing, but they have stuffed in along with those changes certain changes that we strongly oppose. I will just briefly go over the changes to the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act, Public's Right to Know Act, electronic certification, and secular oaths. Those are changes that we take no issue with.

8:20

But what the UCP is doing is that they are pushing for blended urban-rural ridings by removing and watering down the criteria that was contained in the existing legislation. Clearly, the government has not been able to tell us any good reason why they are doing that. For instance, previous iterations, like the law as it stands now, say, “wherever possible, the existing community boundaries within the cities of Edmonton and Calgary” must be considered, and it was mandatory for the commission to consider those. Similarly, they were required to consider, “wherever possible, the existing municipal boundaries.” Now government is taking those provisions out and just making certain considerations that are now discretionary for the commission to consider. I think the reason government is doing this: they want to gerrymander our electoral map. They are giving the commission powers to arbitrarily redraw the electoral map.

I think the criteria that existed before was working pretty well. Back in 2017, when we were in government, we had to set up a commission, and we used the same criteria. I think that criteria went well. At that time the UCP and PC, other opposition parties did support, for the most part, that report that we put forward. The reason they supported it: they had confidence in that report. The commission was given a certain specific criteria that they had to consider in redrawing the electoral map.

Here the government is saying, “Trust us,” and removing that mandatory criteria and giving the commission powers to make arbitrary choices. They specifically removed provisions around community boundaries within the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. They specifically removed the existing municipal boundaries. Given this government’s record I think the government cannot be trusted when it comes to protecting public good, protecting public interests. There are so many examples that I can count what government has done over the last five years. What we are suggesting is that government still has time. They can take this bill back and leave the criteria that has served Alberta well in the past few boundary redraw cycles, and they should leave that.

The second thing is that government claims every time that they will consult, they will do things after the fact, but what we have seen is that government has a very – you can say that government doesn’t have any track record of consulting people in meaningful ways, and when it comes to municipalities, they have shown disrespect for the municipalities, disregard for their autonomy. Most recently they came up with Bill 18, Bill 20, that gives them power over municipalities, and now they are removing municipal boundaries’ consideration as mandatory criteria from this piece of legislation so that they can draw the map in whatever fits their political needs. The reason we know that is because in this session and sittings prior most of the things – whenever they needed things for their political need, they would prioritize that, ignoring Albertans’ interests, ignoring Albertans’ concerns, priorities.

This change is very problematic. We are concerned about it. Albertans are concerned about it. No one should be allowed to gerrymander our electoral map for their political gains. Rather, we should provide the commission with a criteria that is justifiable, that is sensible, and that keeps our municipalities intact, keeps our municipal boundaries intact, and makes sure that Albertans have an electoral map drawn in a way that respects their right to representation, that strengthens their right to representation.

The provisions contained in this bill will erode that right. It will give UCP and its insiders too much power to gerrymander our electoral map. That’s unacceptable. I urge all members of this House to vote against this bill, vote against gerrymandering of our electoral map.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow has the call.

Member Kayande: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. “Shall” and “may”: two words in the English language that have very, very different meanings. We all know what the meanings are even though we’re not lawyers. We all know the plain language. We know plain English, that “shall” and “may” mean not quite the same thing. I’ve never learned English as a second language, of course, being born here, but I’ve learned French as a second language, and in French they make very clear the difference between “shall” and “may” when we’re learning the language and learning our verbs for the first time.

But the Minister of Justice would have the people of Alberta believe that “shall” and “may” mean entirely the same thing. So as part of a process of attempting to educate, I will point out that “shall” is a requirement and “may” is optional. The plain reading, even though I am not a lawyer, of the legislation is that criteria that used to be mandatory are now optional in the drawing of electoral boundaries.

This is a big problem. It’s a big problem for the legislation, frankly, because it may not be compliant with Supreme Court judgments which require that the ingredients of properly constructed boundaries are actually mandatory. They are required for the boundaries commission to consider these things, and if the legislation is not compliant with Supreme Court rulings, there’s a very real risk that the boundaries won’t be accepted.

A quote from the Supreme Court reference case from 1991, where Madam Justice Beverley McLachlin, writing for the majority, says:

Deviations from absolute voter parity . . . may be justified on the grounds of practical impossibility or the provision of more effective representation . . . Beyond this, dilution of one citizen’s vote as compared with another’s should not be countenanced . . . only those deviations should be admitted which can be justified on the ground that they contribute to a better government of the populace as a whole.

Emphasis is hers. Let me repeat that. “Only those deviations should be admitted which can be justified on the ground that they contribute to better government of the populace as a whole.”

We’re all in this together, and our governments, in order to be fully representative and fully democratic, as the Supreme Court has pointed out, need to be effectively representing all of our citizens. This means, then, that a group of citizens, say, living in cities and a group of citizens who are living outside of cities have various different interests. I hear from across the aisle almost every day that rural Alberta has very different concerns than urban Alberta does. I completely agree. This is entirely true. This is a very good point, so the dilution of rural voters who happen to live in an area where the UCP considers wanting their vote in order to pack and crack – in order to pack and crack – and illegally gerrymander cannot be borne and will not be countenanced by the courts.

I quote from one of the dissents in that same case.

The fundamental importance of the right to vote demands a reasonably strict surveillance of legislative provisions pertaining to elections. Scrutiny under s. 3 attaches not only to the actual distribution in question but also to the underlying process from which the electoral map was derived.

The process matters, and the legislation matters. The legislation that is unfair, that promotes gerrymandering, will give rise to a process in which the fruit from a rotten tree will also be considered rotten, so there’s grave risk here. There’s grave risk from the unnecessary removal of the previously mandatory criteria to the now optional criteria.

8:30

What do we mean by effective representation? There are multiple different ways to think about effective representation, but one of the most important is that if the voter changes their mind, then they should get a different government. That is the principle by which electors pick governments, and instead it appears as though this government wants to pick its electors. When a small number of voters change their minds . . .

Mr. McIver: Twenty nineteen.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

Member Kayande: . . . when voters change their minds, that change of mind should be reflected in the seat allotment, as what happened in 2019, as one of the hon. members across the aisle points out, and what happened in 2023. Those were maps that worked because people changed their minds, and they got a different government in one case and a reduced majority in another.

Now, as we have seen in many, many other pieces of legislation brought forward in this session, both in this sitting and in previous sittings, when the government doesn't like the rules, they change them. When it leads to an outcome that they don't want, they change it. It's in that context and in the fundamental antidemocratic denial of the citizens of Calgary-Elbow their votes for over six months that sets a precedent for this government's disgraceful contempt for a proper functioning democracy, and it's not okay.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen to speak.

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to rise again this evening to speak to this piece of legislation, Bill 31, which, of course, begs MLAs, on this side of the House at the very least, to continue this theme of looking at the pattern of gerrymandering that successive Conservative governments have historically been party to. I think back to my earlier days in this province as a younger person, when, of course, Conservative meant Social Credit, from 1935 to '71, then from '71 to 2015, another 44 or so years of Conservative government.

One thinks, Mr. Speaker, as to why on earth that could happen in a properly functioning democracy, that you get a one-party state, one-party rule over the course of 80 years. How does that happen? Well, it happens because rules are changed to make it happen, because of the fact that successive Conservative governments over the decades have used the Electoral Boundaries Commission to their own benefit, to gerrymander so that the electoral process was tilted in their favour.

Don't take my word for it, Mr. Speaker; take a look at the historical record and electoral boundary changes that took place during the reign of the Social Credit and the Conservative and Progressive Conservative parties. The evidence is absolutely clear when you take a look at what took place during those former electoral boundary commissions over that period of years. Gerrymandering was the rule, and it got to the point where Albertans actually finally told the Progressive Conservative government they were sick of it.

There were some reforms and some holdbacks, some drawbacks, some withdrawal from that process and a little bit of respect paid towards the electoral boundaries decisions that were made with respect to not doing so to favour one party or another, yet it seems as though that period is gone, Mr. Speaker, that we've reverted back to crass and brazen disdain for democracy that we've seen since the

early days of the province, particularly during Conservative reigns, with Social Credit and Progressive Conservative governments successively gerrymandering. This is not something that we should be dismissive of or take lightly. This is actually an overt perversion of our democratic process. We see it in other jurisdictions, and Albertans are horrified and mortified. Yet here in Alberta it's happening once again, and it threatens to happen.

The government says: "Oh, don't worry. We have an Electoral Boundaries Commission. It's got members from the opposition as well as the government." But as was pointed out by my hon. colleague from Calgary yesterday, that composition of the Electoral Boundaries Commission happens to have a government majority, Mr. Speaker, just like all of the committees of the Legislature have a government majority. That government majority will indeed take its cue from the legislation that the Minister of Justice is providing before us to consider before the House this evening; that is, to look at the amendments that are made and look at the doors that the Minister of Justice is opening not as suggestions or possibilities but, as was mentioned by the previous speaker, as requirements to consider when making decisions about electoral boundaries in the upcoming redistribution considerations.

To insist that an Electoral Boundaries Commission must consider these new amendments and new changes to the Electoral Boundaries Commission requirements, that they may must consider similar "communities of interest," which is long a piece of terminology that you find in the legal literature – it's not foreign – but these communities of interest: the minister is attempting to broaden the scope and definition of what this community of interest might be by suggesting that merely proximity to a municipality might give a rural area a community of interest definition so that they can be included justifiably in addition to a municipal riding, thereby making it permissible under their rules and regulations and potentially causing a seat that otherwise would have been a New Democratic Party seat in the next election to become a UCP seat.

Now, how many times would this have to be replicated to perhaps change the outcome of an election from one party to another? The jury is out on that, Mr. Speaker, but believe me, we had a very, very close election last election. In fact, the numbers of seats, the seat count, doesn't really tell the true story. We all know that it was around 1,335 votes that caused the election to be won by the UCP versus the NDP. If those 1,335 votes were redistributed in the right proportions in as close as six ridings in Calgary, we would have been sitting over there with a one-seat majority. That's how close that election was. Believe me, the UCP are really thinking of ways to cobble together a particular effort that will give them whatever one or two seats they can squeeze out of this legislation and try to look as though they weren't doing anything that was in any way, shape, or form nefarious or contrary to democratic principles.

