



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

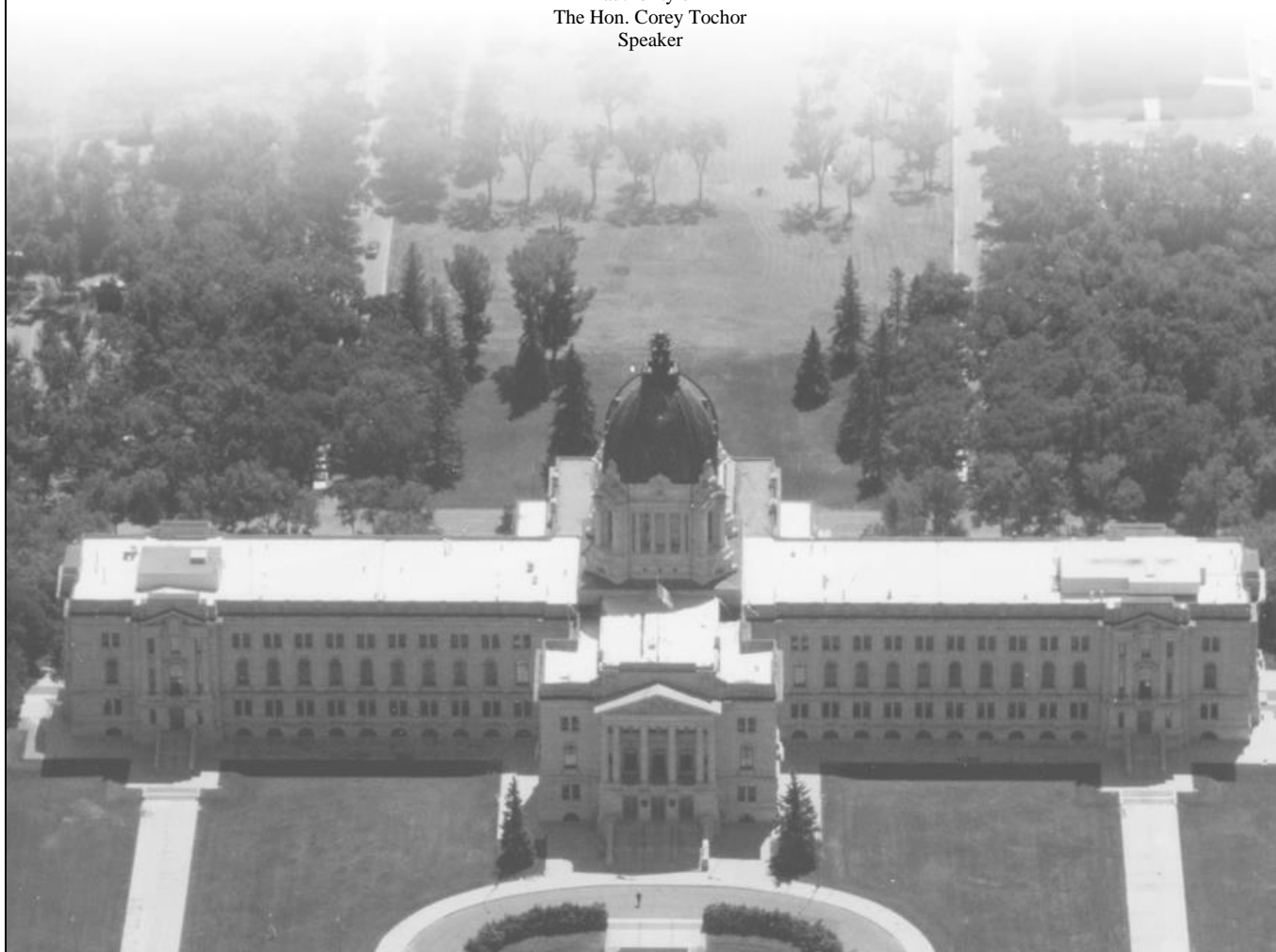
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 28th Legislature**

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

**Beaudry-Mellor**, Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)

**Beck**, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

**Belanger**, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Bill — Kindersley (SP)

**Bradshaw**, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

**Buckingham**, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

**Campeau**, Jennifer — Saskatoon Fairview (SP)

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

**Chartier**, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

**Cheveldayoff**, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

**Cox**, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

**D'Autremont**, Dan — Cannington (SP)

**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

**Docherty**, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

**Doherty**, Hon. Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)

**Doke**, Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

**Duncan**, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)

**Eyre**, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

**Fiaz**, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

**Forbes**, David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

**Hargrave**, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

**Harpauer**, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

**Harrison**, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

**Hart**, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

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**Kaeding**, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

**Lambert**, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

**Lawrence**, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

**Makowsky**, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

**Marit**, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

**McCall**, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

**McMorris**, Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

**Meili**, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

**Merriman**, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

**Michelson**, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

**Moe**, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

**Morgan**, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

**Nerlien**, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

**Olauson**, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

**Ottenbreit**, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

**Rancourt**, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

**Reiter**, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

**Ross**, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

**Sarauer**, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

**Sproule**, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

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**Steinley**, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

**Stewart**, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

**Tell**, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

**Tochor**, Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)

**Vermette**, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

**Wall**, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

**Weekes**, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

**Wilson**, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 11

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Buriandyk

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues and members of the Legislative Assembly here for granting leave for this very important and extended introduction. I am pleased to rise today to introduce a number of members of the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program in, I believe, the west gallery here, Mr. Speaker.

Today we have members, and I will list them and I'd ask them just to give a wave. I don't know if they're all quite here yet but, Mr. Speaker, we have members from the Mistawasis Business Club. We have Danika Dreaver. We have Chris Ochusachayoo, Ryan Dreaver, Konnor Johnstone, Korbin Lasas, Randall Strongarm, Kieran Moyah, and as well business club mentors Justin Bear and Yvonne Daniels.

Mr. Speaker, from the Muskoday Business Club, we have — and again, I'd just ask you to give a wave — Braiden Crain, Tessa Tait, and business club mentor Sandi LeBoeuf. And from the Kinistin Business Club, we have Aiden Lumberjack, Julian Severeight, Wesley Brabant, and business club mentor Cyrus Smokeyday. From the One Arrow Business Club, Mr. Speaker, we have Stephen Littlepine. Mr. Speaker, also they are joined by Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program coordinator, Joe Taylor.

And I won't get into many of the details of this program, Mr. Speaker, as I know my colleague from Saskatoon University will be giving a member's statement shortly on this. But, Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program is a program that gives high school students the opportunity to meet, the opportunity to interact and learn from a diverse group of successful entrepreneurs, professionals, and individuals.

It also gives the students, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to visit successful First Nations-owned and -managed businesses to hear first-hand about the opportunities and career options that are available to them in their life.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I also want to welcome Lisa Mooney from the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. And it's my understanding that Potash Corporation, through a partnership with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, are a generous financial supporter of the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship

Program.

We also have with us, Mr. Speaker, DonnaLyn Thorsteinson and Jasmine Gray here from Square One Saskatchewan, who have joined in to speak to this group of students here later today.

I ask that all of my colleagues here, Mr. Speaker, join me in welcoming this group of young entrepreneurs to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my colleague from Shellbrook in recognizing these youth and these entrepreneurs from the various First Nations of our province and to point out that, as one of the few Aboriginal MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the Assembly, I'm very proud when we showcase some of the Aboriginal talent that we have throughout the community, whether it's in sport, business, and politics. So I want to welcome all the young entrepreneurs and to point out that some of the successes that we've seen throughout the province are something that we should all celebrate.

And I had the opportunity once, Mr. Speaker, to stop at the newly opened Misty Café. I often gas up at the gas bar, and one day they had neck bones and bannock. But the only problem I had is I already had lunch, and I couldn't of course partake in the feast. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the Aboriginal entrepreneurs, from their various First Nations, to thank their instructors, and basically in my Cree language:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

Welcome and enjoy your visit, and great success in your future endeavours as business leaders of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina University.

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to introduce Jim Demeray, the president of UnderstandUs to the legislature today. Jim, would you give us a wave?

Jim is a graduate of the Hill School of Business, Mr. Speaker, from the University of Regina, and an important constituent and community leader. He has recently left his career in the restaurant industry to focus on growing UnderstandUs into a Saskatchewan-based mental health foundation that changes the current reality of health for our youth.

UnderstandUs is a mental health initiative based out of Regina, and it strives to improve the health and understanding of individuals with mental health barriers, in turn removing the stigma attached to it. UnderstandUs produces awareness campaigns and educates youth through the classroom web shop and website resources. It's a young organization, Mr. Speaker, that has the ability to connect to youth and make learning about mental health relatable and fun.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming Jim Demeray to his legislature today, and thank him for his work.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to join with the minister opposite to welcome Jim Demeray to his Assembly. Certainly the work that Jim has taken on through UnderstandUs is incredibly important work to so many across our province, so many throughout our community, so important to our future.