This is not a foreign concept to the UCP, Mr. Speaker. Conservative governments have intergenerationally done this as a matter of course except that once and again Albertans are going to rise up and suggest that this is not acceptable anymore. They've had it with this type of perversion of our democratic principles. Believe you me, if indeed this legislation passes, we will hammer – we will hammer – the UCP with it every chance we get because it is reprehensible. We won't stand for it, and neither will Albertans.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Justice to close debate.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 8:40 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Johnson	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	LaGrange	Schow
Boitchenko	Loewen	Schulz
Bouchard	Long	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Lovely	Sinclair
de Jonge	Luntz	Singh
Dreesen	McDougall	Stephan
Dyck	McIver	Turton
Ellis	Nally	van Dijken
Fir	Neudorf	Wiebe
Getson	Nicolaides	Williams
Glubish	Nixon	Wilson
Guthrie	Petrovic	Wright, J.
Horner	Pitt	Yao
Hunter	Rowswell	Yaseen
Jean		

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Elmeligi	Kayande
Batten	Eremenko	Loyola
Boparai	Ganley	Metz
Brar	Goehring	Notley
Calahoo Stonehouse	Gray	Renaud
Ceci	Haji	Sabir
Chapman	Hayter	Schmidt
Dach	Hoffman	Shepherd
Deol	Hoyle	Sigurdson, L.
Eggen	Irwin	Sweet
Ellingson	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Totals:	For – 46	Against – 33

[Motion carried; Bill 31 read a third time]

Bill 32

Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2)

[Debate adjourned December 4: Mr. Shepherd speaking]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre has seven minutes remaining should he choose to use it.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm thrilled to rise and speak to Bill 32, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2). There are a lot of bills, actually, in this session that are called something statutes amendment. There is justice statutes, financial statutes, various – I mean, it all seems very above board, but it isn't, which is our job to be here to point out.

There are multiple parts to this bill. Financial statutes, I suppose, will touch on many things, and I guess I'll start, as I like to in most conversations, with the thing I like about this bill. This bill actually brings in halal financing. That's been something that communities have been asking for for a very long time. It's an important move on the part of the government. That is something, I will say, that the government got right, and if that was all that was in the bill, my colleagues and I would definitely be in favour of this bill.

The challenge is, as the UCP does in so many instances, that they have taken one good thing and tied it to a series of other things, none of which are particularly good. Yes, halal financing is a very good move on behalf of the government. I congratulate them on

getting something right. Unfortunately, they have chosen to tie it to a bill that is extremely problematic in basically every other way.

The problem with this bill actually occurs in the definition section. I mean, this is often the case with legislation. It will sort of bury the problematic bits in the definition. The government has been running around saying: oh, not to worry, not to worry; there's a floor of 2 per cent. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not in accordance with the facts or the words on the piece of paper that are this bill. I can't describe that any further here because that would be unparliamentary, but it's definitely not in accordance with the words that are written in the act. I'm going to read a short section because I think that it is the relevant section. It's on page 13 of the bill, and it talks about indexing. It's section 44.2(0.1).

44.2(0.1) In this section, the "Alberta escalator" means, for a calendar year after 2025,

- (a) if a percentage is prescribed for the year on or before the first day of the year, the prescribed percentage, and
- (b) if no percentage is prescribed for the year on or before the first day of the year, the lesser of

what is basically 2 per cent or inflation. That's what the formulas come out to. So it's basically the lesser of 2 per cent or inflation or the prescribed amount, and the "or the prescribed amount" is actually the really relevant bit because the number prescribed can be zero. That's why it's very clear on the face of this bill that what is being done here is deindexing.

What that means is that your tax brackets will not travel with inflation. As inflation goes up, which it has been in this province particularly quickly, actually, faster than any place else in the country under the UCP – particularly, costs like car insurance, costs like electricity, costs like natural gas have been rising. Rents have been rising faster in Alberta than anywhere else, and it is incidentally impacted by government policy.

Also highly relevant in this way, wages have been stagnating in Alberta more than anywhere else in the country under the UCP. Minimum wage has been frozen under the UCP this entire time, and in fact income inequality is now higher in Alberta than anywhere else in the country. That means that the difference between the income taken home by the top 40 per cent of earners and the bottom 40 per cent of earners is much higher in Alberta. The problem of the rich getting richer and everyone else getting further behind is worse in Alberta. This wasn't always the case. This is something that has developed under this UCP government, and it is definitely a result of their policies.

8:50

While all of that is going on, while costs are rising faster in Alberta, this government has given themselves the power to completely decouple tax brackets from inflation. That means that even if you do happen to be one of the Albertans that gets a raise, you're losing more and more of your income to taxes. It also means that if you are an Albertan who relies on benefits, your benefits are shrinking. Those are seniors, folks on AISH, folks on Alberta Works. Those benefits are all going to shrink.

You know, I think it's worth telling a little story here about a friend and constituent of mine, my friend Kavin, who was actually given an award last night at our International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebration. I first met Kavin when she came into my office with a giant stack of signatures that she had collected herself by going door to door and knocking on people's doors and explaining that the UCP had deindexed AISH and explaining what her life was like as someone who lived on AISH and how she was being negatively impacted by the UCP's choices. She was able to by herself gather thousands of signatures from people on that petition, which was ultimately tabled in the Legislature. That really

tells you how much Albertans care about this issue, how much Albertans care about ensuring that our neighbours are properly taken care of, and it really tells you how important this is to the individuals struggling to live on those benefits. So, Kevin, if you're watching out there, thank you.

But this is what we see the government doing again. The very thing that Kevin came to my office to fight against in 2019 is being done again by this government. The interesting thing, I would say, about this is that the UCP under their previous leader, under Jason Kenney, who's no longer here, did this. They did this deindexation. We pointed out that their leader at the time had called it – he is one for an interesting turn of phrase; great vocabulary – a pernicious, insidious tax grab. That's what he called it. Yet he went ahead and did it anyway. The UCP's current leader actually ran in the leadership campaign specifically on reversing that decision as made by their former leader. I'm interested to see that she has wandered down this particular path.

I think what I really want to get on the record here is that the UCP have given themselves the power by this legislation – and the reason things like this have to go by way of legislation is so they come before this House. The purpose, in my opinion, in our democratic system of things coming before the Legislature is to allow sort of a public airing of those things, right? In this place the government has the majority. They hold the majority of the Legislature. That is our parliamentary system. They don't tend to listen to the things we say in here, so it's very unlikely that the opposition is going to convince them or win a vote or anything like that. But the purpose is that this is all on the public record. People can watch us at home. They can read us in *Hansard*. They're aware. The media can publish stories about the things we say in here. So the public becomes aware of what's happening. That's why it's in legislation, to allow that public airing.

What the UCP have done – they're claiming that they haven't taken it to zero. Sure, they haven't taken it to zero yet. What they've done is give themselves the power, under cover of darkness, to slide through on the 29th of December and order from Treasury Board, setting it to zero per cent. Basically, it's giving themselves the power to, I mean, essentially, vis-à-vis inflation, raise your taxes. It's giving themselves the power to claw back folks' benefits.

Those parts of the bill are incredibly problematic, and I won't be supporting this bill. I won't be supporting this bill because I think that Albertans are struggling right now. I think the cost of living is top of mind for Albertans, and I think that we as folks who are representing our constituents here in this House should not be supporting a bill that allows this tax bracket creep.

Albertans are already struggling enough under the UCP. Auto insurance is at the highest rate, and it's going up again under UCP policies. Electricity at the highest – well, it's not at its highest now, but under the UCP, like, the creep upward has been phenomenal, and they have done absolutely nothing to intervene despite the fact that they could, right? In the only other jurisdiction that has an energy-only market like this, Texas, there are, in fact, rules in place to prevent the kind of price gouging we see in Alberta. The UCP has just chosen not to take those steps.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

In addition, we see income sliding more in Alberta. We have the highest unemployment west of the Maritimes here in Alberta under the UCP. This wasn't a thing that was historically the case in Alberta, not until this government. People are really struggling, and this is not a good time to take more money away from them. It's particularly not a good time to take more money away from seniors who are struggling more with those costs than anyone else, and they are having their benefits deindexed by this government.

I think my objection to this bill is one of substance; that is to say, I don't think that the government should be taking more money from Albertans right now, which is precisely what they're doing with this bill. It's also an objection on the basis of the way it's being communicated. You know, they are deliberately suggesting to the public that there is a floor of 2 per cent, and that is absolutely false. Treasury Board can prescribe whatever rate it wants, and it can easily prescribe zero or 1 per cent or any number between zero and 2 per cent. That, too, is highly problematic.

I would urge all members to really look at the bill, to read the sections to which I am referring, to understand what they are voting for, because it is deindexation and it is a tax grab.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Any others wishing to speak to Bill 32? The Member for Edmonton-Manning has risen.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on Bill 32 not because I support the bill but because I think and I believe that it's actually a really important conversation that we should be having in this Chamber given the fact that this is really the only piece of legislation that I would say the government has brought into this House that even acknowledges that there are some financial pressures happening in the province.

I think it's a real shame, and I think it speaks to the fact that this government really is not all that concerned about what is happening to the people of this province and how they're feeling in this given time with the cost pressures of inflation, with the fact that many have not seen a raise in a very long time.

Many Albertans are currently going through mortgage renewals and seeing the changes in what were quite low, I would say, very extremely low mortgage rates. They may now be seeing their mortgages going up, like, 3 to 4 per cent while they renew those mortgages. We see the cost of everything rising over a period of time, yet we have a government that, when we talk about the fact that the cost of housing has gone up, rents have gone up, food has gone up – we just had one of our first of many very long cold spells. I'm sure people are going to get their first bill of the season that's going to have that initial hit, that everybody's like: it costs a lot to heat my house. So utility pressures are going to start to become a thing, all at a time of Christmas and all of the natural pressures that come with the season.

9:00

I find it frustrating that we haven't really seen this government take any initiative in addressing any of those issues. We have seen a government who has acknowledged that rent is going up and has acknowledged that that pressure is real, because all of the MLAs in the government caucus just got an increase on their rent. Now they feel better, but the people in this province are not receiving that same benefit from this government. There's been no offer from this government to help.

When we look at the financial amendment act, what we do see is the government taking on the ability to increase taxes, which will make life even more unaffordable for Albertans, or decrease services to the people who are receiving financial assistance from this government. So, in fact, at a time when Albertans are saying, "Government, we need you to step up and help," what the government is responding with is either more costs or less help, completely opposite to what Albertans are asking for.

What does this bill do? Well, pretty much what I just said. It allows the government to increase taxes, personal income taxes. We're also seeing the federal government do the exact same thing, and on average, as much as the government would like to say that

this is not the case, it's going up 2.7 per cent this year. That is what the 2025 tax bracket increase will be on average between provincial and federal increases. That has been announced. That is public. So it's high. It will have an impact on Albertans although I would say it would have a higher impact on Albertans if we were seeing a government actually paying fair wages and ensuring that the working people of this province are compensated for the work that they do, but we don't see this in the financial statutes act.

We don't see a recognition of an increase to minimum wage and recognizing that we do have the lowest minimum wage in this province. Although the government will say that's not the case, it is absolutely the case. We have a two-tiered minimum wage in this province. If you are a minor, the government doesn't recognize you as a worker, doesn't recognize that you should be compensated. If you are a server, the government doesn't recognize you as a worker, doesn't believe you need to be compensated fairly. You need to earn your tips. It is not a fair model, yet we don't see the government addressing that or looking at that.

In fact, we see arrogance from the government when it comes to: well, if you're a student, that's why you don't make as much money. No recognition of single mothers who may be working in lower paying positions because that is what they can do because they have to make sure they can take care of their kids. No recognition of individuals that work in health care professions that are paid pennies to work in group homes or be live-in care supports or do any of the heavy physical requirements that are required in working in those areas. No recognition of that.

So there is a problem. There is a problem with how we compensate our nonprofit sector and their work. It's in the fact that the government won't increase salaries in nonprofits, yet they are the people that are serving the people of Alberta. That should be in this bill.

The halal mortgages. As an MLA that represents many constituents that would like to see halal mortgages, I will give the government recognition that they have put moves forward in that step. What I will say, though, is that they have not addressed how it's actually going to work, whether or not it's actually going to meet the needs of my constituents, and, to be honest, whether or not it will actually address what could be some predatory lending components when it comes to halal mortgages. The rent-to-own component and the requirement of ensuring that there are protections around the way that these mortgages are going to be distributed and who is going to be offering the product is a real concern, yet the government hasn't really clearly said what that inclusive financing option is going to look like.

Now, I know that my colleague from Edmonton-Decore has met with the minister and has offered solutions and suggestions, has worked diligently on that component of the bill, and I was hoping that we would see the minister come forward with some of those amendments in the legislation. Without them, we risk creating a system in which mortgages remain out of reach for most individuals due to inflation. There need to be controls on what the ceiling of the price on these mortgages is going to look like. It has to be affordable, and it has to be comparable to the rest of the market. It cannot be something where we start seeing lenders offering it at 2 or 3 per cent higher than what a traditional bank would be. They have to be comparable.

It is a step in the right direction, and had the government decided to just come forward with a bill that was specifically addressing halal mortgages, I don't think we would have had an issue in this caucus in supporting that. We would have voted in favour, we would have made sure that those protections were in place, and I

believe that everybody in this House would have had a consensus to ensure that halal mortgages were available in the province.

The problem, though, is that Bill 32 has a whole bunch of other problems in it. We can't support the increasing of taxes; we can't support cutting services for people that are on programs; we can't support the fact that there's nothing in this bill that actually addresses utilities, rent, minimum wage, all of the affordability pieces that Albertans are asking for assistance with while the government is just not doing anything. You can't support a bill that doesn't support Albertans.

I mean, if we could take the halal part out and just vote on the halal thing, I think the government would see that we're all in consensus. I would support that, but I will not support services being cut for people that need support by the province. I will not support the government arbitrarily deciding whether or not year after year they're going to increase personal income taxes or decrease. The irony of the whole thing is that during the election the Premier said: "No, no, no; we're going to cut personal income taxes. I made you a promise, Albertans. I'm going to get rid of all of the things, and we're going to cut your personal income taxes. You're going to pay less taxes."

Fun fact: we're third in the country. B.C., lowest; Ontario is lower than us; and now Alberta. We actually are the third on the tax advantage when it comes to personal income taxes, not number one, so high five.

Mr. Glubish: Who raised those taxes?

Ms Sweet: Really? "Who raised the taxes?" from the minister and the government that's doing it right now. I don't know, Minister; you tell me. Put your hand up, friends. Come on. Seriously, I don't know who I'm talking to. I just don't get – like, read your bill.

The government asking the opposition who raises taxes: well, it's the government that does it. They've been there for five years. Taxes have gone up. Who did it? UCP. Congratulations. It blows my mind sometimes. I mean, I know it's late, but, like, seriously. You know what's the best part about this gig? It's that when I know that what I'm saying is true is when the government starts talking to me. They're talking to me right now, which means, I think, I'm right and they know it's true, which is why they keep asking me: well, what about this? I can answer their questions for them if they would like, Mr. Speaker. Next time they need to do a bill briefing, I will come and teach them all the things they want to know. They always ask me what I know, so I can tell them more. I'm telling you they just can't help themselves.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the government knows it's true. The government knows they're increasing taxes. They're a little concerned about which minister over there is actually doing it, but what I'll tell them is that they all are. They are going to cut services, and they already are. Albertans are not benefiting from anything that this government has done.

9:10

In closing, I cannot support this bill in the way that it is drafted. The government needs to go back and have a really hard consideration about that their pocketbook is not the only pocketbook in this province. If they want to increase rent for themselves, then that \$250 increase should go to every single Albertan.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to Bill 32, first of all, I want to thank the Minister of Finance

and President of Treasury Board in that he actually took the time to meet with members of the Muslim community so that he could learn a little bit about what halal financing is all about. But, unfortunately, what we have here in Bill 32 is not halal financing. I just want to make that absolutely clear to the members on the other side of the House because they were promising members of the community that: hey, we're going to do halal financing, and we're going to make it; we're going to do it for you. Unfortunately, in order to actually implement halal financing, they would actually have to open up legislation to make it truly halal, right? This is what they don't want to do. They don't want to take the actual time to really delve deeper into the necessary legislation that it would take to actually make it halal. What they're doing is that they're opening up an opportunity for other financial institutions to perhaps not quite provide something that's similar to halal financing.

Now, when you go to the Islamic scholars in the community and you describe what the government has actually provided for the community itself, they'll be the first ones to tell you that this is not halal financing. This is not. So I just want to make it abundantly clear to the members on the other side of the House that when they go into the Muslim community, when they show up for jum'ah prayers to shake hands with members of the Muslim community, don't tell them that you have made halal financing available to them, because that would be untrue. I just want to make sure that that's clear.

Mr. Speaker, one, halal financing is part of the broader concept that is halal. You know, I just want to explain it to the members on the other side of the House so that they can get a better understanding of it, right? When it comes to halal, it's actually an entire lifestyle. You're providing financing that's fair. You're providing financing without interest because what's truly important for Muslims and those who follow the Muslim faith is that interest is extremely prohibited. Extremely. This is what the members on the other side of the House have to understand and which I'm willing to share with them, and I'm sharing it with you.

You have to understand that in Islam charging interest is a sin equivalent to ascribing partners to the Creator. Now, this is our perspective as Muslims. I'm not trying to force it on you, but if you're going to go to the community and tell them, "Hey, we're providing halal financing" when it's not halal financing, then you should be aware of that because members of the community want to trust us as legislators. They want to trust us. So it's imperative for all of us, when we're going into the community and we show them what we have done, if this bill passes, which I'm sure it will – but I'm just saying that when this bill passes, you can go and you can explain it so that members of the community know what it actually is.

Now, it's very important – and let me tell you that I'm incredibly proud that when we were government and the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona was the leader of this party and Premier of this province, one of the most proud moments of being part of the governing party at that time, was when we got rid of predatory lending institutions. [interjections] You know, members on the other side of the House are laughing because I'm talking about us getting rid of predatory lending institutions. You've got to wonder: like, what world do they live in, Mr. Speaker? Predatory lending institutions.

These institutions take advantage of the most marginalized people in our communities. They take advantage of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in our society. It's a shame that in this province predatory lending institutions were allowed to go on as long as they did. See, we as Muslims understand that interest – when you charge especially that level of interest that predatory lending institutions are charging marginalized people, you make them

go further and further and further into debt. That is a reality. That's why we as legislators have the responsibility of making sure that especially marginalized people aren't taken advantage of. That was one of the best things that we could have done, and I'm proud of it. I think that we need to continue taking steps in that direction, Mr. Speaker.

Now, what the members have done with this bill, Bill 32: yes, they have created it so that instead of charging interest, financial institutions can charge a service fee. Now, that doesn't necessarily make it halal. If the service fee that they're charging – what a lot of financial institutions are just going to do is that they're just going to make the calculations and be like, "Well, if we were charging an interest rate of 5.9 per cent," and then they would calculate that over the . . . [interjections] Yeah. Okay. I see the members on the other side shaking their head, and they're like: yeah, yeah, yeah. But that's not halal. That's what I'm trying to explain to you. That is not halal, okay? The financial institution: all they're doing is that they're making a calculation, and they're saying, "Okay; well, this is what we would have charged in interest, so this is the service fee that we're going to charge you for giving you this loan or this mortgage" or whatever it is that they're providing for you, Mr. Speaker. So there are additional pieces of legislation that have to go along with that.

Now, what happens is that you've left the door open so that, again, it lends itself for predatory pricing. The financial institution can put any interest rate that it wants at the time. It could be, you know, prime plus 5 if they wanted to. And then they could say: "You know what? We're going to calculate it at this because we're providing you this loan, and we're going to charge you prime plus 5, and we're just going to calculate what that is, and that's the service fee that we're going to charge you for giving you this loan." It's the same thing as predatory lending.

Now, a lot of people in the Muslim community, Mr. Speaker, come from a South Asian background, Arab background, many, many backgrounds from all over the world. It is Muslim practice that you have a lot of children. We have a number of people, a number of Muslims in the community who have large families, but they can't afford to get into a house, so they need to go into subsidized housing. But guess what, Mr. Speaker. Because they have so many children, according to our way of thinking of it, they're like: "No, no, no. We're not going to give you subsidized housing because there are just too many of you."