You couldn't have a better suited person for this work. Jim is just a real quality person, a caring person, a thoughtful person. And I'm thankful, we're thankful for his efforts on this front in addressing and making sure that mental health supports are in place, in addressing stigma, and making sure that young people have care and love and opportunity around them, and that they're not suffering in silence is something that we all support.

So on behalf of a grateful opposition, on behalf of a grateful province, I say thank you to Jim Demeray, to UnderstandUs, and to all those involved in mental health in our community.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce in your gallery, former MLA for Saskatoon Sutherland, Joceline Schriemer. Welcome back to your Assembly, Joceline.

Joceline helped this government form government in 2007, and changed from a long 16 years of the other side forming government. So we're very happy that Joceline has retired now. She worked for the Saskatoon Police Service for several years along with her husband, Gary Broste, who is a former deputy chief of police for Saskatoon, serving our citizens in Saskatoon for several years.

And they've also brought their grandson, who is sitting up there with the Captain America shirt on, Mr. Speaker. Cohen has joined us, and we were able to sneak him down on to your floor, Mr. Speaker, to be able to snap a couple of pictures. And we'll make sure that we get your permission for those pictures later on, Mr. Speaker.

But I wanted to welcome them: Joceline, back to her Assembly; and Gary and Cohen to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to also welcome a former colleague — and join the Minister of Environment — Cyrus Smokeyday, up in the gallery. Cyrus was, years and years ago, my summer student when I was with SaskEnergy, working in the salvage operations in the stores department. So I wanted to welcome him and his group to his Legislative Assembly. And it's good to see you, Cyrus. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member from Sutherland and welcome Joceline back to

her legislature. She did an outstanding job, and her husband. We've worked well in the, you know, in the city of Saskatoon, making sure the people of Saskatoon are safe, and the work that they did in the police service was really well done. And thank you, and good to see you here. And good to see you here with your grandson; that's a wonderful thing. So we wish you all the best in the future, good health, and enjoy the day. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature, it's my pleasure to welcome, in the west gallery, some folks here today who want to help the Minister of Health understand the cut that he's made to the hearing aid plan, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully see a reversal there.

Today we have two, we have many people here, but two very important people, Mr. Speaker. We have Zachary Baptiste and Mary-Jayne Morris, who are two children who are hearing impaired. And they know very well the services that the hearing aid plan has provided for them and the importance of them. Like to welcome their parents, Mary-Jayne Morris and Jayne Morris, and as well, Claudia Baptiste, who's Zachary's mom.

We also have here today Sheryn West and Kumiko Yokoyama, who are parents of children with cochlear implants, Mr. Speaker. We have educators Barbara Scott, Wendy White, Fay Jacobson. And as well we have Marilyn Barrington who's with the Saskatchewan Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf. She's a board member, but she's also a retired consultant and a teacher of the hearing impaired.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I think I got everybody in that list but while I'm on my feet, there's a couple of other people I'd like to mention as well. Lisa Mooney, the Minister of Environment introduced. I don't see her up in the gallery. Lisa is with PotashCorp of Saskatchewan and is one of my dear friends, Mr. Speaker. So I don't know if I'm just missing her, if she's behind a ledge or something, but I'd like to say welcome to her as well.

And I just would also, as the Health critic, would like to welcome Jim Demeray as someone who has a very personal vested interest in mental health. And also, as the Health critic, your work is really important and very valued.

So with that, I would like to ask all members of this Assembly to welcome these guests to this House. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to join with the Health critic in welcoming Zachary and Mary-Jayne and everybody that's with them here today. We hope they enjoy the proceedings this afternoon, and I'd ask everyone to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Hafford, Speers, North Battleford, Richard, and Mayfair. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. The people who have signed this petition are opposed to the Sask Party's plan to scrap and sell off the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They would like us all to know that STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] provides vital services to many seniors, workers, and families throughout the province; and that by scrapping STC out of the blue and without asking permission of the owners, the Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party is sending a clear sign about how little they care about protecting our Crowns like SaskTel; and that STC helps to drive the economy with its parcel service that serves farms and other businesses.