9:20

I have to figure out how to help people in the Muslim community that are not getting access to the subsidized housing. There are a number of things that we have to get right here. These people desperately need housing, but pretending that what the government is offering right now is halal financing: that's a misnomer, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the other part of this is that, as I said at the beginning, I'm appreciative that the minister did meet with members of the community, but there was a number of other asks that the community had. As the minister developed the concept of what's here in Bill 32, he didn't continue to consult with the members of the community who are actually experts in this, and we have so many of them.

Ms Pitt: Intervention? Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, just a point of clarification. Does the hon. member believe that certain Albertans should receive preferential treatment when it comes to financing as opposed to other Albertans? Point of clarification.

Member Loyola: Most definitely not, Mr. Speaker. That's not what this is about. What this is about is providing opportunities for people based on their belief if they want it. It's not necessarily preferential treatment.

What we want to do here in the province of Alberta is respect people from different backgrounds, the same way that the other members on the other side of the House want choice in schooling and therefore we do have public school, we have the Catholic school, we have the francophone, we have charter schools, and we have private schools, and then people can even home-school. People on that side of the House believe in that. Okay. Fine. So then why wouldn't you implement a piece of legislation that would actually make life better off for people?

You know what, Mr. Speaker? We often talk about this in the Muslim community. If halal financial institutions were to actually be allowed to be created here in the province of Alberta – and I'm talking real halal financial institutions – it wouldn't be just for the Muslim community. Muslims in our community are constantly saying: "You know what? If we were to do this, this would benefit all Albertans because it would be a financial system not based on interest . . .

Mr. Getson: Hear, hear.

Member Loyola: . . . which would actually stop people from going further and further into debt."

Now, I hear the members on the other side yell: yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, okay. Well, let's get rid of interest, then. If they're saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," well, then let's get rid of it on mortgages, then. [interjections] Yeah.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to offer financial tools for people in this province, not just to those who believe in this particular way of thinking, in this particular way of things being done, but it can also be offered to other Albertans as well, and Muslims constantly talk about this, and I think it's something that we need to delve deeper into.

I know that in other parts of the world they are providing halal financial mortgages. There are halal financial institutions. It's just a matter of us going out there and seeing what other jurisdictions around the world are doing and not closing our minds to something because we simply don't know enough about it.

What I said was that the minister met with the community initially but then, as the minister continued to develop the legislation that we have before us, did not continue to meet with members of the community. This is what we know.

Ms Pitt: Sorry. Point of clarification, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member. How is it fair that one group of people pays interest and not another group of people? I simply just don't understand.

Member Loyola: Other financial institutions will continue to exist, and people can go to the financial institution of their choice. If they want to explore halal options – anybody in Alberta; they don't have to be Muslim to do it – they can go and explore that option. If there were halal financial institutions that would be allowed to practise here in the province of Alberta, every Albertan could go and investigate it, learn more about it. I can guarantee you this, Mr. Speaker: it's a great idea, and more Albertans would opt for halal financial institutions. They would start banking with those institutions more and more.

The other aspect of this, of course, is that it's not just for mortgages or car loans. I mean, the Alberta government itself could start to explore the restructuring of its own debt offerings to people

here in the province of Alberta, but for that to happen, we'd actually have to open up the legislation, like I was talking about before.

You know, I would really encourage the members on the other side, that they continue to explore this, continue sitting down with the community, continue to sit down with experts not only from here in Alberta but across Canada and across the world and truly explore. Could you imagine a future where university students or postsecondary educational students would actually get a loan but it would be a halal loan for their education, Mr. Speaker? That world is possible, and we can create it, but it's going to take the political will to get it done and open up the piece of legislation and actually make it happen.

I've said enough, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping that the members on the other side of the House are listening and that they would be willing to do something like this. I encourage them to keep an open mind and keep working with the community.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland has risen.

Mr. Getson: I really appreciate it. We had a really good debate talking about this bill. I'm going to be very brief to it, through you to the member opposite. We have been exploring this. That's why we brought this bill forward. Mr. Speaker, through you to them, I've been working with a Kuwaiti clearing house. I've been working with Prairies Crossing. We're looking at a sukuk model of lending. We've sat down with Dentons and the Kuwaiti financial institutes. We are looking at these things.

To him through the Speaker, I would love to go have a coffee with him in the back, bring him up to speed, and let him know full well that we are looking at a ton of options because there are different ways of lending money in the world. This is one of them, and that's why our minister has brought it forward.

With that, I really appreciate the comments.

The Acting Speaker: Any other speakers? The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to rise on this very important issue that's contained within Bill 32. I once again also wish to make a few comments with respect to the halal financing component of this piece of legislation.

Members across the way on the government side, Mr. Speaker, have plainly asked: what is this all about? They clearly don't quite grasp halal financing and understand exactly what it is. Most members of this House will know that I spent 30 years as a realtor before getting elected in 2015 for the first time. I can honestly tell you that I had hundreds of people who crossed into my office over the course of those 30 years who wanted to buy a house but were not able to because they felt uncomfortable or unwilling to contravene their religious beliefs. That is a difficult decision point to have a parent or an individual come to a conclusion about, not buying a house because you can't finance it in a way that's compliant with your faith.

9:30

That's what this is about, Mr. Speaker. This is not about preferential treatment for a population in Alberta. It's about the fact that 95 per cent of Albertans already have preferential treatment and that they can access financing that is not contrary to their faith, but the 5 per cent of the population in Alberta, the Muslim population in Alberta, does not have access to financing that's not contrary to their faith. It's not a hard concept. It's not a preferential treatment.

I mean, the reason that we are here debating tonight and not wholeheartedly wrapping our arms around the minister's bill and

this piece of Bill 32 is because it is flawed. It is not where it needs to be in order to have the acceptance that one would hope it would get from the Muslim community and a wider Alberta population. What this is about is that about 5 per cent of the Alberta population being able to buy a house, to invest, and to use money as a tool to grow assets. Now, the option to buy a house is available to everybody in Alberta except the 5 per cent of the population who feel they can't contravene their religion by obtaining regular, more conventional financing.

The minister claims to have consulted about this bill. We just had another minister, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, stand up and say that, you know, they're consulting: we'll talk to you in the backroom about it; we'll let you know what's happening. Well, I can tell you quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, that – and the minister knows full well because I have a copy of the letter in my hand that was sent to him by ranking members of the Muslim community just yesterday, to which he responded last night, apparently.

The letter talks to the minister about his lack of understanding, his lack of fidelity with what was actually needed in order to make this piece of legislation operational and workable for truly creating halal financing options in Alberta. You know, they thank him for his work on it so far, but the following amendments are necessary to strengthen the bill: protect consumers and adding provisions to prevent predatory pricing, provide an oversight, direct further community engagement, and the establishment of a committee to approve products separate from the CUDGC.

Now, what this letter says to the minister is that you fell short of the mark, far short of the mark. These individuals who put their names to this letter are not lightweights, Mr. Speaker. Many of them are known to me, and I've met with them, and I've had conversations with them in the past: Amal Jama, Alberta Central; Issam Saleh, Muslim Association of Canada; Syed Hussain, Islamic Missionary Association; Navaid Aziz, Islamic Information Society of Calgary; Momin Saeed, Abrahamic Finance; and Omar Yaqub, Islamic Family.

Some of these individuals are experts in the field, and Mr. Saeed recently spent time in Dubai delivering lectures on Islamic finance, yet none of these people were consulted by the minister in preparing this legislation; it was a total waste of expertise. I implore the minister in his further consultations, when he's developing and making this beginning piece of legislation what it really should have been in the first place, to consult with these individuals and even beyond this to make sure he gets it right.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that one of the largest drivers of economic productivity and economic activity in the province is what happens after somebody buys a house. It's all the incidental expenditures that take place after you buy a house or buy a business. No matter what you're having to finance and invest in, it's what happens afterwards that drives the economy. We are telling Albertans, 5 per cent of our population, that their economic activity is something we're willing to throw by the wayside; all those hundreds of millions of dollars that Muslim families will spend on first buying a house and then investing in all those things that they need to furnish it and renovate and so forth are not important.

This first step is a failing first step, and we need to make sure that this bill does not bring forward a so-called halal financing option for banks to be able to offer that is set up to fail, because this is precisely what will happen. It will follow the Manitoba model, and it will invite predatory lending. It will be unaffordable and will be having very low uptake, and it's set up to fail. If that is the motivation behind this bill, if that is the intent of the minister, well, he's succeeded wonderfully, Mr. Speaker, because this bill will go nowhere in terms of satisfying the needs of the Muslim community

and beyond to be able to access financing which is compliant with their faith, which is certainly not really a foreign concept.

If I can try for a moment to put it into terms that may be a bit more familiar to members across the aisle, think of a situation where maybe – and it's not a perfect analogy, Mr. Speaker – a person wouldn't qualify for a mortgage, somebody you may have known, and they found a way to buy a house. I've done this before in my business as a realtor, where they buy a house by way of agreement for sale. Okay? So the title doesn't change hands until the actual full purchase price is paid. The individual who owns the home keeps the mortgage in place and is paid, by way of an agreement for sale, payments over time until the full value of the property is actually achieved, and then the title will change hands. So it's kind of like that in a rudimentary way, but interest isn't charged.

Now, 2 billion plus Muslims around the world do business with fundamental financing that is satisfying the need to avoid interest. It's not something that's a laughable concept. It's working throughout the world, and if you look at investments that are made by His Highness the Aga Khan, you will find out that in all those projects halal financing is fundamentally what's used to make sure that those public infrastructures that are so heralded throughout the world, including the botanic gardens here at the University of Alberta, are financed using Islamic finance, Mr. Speaker.

It's not a foreign concept. It's something we should be willing to look at and maybe learn some more about it, and I would encourage you to look at Abrahamic Finance. Mr. Momin Saeed offers courses and education on it, and you can take his course online and learn more in depth about Abrahamic finance. I know Mr. Saeed personally. I've taken his course. It's a really good course. It may take you a couple of days. It's fairly in depth. It's the same course that he learned to teach when he was in Kuala Lumpur studying Islamic finance in his earlier years.

This expertise that I speak about, Mr. Speaker, is available to us here, and I suggest to members opposite, particularly the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, that he take advantage of the offerings of education that could be had through people like Mr. Saeed and Abrahamic Finance and really engage in learning about it and give you a better sense of what it's all about, because it's certainly not a foreign concept. It's nothing that we can't implement, but it will take some definite legislative changes much beyond what this piece of legislation even attempts to get to. It will do something beneficial to this province economically because it will allow 5 per cent of the population to actually buy property and invest in a way that is compliant with their faith and open up billions of dollars' worth of potential investment and purchases in the province.

We at the NDP are all about that. We're all about economic activity. We're all about economic development, and we certainly are not going to stand in the way of 5 per cent of the population being able to buy a house and invest in all the things that you want to buy after you buy a house. So we wish the government opposite would learn a little bit about opening their eyes and their worldview and understanding that 5 per cent of our population should not be denied the opportunity to operate in our economy in the same way that any other Albertan is.

I really hope that this bill ultimately goes well beyond what it already has. We will take it in its infant form, I guess, Mr. Speaker, but really, it's got a long way to go.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Any others wishing to speak to the bill? The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and offer a few thoughts on Bill 32, Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2). I first of all want to thank my friends from Edmonton-Ellerslie and Edmonton-McClung for their extensive discussions of halal financing. I appreciate the fact that they underline the point that even though this is based in Islamic principles, it is not exclusive to people who practise the Muslim faith but would be open to all.

9:40

However, it did cause me to wonder, you know, what other faiths' borrowing and lending practices would be if they were to be enacted. I myself am a Zen Buddhist, Mr. Speaker, and we believe in emptiness. So I'm wondering if I could convince my bank to cancel my mortgage payments because I don't exist; my house doesn't exist; the money that I used to pay it doesn't really exist. I think that would be a very interesting model of finance, and I think some smart Zen bankers would be well served to try that out.

But I want to focus my comments tonight on the sections of the bill that have been covered a little bit by my friend earlier this afternoon from Banff-Kananaskis. She didn't get a chance to linger on the point very long about the EV tax and also on this government's decision to raise everybody's income taxes and lower their personal exemptions.

On the EV taxes: the government has decided that it's going to charge a yearly fee for everybody who purchases and operates an electric vehicle. This is a backward step in terms of not only meeting Alberta's climate goals but also in meeting the government's explicitly stated goals of fostering our lithium industry here in Alberta. EVs, of course, run on batteries, and almost all of the batteries that are used in EVs are lithium-based batteries. The demand for lithium, because the world is producing so many EVs, is far outstripping the supply.

Now, the government has explicitly stated that they wish to develop a lithium industry in this province, and certainly there are some promising prospects. You know, I'm just looking at a couple of reports. E3 Lithium has their project in central Alberta. They estimate that there's over a million tonnes of lithium to be extracted at their sites. I know that there's another project with a similar-sized resource in the Peace River region that's just getting under way.

But that lithium needs to go into batteries, and it seems to me that the government is working at crosspurposes with themselves when they say that we want to do everything to support a lithium industry in Alberta. Tens of billions of dollars of potential revenue there from lithium, but they don't want to do anything to create a market for the lithium. They don't want to encourage people to buy EVs. They've banned renewable energy. They certainly don't do anything to increase the amount of electricity storage on the grid, which would also be accomplished by building giant lithium batteries, Mr. Speaker. So it's interesting that, on the one hand, we have this push for a lithium industry and, on the other hand, we do everything we can to undermine it. It just doesn't make very good sense for the people of Alberta, and I don't think that this is a very productive section of the legislation.

The other part, Mr. Speaker: the government has decided to raise everybody's income taxes and lower their personal exemptions by breaking the link between inflation rates and those income tax brackets and the amount of the basic personal exemption. You know, this is a sneaky tax grab, as my other friends here on this side have indicated. Next year Albertans will wonder why they're taking home less on their paycheque than they were this year, or less than they expected to on their paycheque this year. That's because the income tax brackets will not have increased with inflation rates and

the basic personal exemption won't have increased with inflation rates.

So they'll see that they're taking home less, but they won't quite clearly see that it's actually the UCP that's taking that money out of their pocket and spending it on things like their own rental expenses for their apartments here in Edmonton, gifts to their board members on the Alberta Energy Regulator, or excessive and possibly illegal salaries for the CEOs of Alberta Innovates and Alberta Enterprise Corporation. You know, they'll just wonder where the money went. Of course, the UCP will not be honest about the fact that they've raised their taxes and instead wave their hands and say: look over here at this carbon tax that these other guys charged, and worry about that.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will set Alberta back in terms of developing a vibrant lithium market and will certainly set Albertans back when it comes to tackling the affordability challenges that they're facing every day, that the UCP is not intent on addressing. I urge all members of the House to vote against this bill.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak? The Member for Calgary-Edgemont.

Ms Hayter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak today to Bill 32, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2). In Alberta we are here in an affordability crisis. Many Albertans are hurting financially, and people are struggling. What gets me is that, you know, as we're struggling – people are struggling in my riding. I've been so proud to see the work that the Ranchlands Community Association has been doing, spearheaded by Zen Yee. Last year alone they handed out 100 food hampers to families in need, but it's heartbreaking that this work needs to be done so people can eat in my riding. I have so much gratitude that the Dalhousie Community Pantry, nestled behind the Dalhousie elementary school, is there to support community members. Both of these local supports need donations of nonperishable food items, also diapers and formula and menstrual products and food for animals.

Now we have this bill, Bill 32. It fails to make life more affordable for anyone. This bill is just another broken promise to Albertans by effectively making Albertans pay higher taxes and receiving lower benefits in this time of inflation. Many of us on this side of the House have said that our insurance is going up, our energy bills are going up, food prices are going up. Those are the words of our constituents, yet wages are not going up under this UCP government, and minimum wages for students were also rolled back. It's embarrassing that under the UCP not only are students funded at the lowest per capita, but Alberta has the highest inflation than the national average. How are Albertan students learning when their classrooms are overcrowded, their curriculum is outdated, and it's not age appropriate? Our teachers are not valued or paid properly, and educational staff cannot even make ends meet. Many are making less than a living wage.

Let's let this sink in for all of us. Under the UCP government Alberta has a higher inflation than the national average. Please explain to me how that is the Alberta advantage under the UCP. I thought Alberta was calling and the government wanted more people to move here. But here's the thing. If folks were making a decent living and they didn't have to decide between food and bills due to the inflation in our province by the UCP, if the UCP stood up for Albertans and took care of those in need, we wouldn't need volunteers in our local communities doing that work.

Last year I started a period poverty drive, with items being donated back into the riding. It brings much-needed help to women and girls because they can't afford it. But now there's this new level

also being requested. We're needing to look for formula for babies and diapers. Diapers for babies. We shouldn't have to be fund raising and asking for donations for basic needs.

9:50

In a previous life I worked in a nonprofit with individuals with disabilities, individuals here in Alberta on AISH. I worked with them when this government changed back the date on their payments and saw the devastating impacts. I truly appreciate the MLA for St. Albert bringing us together last night to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It was so uplifting and filled my heart after an afternoon sitting like yesterday. Her dedication as the shadow minister of community and services is incredible, and I appreciate her advocacy and pointing out the lack of compassion for Albertans because of the deindexing of AISH and other government benefits that will affect our vulnerable people.

I also wanted to congratulate Kavin on her well-deserved award yesterday. She has worked so hard to advocate for Albertans with disabilities and is so passionate about ensuring proper supports with AISH. I look forward to seeing her at our next event with her clipboard and her petition.

It was nice to come together at that event, and it was also nice to come together on part of this bill yesterday, to see all of us in this House come together in Committee of the Whole and agree on a vote in unison of support for halal mortgages. The Alberta NDP has been urging the government to implement these mortgages since before the last election. I have been so proud of my colleague from Edmonton-Decore and his continued advocacy for halal mortgages. We just wish that maybe it acted a little bit more urgently and added a bit more to it. We appreciate that the government has heard our calls and that you're finally enacting this legislation to support Albertans.

[The Speaker in the chair]

This part of the bill I support as I represent a diverse riding, families, and friends. We have three mosques in my riding, where people gather, and I know that this legislation is important to them. I would like to extend, though, an invitation to this government to meet with my constituents to ensure that the government gets this right. Alberta is diverse, and we need to support and provide for the diverse needs of all of our communities. It's unfortunate that this is the only good part of Bill 32.

We have this bill, Bill 32, and it fails to make life more affordable – sorry. I already did that part. I'm grateful, though, for my community and the members in my riding who live there. I love that Barb in Edgemont will unapologetically ask anyone to donate money, time, or goods for breakfast clubs or food baskets for the community. I am grateful that Joy buys food for her parish to hand out baskets on a weekly basis, and thank heavens for the Westminster Presbyterian church, who works with the Calgary Food Bank to serve the northwest region of Calgary. Yes, in the northwest quadrant of Calgary there are food insecurities, and I am grateful for the many leaders in those areas who are stepping up to provide.

With this affordability crisis I can't support this bill. I cannot support a bracket creep. My constituents are in the midst of an affordability crisis. They are struggling to make ends meet, and deindexing does not help any of them.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise in response to Bill 32, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2). I, of course, like my colleagues, am entirely supportive and very much

welcome the halal provisions which are found in this bill. However, and as can be the problem when we are faced with an omnibus bill, there, unfortunately, are many places in this bill that are entirely problematic and troublesome.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

Let me begin first of all, though, with some comments in terms of halal financing. The area that I represent, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, is an incredibly diverse community, and the folks who live in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview are very, very enthusiastic about that and really revel in that diversity. Certainly, as a teacher who spent many, many years teaching kids from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, I had the opportunity and the chance to learn an awful lot about halal financing, as my colleague from Edmonton-Ellerslie was talking about, and what it could mean, what it could mean to families, what it could mean to the future of families, the future of kids.

I had that opportunity because the kids in my classroom came and they talked to me about it. I had not heard of halal financing probably before about a decade ago, but it was one of those things, one of those inadvertent conversations that kids and teachers on occasion have. They were very proud to tell me that this was something that they wanted to be able to look forward to in their futures, but they also knew that it was unlikely.

The fact that it's here in this bill does give me a great deal of hope, but as I also learned, in addition to the comments from the member just to the west of me, Edmonton-Decore, as well as my colleague in Edmonton-Ellerslie, kind of what one hopes for, one doesn't always get, and that, unfortunately, is the case in this bill, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly need a different approach. We need that notion of an alternative financing. We need true halal financing so that the folks who live in my community in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview have a chance to find that home that can be their home, that can be that place that they go to every day, that can be that thing that's left to their family, where they can enjoy celebrations, where they can enjoy all those wonderful traditions that life is made up of. Sadly, this particular bill does indeed miss the mark, regardless of what it purports to be about.