And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the plan to scrap and the sell-off of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation services to the people of Saskatchewan.

It is supported and signed by many good people of this province. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition opposing the Sask Party's cuts to spiritual care. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are concerned that this government neither understands the role that spiritual care providers provide in our health care facilities, nor do they understand the impact. Otherwise they would not have made this decision.

They point out that this government unilaterally eliminated spiritual care within health region facilities with this budget. They point out that spiritual care helps patients and residents and their families towards achieving holistic wellness, and that Saskatchewan will be the only province within Canada to not fund this support for its citizens.

The petitioners point out that the Sask Party did not inform the Saskatchewan people prior to the election just last year about their plan to scrap this funding to spiritual care. They point out that spiritual care provides a compassionate listening presence in times of crisis and the ability to respond to that spiritual and

emotional needs of patients and residents. They point out that spiritual care supports families and patients and residents in making difficult decisions, and that spiritual care meets the needs of traditional First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people. And they also point out, Mr. Speaker, that professional, non-denominational, non-faith-specific spiritual care practitioners facilitate for patients and residents in obtaining comfort and support from within their own faith traditions.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately stop the cuts to spiritual care programs in this province's health region facilities.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by citizens of Regina. I so submit.

[13:45]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my place to answer the call and direction by the member from Prince Albert Northcote for anyone from the Assembly to help her in her bid to get a second bridge built for Prince Albert, her hard work. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand in my place to offer that support.

And, Mr. Speaker, the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert and communities north of Prince Albert and the businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution. So the prayer reads as follows:

Ask that the Sask Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric, and refusing to listen to the people calling for action, and begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

And as we do, Mr. Speaker, day in, day out, we present page after page after page after page of this petition signed by people from all throughout the towns, cities, and villages of our province. And on this particular page, Mr. Speaker, I present the names of people that have signed from Melfort and Prince Albert, and I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, today I'm rising to present a petition opposed to Bill 40 and a potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. The people who have signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: Sask Party's Bill 40 creates a new definition for privatization, one that doesn't exist anywhere, Mr. Speaker, which would allow this government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum, and which is of course outside of the Crown protection Act, Mr. Speaker.

In 2015-16 alone, Saskatchewan's Crown corporations returned almost \$300 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals. Those dividends should go to the people of Saskatchewan, not private investors. And we know our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province.

Mr. Speaker, under the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, we know that Crown corporations would be exempt from corporate income tax as long as 90 per cent of the shares are held by a government or province. And of course the Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized, and therefore expose us to huge income tax expenditures. So this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to the owners of those Crowns, the people of Saskatchewan.

So I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the passage of Bill 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act*, and start protecting jobs and Crown corporations instead of selling them off to pay for Sask Party mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed the petition today are from the city of Regina. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition regarding pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province want to bring to our attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity; and that all women should be paid equitably; and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

And we know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 2016, women earned on average 63 cents for every dollar that a man makes, and in Regina women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar that a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national gender wage gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar a man makes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer now:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors where the Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction, provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of the Assembly, and that the Saskatchewan government call upon workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to present a petition to increase funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert mobile crisis has had to close its doors during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress, because of a lack of funding.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that during the daytime hours, during the week, a lot of the ministry offices are open but most of those ministry offices have different mandates. And mobile crisis filled a gap when clients did not fit those different mandates, and they provide that crisis intervention services which now is missing in Prince Albert. And a lot of people are falling through the cracks because of that.

The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile crisis has also put stress on Prince Albert Police Service, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide counselling and intervention services to clients. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to increase funding to the Prince Albert mobile crisis unit so they may once again offer 24-hour emergency crisis service.

Mr. Speaker, individuals across this province realize that this is an issue that needs to be dealt with in Prince Albert, and individuals signing this petition come from the communities of Humboldt, Vonda, and Regina. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to reverse the cuts to Saskatchewan libraries. Those who've signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following:

Whereas the Saskatchewan government has cut funding for the regional libraries in half, or by 3.5 million, and eliminated funding for libraries in Regina and Saskatoon, this drastic funding cut will have a devastating impact on libraries, especially regional libraries, and the many people who depend upon them.