It is certainly a meaningful step, and it is an extraordinarily important step to the Muslim community throughout Alberta, but that's when it's done right. When it's done right, it will indeed be a way forward for folks. It will level that playing field. It will provide not just an opportunity for home ownership but an opportunity for parity, an opportunity for equity. To allow folks to own a home in a way which does not breach their faith, does not undermine their faith is extraordinarily important.

But as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, this bill does indeed have limitations. It doesn't ensure the inclusivity and fairness which one would hope it would, and it certainly, as we have also heard with previous speakers, doesn't fully meet the expectations of the community it seeks to serve. As a result, there are gaps, and because of those gaps, it will mean that those barriers will still exist. Those barriers will still continue to exist for the kids that I taught, who are no longer kids, for their parents, perhaps even for their children.

I'm conscious of the fact that about a year ago there was indeed the promise – and with promise comes great expectation – made by this government that Albertans would gain access to home financing made in accordance with their faith, halal financing. But the provisions that we're discussing today are not what was needed or wanted. It doesn't move forward.

When I'm conscious of the fact that there might have been a portion of the community that was consulted, I'm also equally

conscious of the fact that there was a portion of the community that was not consulted. That, unfortunately, is a tradition, it seems to me, speaking of traditions, with this particular government. Consultation is a place where, unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be done with the depth and breadth that it should be done. And when, as my colleague from Edmonton-McClung notes, there was a letter, a letter of grave concern, that was submitted to the minister just the other day that talked about that lack of consultation and then talked in very, very clear terms, Mr. Speaker, about what was required, I am hopeful that the minister read it with the openness of heart and with the grace to understand that this bill indeed falls short with the community.

That, of course, is because of the lack of specificity that exists in this legislation in terms of the areas of making sure products are priced not just competitively but also affordably to make sure that that alternative financing compares favourably to conventional mortgages. But the bill as it stands, as I mentioned, doesn't ensure parity. It will not level that playing field. Home ownership may well still be out of reach for a number of folks within the Muslim community, and that shouldn't be. That, indeed, as my colleagues have stated, should be the dream. A consultation process that is just that select few, that does not reflect the diversity of the community or of the range of expertise is not consultation.

10:00

This idea of home ownership is really part of the fabric of who we are as Albertans. It's sort of that thing to which we all want to aspire. And there was a promise made that, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government was unable to keep by virtue of the provisions that are in this legislation. This bill has gaps where halal financing is concerned. It is lacking, it has shortcomings, and it means that we are left with a framework that doesn't include any accountability and that doesn't include any meaningful engagement.

There was indeed an opportunity to do just that. The government could have done more than simply merely enable financial institutions. They could have truly partnered with members of the community. They could have truly gone out and heard and understood what the community was asking for. We are left with the knowledge, then, that what is actually there, that what will transpire is uncertain. And the community, I believe, as a result of that, remains underserved. That's really, really unfortunate.

As I go back out into my community, I know that they're going to want to know where things stand, and I would like to tell them more than I actually know. I would really prefer to tell them: it's okay; Bill 32 has these provisions, and it sets out some really specific things, and it will be fine. But I cannot tell them that, Mr. Speaker. I cannot.

At its heart this is not just about financing. This is not just about affordability. This isn't just about an opportunity for people to own a home in a community they love and in a community they serve. This is about trust, and this is about trust that continues to be broken. Every single time the trust is broken by this government, it continues to erode and erode and erode and erode, and that should not be what the government is in the business of doing. Governments should hold themselves accountable to the promises that they make in the communities that each one of us serves and that we all serve collectively.

Certainly, if I had the choice about all of this, I would pull the halal financing part out of the bill, create its own bill, make it much more specific, ensure that the community was meaningfully consulted, be very, very happy to vote in support of that bill. But as it is, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, right now I cannot support Bill 32.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Currie.

Member Eremenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Oh, let's see. Lots to talk about here with Bill 32, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2). I don't really think I have a whole lot more to add to the incredibly important comments that my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie made in regards to halal financing. Certainly, this is something that people have been talking about and waiting for for a long time.

Before coming into politics, I actually worked for a microlending organization that supported newcomers. Many of our clients were Muslim or many prospective clients were Muslim, but one of the big challenges that they had was that should they take out a loan to go back to school, bridge their foreign credentials, and restart their careers in Canada, it did mean that they would be taking out money that they would in fact owe interest on. I really am hopeful that we don't stop at this very first step around halal mortgages, that we actually talk about financial products beyond that as well.

I have to make a point, though, to reinforce something that my colleague mentioned about predatory lending and the incredible impact that that legislation had that the NDP were instrumental in taking over the finish line back in 2015-2016. [interjections] For some weird reason the member opposite thought that this idea of predatory lending was hilarious. Clearly, the member has never had to access payday lending before, has never had to face no money, a fridge empty, and having no other option but to have to go and take a payday loan at an absolutely outrageous and inexcusable interest rate. That is exactly what the NDP did to change. They changed that legislation because financial products in mainstream banking are not an option for too many Albertans, Mr. Speaker. The fact that that should be funny is of great concern, so you'll have to excuse me that I don't fully believe the authenticity in the offer to connect and really talk about how to improve this piece of legislation and improve access to mainstream banking.

Before the NDP brought in this legislation, payday lenders were allowed to charge \$23 per \$100 borrowed; that amounted to a 600 per cent interest rate on a two-week, \$300 payday loan. It is pure usury, Mr. Speaker, and usury is strictly forbidden in Islam. By the way, it was the Tories before 2015 that actually started that conversation, and it was the NDP who completed the public consultations and actually got that act brought through, and I'm very, very thankful for it.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Moving on to the rest of Bill 32, Mr. Speaker, if I may. I'll try not to take too much more time here, but I do just want to make sure that a very special person gets into *Hansard* before we adjourn for the holidays. His name is Hugh Segal. Hugh Segal was a Canadian Senator. He was chief of staff for Conservative Premier Bill Davis in Ontario, and he was chief of staff for Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. After he became Senator, he became a one-man powerhouse around poverty reduction and significant, meaningful social assistance reform. I raise Senator Segal's name – unfortunately, he passed away last year, and I think his absence is still deeply felt, but his work on utterly changing our entire attitude about social assistance was instrumental.

Clearly, we still have a long way to go, but I raise Senator Segal because I truly believe that this is a nonpartisan issue because both sides of this aisle, Mr. Speaker, do not – I have to believe that poverty should not be government policy, but that is precisely what Bill 32 further deepens in our systems. Unfortunately, the UCP have flip-flopped on the question of indexation of income support programs for several years; 2015 to 2019, when we were in

government, we indexed. After that Jason Kenney, you know, who used to be leader for the members opposite, deindexed.

We did come back to reindexing so that there could be some predictable, consistent, aligned increases to the benefit programs that many, I would say even the majority of Albertans, rely on to some degree. Now we are back to a level of deindexation that takes away the certainty, that takes away the predictability, that will further contribute to a degradation of our social assistance program, putting more and more people into deeper and deeper poverty, and I don't know why we would ever want to legislate that as policy.

We have heard for the last five weeks in these Chambers about issues around homelessness, issues around health care, the unaffordability of groceries and utilities and insurance, and all that this does is make life harder. Bill 32 putting a cap of 2 per cent on increases to benefits just for this year, with no guarantee that that same cap will apply in years in the future, increases taxes and reduces benefits; that's just math, Mr. Speaker. But yes, please remind me how the UCP ran on a campaign to improve affordability and to make life more affordable for Albertans.

Over the last three years the average inflation rate was over 4 and a half per cent in Alberta; 2.2 in 2019; .1 in 2020 – that's the only time in the last five years that it's actually been below 2 per cent – 3.1 in 2021; 7.1 in '22; and now 3.1 in 2023. At no point with this new legislation will the benefits actually go up to any of those levels because they have put a ceiling of 2 per cent in on those increases. Now, I think it is important to note that none of those are 14 per cent; 14 per cent, of course, being the rate that the UCP voted to increase members' living allowance just last week.

10:10

Clearly, the members opposite saw that the cost of living was going to make it hard to pay their expenses, so they voted to raise the living allowance by double digits. The NDP members voted against the increase. Unfortunately, the UCP say: 14 per cent for us, but no more than 2 per cent for everybody else collecting any kind of income benefit in this province.

The poverty threshold, Mr. Speaker is about \$29,000 for a single person. That's the poverty line. They now have a deep income poverty threshold, which is \$22,000. An Alberta Works recipient in the expected to work category makes \$11,602 a year, and they might get up to 2 per cent increase next year. AISH is \$1,902, still below the deep income poverty threshold of \$22,000 for a single person.

Unfortunately, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, this is poverty as government policy. You know, we can tweak the system over here to make it a little bit harder, we can tweak the system over here to make it a little bit better, but in the spirit of Hugh Segal, we need a full overhaul of the social assistance program so that we are not asking people to commit themselves to a lifetime of poverty as a result of this constant nickel and diming of people who have nothing else to give.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-North East.

Member Brar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak on Bill 32. Before I go any further, let me make it very clear that all members on this side of the House do support halal mortgage financing. I specifically want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie for his passionate, caring, and insightful speech on halal mortgage financing. If the government really cares about halal financing, they can bring a separate bill just focused on halal financing, the exact bill that the community members asked from them, and there will be

no problem to support it. In fact, we will all support it, but unfortunately this government's intent is not exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 32 stands as a monument to disdain of the hard-working people who keep Alberta running every day. Let me begin with some facts. According to the recent report Alberta's Disappearing Advantage by Dr. Jim Stanford, Alberta's workers have experienced unprecedented declines in their real wages and living standards. Public-sector workers won cumulative wage gains of just 3 to 4 per cent over multiyear contracts just as inflation accelerated. These workers thus experienced a historic decline in their real wages, as much as 10 per cent since 2020.

Mr. Speaker, we have a government that doesn't care about people working on minimum wage. I have met so many of my constituents who have repeatedly mentioned that if they would make a little bit more money working part-time, they can go to school for upgrading, they can go to school for recognition of their foreign credentials. It's another file that this UCP government has messed up.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to highlight again that it was this NDP government under the leadership of our Member for Edmonton-Strathcona that hiked the minimum wage to \$15, putting Alberta as number one in the entire country. Under this UCP government we are last, the lowest minimum wage in the entire country. That is just minimum wage.

Let me talk about real wages as well. Real wages in Alberta are now growing at the slowest rate in Canada, a pitiful 2 per cent annually for hourly employees over the past five years compared to the national average of 3.4 per cent. Alberta's minimum wage has lost 14 per cent of its value. This crisis has not occurred in a vacuum. This crisis has occurred because of the deliberate policies of this UCP government. They have always prioritized their wealthy insider corporate profits over the well-being of all Albertans.

Bill 32 is the latest chapter in their book, Mr. Speaker. This is the same government that gave a \$4.5 billion corporate handout to their wealthy corporate friends in 2019, and as a result 55,000 Albertans lost their jobs. This is the government that gambled almost \$2 billion of Albertans' money on Donald Trump's election in 2020 and lost.

Mr. Getson: And he's back.

Member Brar: And here are the members celebrating Donald Trump's election, who has recently said that he's going to impose 25 per cent tariffs on the Canadian economy, hurting the agricultural workers, hurting the agricultural economy and the energy sector of this province, Mr. Speaker. That's the hypocrisy that we are seeing on the other side.

What have we seen as a result of these policies? An explosion of corporate profits. That's not economic growth; it's economic plunder, Mr. Speaker.

Let's not forget who the workers are. They are the nurses who cared for our loved ones during the pandemic. They are the teachers who are going to schools every single day, teaching the next generation of this province. They were the EAs that were fired by this government during the pandemic.

This report also highlights that union coverage in Alberta is already the lowest in the country, at just 25 per cent overall and 11 per cent in the private sector. This government is not just kicking workers when they are down; this government is also building a system that ensures that they never get up. The government's priority is clear. They put their wealthy insiders before Albertans. But I ask, Mr. Speaker: at what cost?

In the past five years Albertans have seen a cumulative 27 per cent increase in food prices, 18 per cent increase in rents, 85 per cent increase in electricity, and 38 per cent increase in auto insurance rates, and now this government is planning to increase another 14 per cent for the next two years. As my colleague from Calgary-Currie has mentioned, anyone on AISH is making \$19,200 a year. That is way less than what this government just gave themselves, the raise on rent claims that they make every month.

Bill 32 does nothing to address these issues that Albertans are facing. Instead, it is making life more difficult for Albertans. This bill has nothing to do with fairness, nothing to do with efficiency.

The record of this government is not trustworthy, Mr. Speaker. As soon as the election arrives, they come up with cheques. They come up with the indexation of benefits. But as soon as the election is over, they show their real face, and they deindex those benefits. Let me give you some examples of that. The Member for Calgary-North West ran her leadership campaign promising to index those benefits, and none of these UCP MLAs supported this idea. As soon as the election arrived, they did the exact opposite, and as soon as the election was over, they deindexed those benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the government that Albertans expect or elected or deserve. I cannot accept a future where Alberta is a playground for profits while its people are being left behind. I will not stop fighting for an Alberta where Albertans are respected and not left behind.

I urge all my colleagues on this side of the House and on the other side of the House to vote against this bill, stand up for working Albertans, and let us choose fairness over exploitation, dignity over greed, and solidarity over division. The Alberta advantage must belong to all of us and not just to the wealthy insiders of this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Are there others?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call on the minister to close debate. That is waived.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:20 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Johnson	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	LaGrange	Schow
Boitchenko	Loewen	Schulz
Bouchard	Long	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Lovely	Sinclair
de Jonge	Luntz	Singh
Dreeshen	McDougall	Stephan
Dyck	McIver	Turton
Ellis	Nally	van Dijken
Fir	Neudorf	Wiebe
Getson	Nicolaides	Williams
Glubish	Nixon	Wilson
Guthrie	Petrovic	Wright, J.
Horner	Pitt	Yao
Hunter	Rowswell	Yaseen
Jean		

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Elmeligi	Kayande
Batten	Eremenko	Loyola
Boparai	Ganley	Metz
Brar	Goehring	Notley
Calahoo Stonehouse	Gray	Renaud
Ceci	Haji	Sabir
Chapman	Hayter	Schmidt
Dach	Hoffman	Shepherd
Deol	Hoyle	Sigurdson, L.
Eggen	Irwin	Sweet
Ellingson	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Totals:	For – 46	Against – 33

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a third time]

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent to return to Tabling Returns and Reports.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Ms Hoffman: It's a Christmas miracle, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much to all colleagues. I have a number of letters here from folks who've written in about public health care and their concerns that I promised to put on the record.

Then my second tabling is from a number of Albertans, thousands of them, in fact, around their concerns around the long COVID clinics closing when so many people don't have a family doctor.

Thank you so much.

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

(continued)

Bill 36

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the time we've all been waiting for, the time that I rise to move third reading of Bill 36, the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.

To reiterate briefly, Mr. Speaker, this bill makes minor clarifying amendments to various laws and has been the subject of consultation with the Official Opposition, which is custom. In the pursuit of efficiency in addition to clarity, I encourage all members to swiftly pass third reading of Bill 36.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Government House Leader has moved third reading of Bill 36. Is there anyone else wishing to join the debate? The Official Opposition Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Am I correct that as the Leader of the Official Opposition I'm able to speak for up to 90 minutes?

The Speaker: You have 89 minutes and 46 seconds remaining.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

That being said, I do think the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, is an excellent piece of legislation.

Seeing how little we have left on our Order Paper, I would like to just simply say thank you to all of the staff who have worked through this session at the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and in both caucus offices.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing and hearing none, I am prepared to call on the minister to close debate.

Mr. Schow: Waive.

[Motion carried; Bill 36 read a third time]

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise here at the end of this evening's sitting. Before I move to adjourn, I would like to say a couple of things. One, I would like to thank, as the member opposite did, all the staff who make this building possible and make our job so much easier.

I'd like to thank my Deputy Government House Leader team – the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction, the Minister of Justice – the whip, and also his team, the Member for Taber-Warner, the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. I'd also like to thank our staff, Jonathan Koehli and Ben McKay. And I'd also like to thank, if we could as a team here in the Legislature, first, of course, the table officers, please. Also, thanks to the Legislative Assembly security service for keeping us safe here in the building. I'd like to thank the pages for their continuous work.

10:30

Mr. Speaker, of course, I'd like to thank you as well and your office for all your tireless work putting up with us.

And last but certainly not least, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the opposition leader and Opposition House Leader for her

continued collaboration and all the members in this Chamber for their tireless work on behalf of all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to wish you all a safe, Merry Christmas, happy holidays, Happy New Year. With that, pursuant to Government Motion 54 I wish to advise the Assembly that the business of the 2024 fall sitting is now concluded.

The Speaker: Hon. members, my Christmas gift to you is to spare you session statistics and a lengthy Speaker's statement. You're welcome.

But I will say a very special thank you to the Government House Leader, the government caucus, as well as the Leader of the Official Opposition and her caucus for the great work and, if I might say, a renewed tone and a commitment to working together that I think has been refreshing for many.

I will just echo the thank yous from the Government House Leader to all of those folks who make the important work of our democracy happen, in particular but not limited to those in *Hansard*, IT, broadcast, FMAS, visitor services, and all of the other departments that work at the LAO, that a session adds additional duties to them. I hope that you will all join me in thanking the remainder of the LAO staff.

And lastly, hon. members, I too would like to express a deep debt of gratitude to the . . . [interjection] Listen, if you wanted the job, you could have got it.

A deep debt of gratitude to my staff in the Speaker's office, including my chief of staff, Lianne Bell, the rest of the team, both Andrew Koning and Katja, who do an incredible job. I know there's a great, deep debt of gratitude to them on behalf of all members of the Assembly, so thank you.

Hon. members, pursuant to Government Motion 54, agreed to on December 3, 2024, the House stands adjourned until February 2025.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:33 p.m. pursuant to Government Motion 54]

Bill Status Report for the 31st Legislature - 1st Session (2023-2024)

Activity to Wednesday, December 4, 2024

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

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

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

Bill 1 — Alberta Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act, 2023 (Smith)

First Reading — 10 (*Oct. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 57-58 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft.*), 96-97 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 145-47 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 147-54 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c6]

Bill 2 — Alberta Pension Protection Act (Horner)

First Reading — 89-90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 154-55 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 274-85 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 336-43 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft.*), 394-400 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 424-30 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 522-30 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 552-59 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 565 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 583-90 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 cA-29.5]

Bill 3 — Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Amendment Act, 2023 (Williams)

First Reading — 22 (*Oct. 31, 2023 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 90-93 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft.*), 180-87 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 272-73 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 307-09 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 334-36 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c10]

Bill 4 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 55 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 159-63 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 155-56 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 187-90 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 309-13 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 336 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c13]

Bill 5* — Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023 (Horner)

First Reading — 55-56 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 156-57 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 190-97 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 265-72 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 403-09 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 430-35 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 456 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*), 519-22 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted*), 559-62, 563-64 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed with amendments on division*)
Third Reading — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted to Committee of the Whole*), 564-55 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 575-83 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2023 c12]

Bill 6 — Public Health Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)

First Reading — 90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 157-58 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 313-20 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 435-38 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 456-62 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 462 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c11]

Bill 7 — Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2023 (Sawhney)

First Reading — 111 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 158-59 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 273-74 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 400-03 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 423-24 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 514-15 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c7]

Bill 8 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)

First Reading — 209 (*Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 299-307 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 438-41 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 515-18 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 546-52 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 564 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 569-75 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c8]

Bill 9 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Schow)

First Reading — 478 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 513-14 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 546 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 590-92 (*Dec. 7, 2023 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c9]

Bill 10 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 673 (*Mar. 12, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 705-16 (*Mar. 14, 2024 aft.*), 868-73 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft.*), 904-05 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 899-901 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 970-75 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1003-05 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1005-09 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1040-43 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c4]

Bill 11 — Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)

First Reading — 685 (*Mar. 13, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 976-90 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1009-15 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1091-96 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1217-20 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1334-1341 (*May 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1448-55 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024, except section 1, which comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 c6]