Those who have signed this petition also wish to draw our attention to the fact that the drastic cuts imposed on libraries will lead to closures, program cuts, and reductions in hours, which will hurt the many people who use library services and the hard-working and dedicated public servants who work in libraries; and also to the fact that these cuts will have a disproportionate impact on rural communities where libraries are vital spaces. Potential closures or reductions in services will severely impact those communities. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan renew its commitment to the invaluable programming, educational opportunities, and public spaces our libraries provide across this province and restore the \$4.8 million for public

libraries that was cut in the 2017-2018 budget.

These petitions of course are being signed by people all across this province. These particular pages today are signed by residents of Regina. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces. And one in three Canadian workers have been impacted by domestic violence, and for many of them the violence follows them to work. Employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has already enacted such legislation and Ontario is on its way to enacting legislation that ensures job security for victims of domestic violence. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact legislation that requires all employers to provide a minimum of five paid workdays and a minimum of 17 weeks unpaid work leave with the assurance of job security upon return for all victims of domestic abuse in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing the petition today come from Saskatoon. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions. With a cut of \$36.8 million from post-secondary education, including a cut of \$6.4 million from technical institutions, is a very significant decrease in funding for our post-secondary institutions. And with students already paying among the highest tuition fees in Canada and experiencing high levels of student debt, this will only make life more difficult for students and families and only increase the challenges that they face in achieving an education. Alongside that, we have a drop in funding of Saskatchewan student aid by \$8.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

This petition is signed by individuals from Saskatoon. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Centre.

#### International Day of Pink

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, April 12th, 2017 marks the International Day of Pink. It is a day where communities across the country and across the world can unite in celebrating diversity and raising awareness to stop homophobia, transphobia, transmisogyny, and all forms of bullying. It is a day to say that we will not tolerate violence in our communities.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, the Day of Pink is a day for expressing kindness, compassion, and courage. Each year on the second Wednesday of April, millions of people wear pink and take a stand. The Day of Pink is a symbol, a spark that empowers and inspires youth across Canada to create amazing social change.

Mr. Speaker, bullying is a complex issue and youth are demanding that we help provide solutions. We must listen to our youth leaders in our communities and the solutions they are offering. We must adequately fund anti-bullying workshops and programs for youth and adults. All of us must take the time to educate ourselves about the issues that LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] youth are facing in our communities. Most of all, Mr. Speaker, we must show compassion.

Mr. Speaker, anyone can bully; anyone can be victimized by bullying, but together we can stop it. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in standing up for our youth and help them in addressing bullying and discrimination in Saskatchewan on today's Day of Pink and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

#### All Nations Healin' Thru Artz Talent Show and Fundraiser

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night I had the pleasure of attending and bringing greeting to the All Nations Healin' Thru Artz talent show and fundraiser with the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre and the Leader of the Opposition, who showed off his sweet jiggling moves.

This event gave all in attendance the important reminder that potential for indigenous youth is as limitless as our iconic Saskatchewan prairie skies. The event showcased the talents of the Thom Collegiate drum group, the Highway Express Band, and powwow and jig dancers.

For years this event has showcased the talents of aspiring artists by providing opportunity to share their stories through both diverse and empowering creative means. Having this opportunity for indigenous youth is so important as it provides a space for new skills to be learned, cultural lessons to be shared, and new friendships to be built and strengthened.

This year's participants not only showcased their artistic talents but their admirable and strong work ethic. I'd like to thank the

heart and soul of All Nations Healin' Thru Artz, Monica Fogul, along with the president of the board, Wendy Gervais, and all the hard-working staff and board members for a fantastic night of showcasing youth talent.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the All Nations Healin' Thru Artz on another successful year, and thank the organizers for the commitment to showcasing the talents of indigenous youth and Saskatchewan's future. Thank you. Hay-hay.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

### **Aging-Related Health Research in Saskatchewan**

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 5th I had the pleasure of attending the reception for the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation's publication, *Impacting Seniors' Health - The Value of Aging-Related Research in Saskatchewan*. This publication is a showcase of researchers and community members who are working together to address the issues affecting our senior population. Its goal is to create awareness of the aging-related health research that the SHRF [Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation] is funding and to demonstrate the positive impact this research is having on the people of Saskatchewan.

Much of the research in this publication is made possible by the collaborative efforts of the University of Regina's Centre on Aging and Health, and the University of Saskatchewan's College of Kinesiology. Between these two institutions, great strides have been made in areas such as fall prevention, early Alzheimer's treatments, and addressing health inequalities for seniors in rural and indigenous communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that the proportion of Canadians over 65 will surpass 20 per cent by 2030, and will reach 30 per cent by 2056. Without improving our current policies and training directions, as well as increasing funding to our health care system, Saskatchewan is simply not prepared to handle the increase in health care demands that often accompany aging. This is why the work of groups like the SHRF and the ingenuity of our university's aging-related programs are so important.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to join me in recognizing the SHRF and our university-based researchers for all the work they do to improve the quality of life of our seniors. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

[14:00]

### **International Day of Pink**

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, April 12th, marks the International Day of Pink. Mr. Speaker, the world is coming together to celebrate gender diversity, to bring an end to discrimination, and stop all forms of bullying. There are 9.7 million Canadians who are taking part in this day, wearing pink, and showing support.

The theme of this year's Day of Pink is Dialogues, encouraging all communities from youth engagement to LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] inclusion in sport to come together within this initiative and begin a conversation on how we can all be leaders.

Today is to empower youth, bring important issues like discrimination into conversation, helping us all understand each other better while minimizing the harsh effects that bullying can have on our communities. Mr. Speaker, we hope that today serves as a stepping stone and this conversation continues throughout the year. Workshops, flash mobs, and mobilized youth movements are expected to be seen all across Canada today, bringing awareness and hoping to end homophobia, transphobia, and bullying to these communities.

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we must commit today and every day to the important lessons we learn from the Day of Pink, ensuring that this province is a safe and welcoming place for all to be.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in celebrating this Day of Pink and thank all the hard-working organizers who are raising awareness for gender diversity and inclusiveness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

### **Mankota Athlete's Outstanding Hockey Career**

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to stand in this Assembly today and bring attention to an extraordinary young woman from Mankota in my constituency. Kylie Gavelin started skating as a little girl. She loved skating so much, she participated in both figure skating and hockey. As she grew up and continued to participate in both hockey and figure skating until the drive for both became too demanding, Kylie made the decision to stick with hockey.

Mr. Speaker, at 12 years of age she started playing with the Wood River Ice Cats and her talents got noticed. In grade 11 she moved to Weyburn in order to play AAA hockey with the Gold Wings. Her awards have become too numerous to list. As Kylie finished grade 12, she was selected to play on the Saskatchewan female midget AAA all-star team.

Mr. Speaker, Kylie's career in hockey did not end after high school. She enrolled at the University of Regina and just finished five seasons with the University of Regina Cougars while also traveling and playing with Team Canada. Now that her time with the Cougars has come to an end, Kylie plans to finish up her education at the U of R [University of Regina] in economics and business administration.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Kylie on her accomplishments and wish her the best of luck in all that she has yet to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.



### PotashCorp Supports Aboriginal Entrepreneurship

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to share with this Assembly that PotashCorp has announced a new commitment to Aboriginal entrepreneurship in our province.

Today there are 27,000 indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada, which is a 30 per cent increase from the 1996 to 2001 period. We are seeing more Aboriginal-owned businesses and economic development corporations each day, recruiting and investing back into their communities.

Mr. Speaker, PotashCorp has committed to establish the local Aboriginal content as a minimum of 30 per cent of its Saskatchewan supplier spend by 2020. Important skill training, knowledge, and resources will be available for Aboriginal youth, with support from the Saskatoon Tribal Council as well as Aboriginal youth business clubs. These clubs will ensure more successful entrepreneurship while growing important connections to PotashCorp.

They are committed to supporting indigenous youth in whichever venture they choose. The employment and procurement opportunities, in addition to this path to achieve proper support, include scholarships and internships within PotashCorp.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking PotashCorp for their admirable commitment to the indigenous youth in our province and their dedication to entrepreneurs nationwide.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

### New Passenger Bus Service in Yorkton and Regina

**Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we had to make some tough decisions in our government's budget, and one of those decisions was to wind down STC. In the midst of those tough decisions, on this side of the House we have a lot of faith in the ingenuity of the people and businesses of this province. We are already seeing entrepreneurs announce bus services in some of our communities. Earlier this week, my colleague from Martensville-Warman spoke about how AV transport will serve Martensville, Warman, and Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to bring to the attention of this Assembly that DiCal Transport, based out of Melville, is planning to offer a daily bus service between Yorkton and Regina. This local company already offers courier services to many communities across the province. They are finalizing the details of this service and which communities will be served. They are committed to having the route ready for June 1st. This new route will also involve employing more local people and provide a great opportunity to grow local services.