Bill 12* — Consumer Protection (Life Leases) Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 727 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1015-22 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1043-46 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft.*), 1096-102 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1135-40 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1220 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1239-48 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1367-74 (*May 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024; SA 2024 c3]

Bill 13 — Real Property Governance Act (Guthrie)

First Reading — 779 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1102-09 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1132-35 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1161-63 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1220-28 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1341-43 (*May 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1395-1400 (*May 9, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024, with some sections deemed to have come into force on March 21, 2024; SA 2024 cR-5.3]

Bill 14 — Appropriation Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 791 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 855-63 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 887-93 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), 903 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 920-24 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c1]

Bill 15 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 841 (*Mar. 25, 2024 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 863-68 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 893-99 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), 901-04 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 924 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*), 920 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft.*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c2]

Bill 16 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 935-36 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1127-32 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1248-53 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft.*), 1279-82 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1456-60 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1490-92 (*May 15, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c7]

Bill 17 — Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act (Williams)

First Reading — 959 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1156-61 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft.*), 1272-79 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1361-67 (*May 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1464-66 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 cC-1.5]

Bill 18* — Provincial Priorities Act (Smith)

First Reading — 993 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1122-27 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1209-17 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1253-60 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft.*), 1329-34 (*May 7, 2024 aft.*), 1533-40 (*May 21, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1540-42 (*May 21, 2024 aft.*), 1569-77 (*May 22, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1664-68 (*May 28, 2024 aft.*), 1692-99 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 cP-35.5]

Bill 19 — Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Neudorf)

First Reading — 1177 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1344-48 (*May 7, 2024 aft.*), 1400-03 (*May 9, 2024 aft.*), 1455-56 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1460-64 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1492-96 (*May 15, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c8]

Bill 20* — Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (McIver)

First Reading — 1271 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1374-82 (*May 8, 2024 aft.*), 1562-69 (*May 22, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1591-94 (*May 23, 2024 aft.*), 1669-75 (*May 28, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1699-1700 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1712-13 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1729-35 (*May 29, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation, except ss 2(24) and (25), which come into force on January 1, 2025; SA 2024 c11]

Bill 21 — Emergency Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)

First Reading — 1394 (*May 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1508-19 (*May 16, 2024 aft.*), 1542-48 (*May 21, 2024 aft.*), 1634-41 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1649-50 (*May 27, 2024 eve.*), 1675-81 (*May 28, 2024 aft.*), 1683-84 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1700-01 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1704--11 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 30, 2024; SA 2024 c9]

Bill 22 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 1447 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1594-1600 (*May 23, 2024 aft.*), 1641-48 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1650 (*May 27, 2024 eve.*), 1684-90 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1700-01 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1713-15 (*May 28, 2024 eve.*), 1735-41 (*May 29, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 c10]

Bill 24* — Alberta Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2024 (Amery)

First Reading — 1754-55 (*Oct. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1788-1805 (*Oct. 29, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1819-36 (*Oct. 30, 2024 aft.*), 2051-58 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft.*), 2082 (*Nov. 21, 2024 aft.*), 2144-45 (*Nov. 26, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2171-72 (*Nov. 27, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 25 — Early Learning and Child Care Amendment Act, 2024 (Jones)

First Reading — 1818 (*Oct. 30, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1855-56 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft.*), 1907-12 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft.*), 2027-29 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2189 (*Nov. 27, 2024 aft.*), 1717-20 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2222-27 (*Nov. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 26 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2) (LaGrange)

First Reading — 1848 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 1900-07 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft.*), 1969-77 (*Nov. 7, 2024 aft.*), 2137-40 (*Nov. 26, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2145-50 (*Nov. 26, 2024 aft.*), 2172-77 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2299-305 (*Dec. 3, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 27* — Education Amendment Act, 2024 (Nicolaides)

First Reading — 1848 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1912-20 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft.*), 2020-27 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2177-89 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2305-11 (*Dec. 3, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 28 — Meat Inspection Amendment Act, 2024 (Sigurdson, RJ)

First Reading — 1818 (*Oct. 30, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1854-55 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft.*), 1966-69 (*Nov. 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2058-60 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2066-68 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 29 — Fairness and Safety in Sport Act (Schow)

First Reading — 1848-49 (*Oct. 31, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1934-40 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft.*), 2088-92 (*Nov. 21, 2024 aft.*), 2140-44 (*Nov. 26, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2150-52 (*Nov. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2311-14 (*Dec. 3, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 30* — Service Alberta Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 1868 (*Nov. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1946-53 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft.*), 2068-70 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2082-88 (*Nov. 21, 2024 aft.*), 1720-24 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2227-31 (*Nov. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 31 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Amery)

First Reading — 1898 (*Nov. 5, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2029-35 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft.*), 2270-78 (*Dec. 2, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2319-23 (*Dec. 3, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2376-79 (*Dec. 4, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Bill 32 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2) (S) (Horner)

First Reading — 1868 (*Nov. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1940-46 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft.*), 1724-27 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2314-17 (*Dec. 3, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2336-37 (*Dec. 3, 2024 eve.*), 2366-69 (*Dec. 4, 2024 aft.*), 2379-89 (*Dec. 4, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Bill 33* — Protection of Privacy Act (Glubish)

First Reading — 1931 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2060-66 (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft.*), 1727-31 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve.*), 2231-33 (*Nov. 28, 2024 aft.*), 2278-80 (*Dec. 2, 2024 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2351-57 (*Dec. 4, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2360-63 (*Dec. 4, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 34* — Access to Information Act (Nally)

First Reading — 1931 (*Nov. 6, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2035-38 (*Nov. 19, 2024 aft.*), 2153-57 (*Nov. 26, 2024 aft.*), 2259-66 (*Dec. 2, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2281-84 (*Dec. 2, 2024 eve.*), 2323-32 (*Dec. 3, 2024 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2363-66 (*Dec. 4, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 35 — All-season Resorts Act (Schow)

First Reading — 1965-66 (*Nov. 7, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1731-36 (*Nov. 27, 2024 eve.*), 2266 (*Dec. 2, 2024 aft.*), 2267-70 (*Dec. 2, 2024 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2332-35 (*Dec. 3, 2024 eve.*), 2357-59 (*Dec. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2371-76 (*Dec. 4, 2024 eve., passed*)

Bill 36 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Schow)

First Reading — (*Nov. 20, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2280-81 (*Dec. 2, 2024 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2335-36 (*Dec. 3, 2024 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2389-90 (*Dec. 4, 2024 eve., passed*)

Bill 201 — Alberta Health Care Insurance (Access Fees) Amendment Act, 2023 (Brar)

First Reading — 90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 114-25 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft.*), 234-37 (*Nov. 20, 2023 aft., reasoned amendment agreed to on division; not proceeded with*)

Bill 202 — Education (Class Size and Composition) Amendment Act, 2023 (Chapman)

First Reading — 209 (*Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 237-46 (*Nov. 20, 2023 aft.*), 358-64 (*Nov. 27, 2023 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with*)

Bill 203 — Foreign Credential Advisory Committee Act (Dyck)

First Reading — 111 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 364-70 (*Nov. 27, 2023 aft.*), 479-86 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 730-43 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 805-12 (*Mar. 25, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on June 28, 2024; SA 2024 cF-16.5]

Bill 204 — Municipal Government (National Urban Parks) Amendment Act, 2023 (Lunty)

First Reading — 332 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 486-92 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft.*), 649-58 (*Mar. 11, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 812-17 (*Mar. 25, 2024 aft.*), 938-48 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 1059-66 (*Apr. 15, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force May 16, 2024; SA 2024 c5]

Bill 205 — Housing Statutes (Housing Security) Amendment Act, 2023 (Irwin)

First Reading — 510 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 658-62 (*Mar. 11, 2024 aft.*), 948-50 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft.*), 1066-71 (*Apr. 15, 2024 aft.*), 1178-81 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with*)

Bill 206 — Child and Youth Advocate (Parent and Guardian Advisor) Amendment Act, 2024 (Cyr)

First Reading — 917-18 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1181-90 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft.*), 1294-1300 (*May 6, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 207 — Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education (Valuing Skilled Workers) Amendment Act, 2024 (Hoyle)

First Reading — 1152-53 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1300-09 (*May 6, 2024 aft.*), 1417-20 (*May 13, 2024 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with*)

Bill 208 — Psycho-Educational Assessment Access Act (Hayter)

First Reading — 1359 (*May 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1420-29 (*May 13, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 209 — Reconciliation Implementation Act (Arcand-Paul)

First Reading — 1868-69 (*Nov. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 210 — Employment Standards (Protecting Workers' Tips) Amendment Act, 2024 (Gray)

First Reading — 2350 (*Dec. 4, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 211 — Arts and Creative Economy Advisory Council Act (Ceci)

First Reading — 1590 (*May 23, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 212 — Organ and Tissue Donor Information Agreement Act (Metz)

First Reading — 1663 (*May 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 213 — Cancer Care Delivery Standards Act (Goehring)

First Reading — 2298 (*Dec. 3, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 214 — Eastern Slopes Protection Act (Notley)

First Reading — 1729 (*May 29, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 215 — Prohibiting Ownership of Agricultural Lands (Pension Plans and Trust Corporations) Act (van Dijken)

First Reading — 2221 (*Nov. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — St. Joseph's College Amendment Act, 2023 (Sigurdson, L)

First Reading — 289 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*), 421 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with*)

Second Reading — 455 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 530 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c14]

Bill Pr2* — Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta Amendment Act, 2024 (Justin Wright)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

Second Reading — 1633 (*May 27, 2024 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1691 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1711 (*May 28, 2024 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 30, 2024]

Bill Pr3 — Providence Renewal Centre Amendment Act, 2024 (Calahoo Stonehouse)

First Reading — 918 *(Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*

Second Reading — 1633 *(May 27, 2024 eve., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 1691 *(May 28, 2024 eve., passed)*

Third Reading — 1711 *(May 28, 2024 eve., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force May 30, 2024]

Bill Pr4 — Rosebud School of the Arts Amendment Act, 2024 (Petrovic)

First Reading — 918 *(Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*

Second Reading — 1633-34 *(May 27, 2024 eve., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 1691 *(May 28, 2024 eve., passed)*

Third Reading — 1711-12 *(May 28, 2024 eve., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(May 30, 2024 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force May 30, 2024]

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