We are pleased to see local entrepreneurs taking advantage of an opportunity and creating businesses that will serve regions of this province well with a passenger bus service that doesn't need a government subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating DiCal Transport on their planned passenger service, opening June 1st. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

### Details of Land Transactions

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, day after day when we ask for some transparency and some straight answers on the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal, we hear the same tired lines from the Economy minister. Yesterday though, the Premier took to his feet but his answers weren't any better. The Premier hid behind FOI [freedom of information] technicalities.

But Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Premier's condescending and arrogant answer is that the Privacy Commissioner doesn't agree. He said, and I quote, "I am not persuaded that the information in these documents would qualify as financial, commercial, or technical information." He recommended that the GTH land documents be released in full. In fact he said that twice.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier shouldn't need to check his political compass because if his moral compass still worked, he would do the right thing, come clean with Saskatchewan people, and release these documents.

**The Speaker:** — I caution the member to use his words carefully when questioning the character of hon. members of this Assembly. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to my hon. friend that while I may not agree on a number of issues with him, I won't impugn his motives and I won't impugn his integrity in this place even as we disagree. And I would ask him to accord the same respect to members on both sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, as to the question with respect to the arrangement with CP [Canadian Pacific], we signed a confidentiality agreement as previous governments have in the past with companies, and we feel duty bound to that confidentiality agreement. Mr. Speaker, we're aware of the ruling from the Privacy Commissioner, but we believe that it's important to maintain the integrity of the government's position when they enter into these agreements either through the Crown corporations or through the ministries.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, who began these negotiations in 2007, agreed. I'm reading now from a briefing note from the NDP time with respect to this very negotiation with CP, as they were working with the city and CP for the relocation of those railway tracks to the GTH. Mr. Speaker, the briefing note to the NDP, July 2007, says, "The province remains respectful of the high level of confidentiality required by their private sector partner, CPR, as they are vulnerable to market conditions beyond their control."

Mr. Speaker, that was the position of the NDP on the same issue, exact same issue, in 2007. And, Mr. Speaker, we agree with that position.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

#### **Letter to School Divisions and Funding for Education**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier sort of glosses over that millions of dollars have been wasted and that a scandal has ensued and that this project has gone off the rails in many ways, Mr. Speaker. But you see in the Premier and that whole caucus an arrogance and a sort of feeling that they know better than Saskatchewan people.

Let's look just at the Education minister. He wants to take control of local school boards, but he can't even keep track of his own ministry. There's been really nothing but confusion since he sent out a letter from his ministry urging . . . or imposing massive cuts on school boards.

He now says the letter is "wrong," but he also says he didn't read it. Mr. Speaker, he's now asking school boards to wait for more clarity, but says he doesn't have it. He doesn't even know how much has to be ultimately saved in salaries: "That's one of the reasons we need to seek some more clarity before we go back to our employer partners." And "That's a question for the Finance minister."

I'm asking the Premier, how can he ram through these damaging cuts and attacks on Saskatchewan's classrooms, Saskatchewan workers, and Saskatchewan families when his caucus clearly doesn't know what's going on?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly be happy to answer the member's question. I want to point out that in his preamble he referenced the millions of dollars the government's prepared to invest in the GTH, and even with respect, potentially, to relocation of the railway as we've talked about.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also now reading from a briefing note from the NDP government on this very same project. Members opposite like to forget the fact that the project began, including authorization for the funds, under the previous government — the right move, I would point out; I think it's the right move. But important to be clear with the fact that this briefing note notes that in April the province — that's the NDP government — the province approved \$33 million to be invested in the project. In part, by the way, that was about relocating, and it was also part about establishing the GTH. And again, I wouldn't argue with that position; I think that was the right thing to do.

With respect to the member's question, you know, Mr. Speaker, we have said, and it's in the budget, we've noted that we have to find 3.5 per cent savings in terms of the public sector salary compensation expenses right across government, right across public service in the province, in Crowns, in health care, and education. Mr. Speaker, I have said publicly that we want to let collective bargaining determine how that's achieved. We will

not be prescriptive. We will not limit the bargaining tables to consider anything.

Mr. Speaker, the letter that's referenced was wrong, as the Deputy Premier has indicated. And the Deputy Premier has indicated that the position's been clarified. I do so again here today on the floor of the House. This is an important matter, Mr. Speaker. We want all of our third party partners to understand, and those bargaining tables to realize, 3.5 per cent must be found in savings right across government. And we will not be prescriptive how they're found; we will not dictate to the collective bargaining tables.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not quite clarified. The minister's letter went out to every school division, demanded that they break contracts with teachers, teaching assistants, principals, custodians, and every school division worker across the province. And the minister couldn't remember when he read it: "I don't know. I can't answer that." And "Would it possibly have been sometime yesterday? I don't know."

And, Mr. Speaker, when I asked if any school boards had responded to the letter by the deadline, he said, no. And then he said, maybe. And then he said, "I'm told by the officials that they were, and they said about half. I haven't looked at them." Mr. Speaker, after all of this, he still hadn't looked.

Then the minister, that minister presented a bill that takes control away from elected school board trustees because he thinks that some of them aren't fit to do their job. Mr. Speaker, after all we've seen, from where does the minister get the gall to look down on anyone and judge whether they're doing their job correctly?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we spent a long time in committee last night. I'd like to give the member the opportunity to stand on her feet in the House today and withdraw some of the statements that she's made.

We made it abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker, that we do not advocate or we're not asking any of the divisions to breach any contracts. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having people sit down and have a meaningful discussion about how we can meet the targets that we have set. The targets we have set are aggressive targets. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to meet those targets, and we're going to meet them by doing some hard work at the bargaining table.

Mr. Speaker, for her to stand up and say, we're not fit to do something . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker, their record is not something they should take any pride in whatsoever.

Since we have formed government, Mr. Speaker, we've increased funding, operating funding from \$944 million in 2007, total funding is now up to \$2.02 billion, an increase of 114 per cent. In '07, operating funding was 1.41; now it is up 32 per cent to 1.86 billion. Capital, 18 million to 119 million. If the member has more questions, Mr. Speaker, I've got more

particulars to give to her.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He was clear about one thing last night, and that is that he wants to be able to overrule the voice of elected trustees. He doesn't trust the people of Saskatchewan to hold their local representatives to account, and it's an affront to democracy.

Here's a list for the minister: trustees' conflict of interest, disqualification of trustees, board meetings, quorum for school division meetings, voting at school division meetings, general duties and powers of the division board, special and annual meeting of electors, submission of school division budgets, and changes to school division boundaries. Also protections against school closures.

[14:15]

These are just a few of the rules and protections that the Education minister is ripping out of *The Education Act* and putting into the hands of government with Bill 63. Can the minister tell the people of Saskatchewan why he's silencing local voices and making it easier for the Sask Party to shut down our kids' schools?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we'll make no apologies for wanting to find savings with regard to busing, common procurement, having a salary grid, having some common admin costs, looking at variety of different things to make sure that we commit all the resources necessary to keep our schools open, healthy, happy, and thriving.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about the variety of things that she's done. She claims to have listened to the consultation when she accuses us of listening in the most literal sense. She used . . . and I'm quoting from her, "The minister has claimed to listen to consultations around the province and I think this is only the case in the most literal sense."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I do like to listen in the most literal sense. I like to hear what people have said, and that's why we've agreed to a number of things with the Saskatchewan school boards.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about some of the literal things that she said. She talked in her maiden speech in this House about Lang School. Do you know what list Lang School is on? On the 176 been closed. She is the last MLA that will come out of the Lang School in our province.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

#### Financial Situation of Municipalities

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, this whole budget and all these bills are about giving themselves more power and silencing local voices. They're not even listening to SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] anymore,

Mr. Speaker. The Premier and the minister can go on and on about fairness, but what's fair about telling our cities, towns, and villages how to govern themselves, especially when the advice is to mismanage and waste things as badly as the Sask Party has?

Mr. Speaker, it's been three weeks since the budget, and most of the cities, towns, and villages affected by the Sask Party cuts have had no official communication from the minister about what to expect.

Maybe the minister would properly understand the implications of these cuts if she had consulted before cheerleading for this devastating budget. At very least, she should be talking to them now. Can the minister put a hold on these damaging cuts and engage in genuine consultation with the elected leadership of our cities, towns, and villages in Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and there is no doubt there was difficult decisions that needed to be made in this budget. And one of those decisions was that two and a half per cent of the deficit, about that much, would be shared with our municipal partners. And as such, we're looking for \$33 million from our municipal partners.

Mr. Speaker, I have, along with three other ministers, have met with the mayors of the two major cities since the budget, as well as the president of SUMA, as well as the mayor and the city caucus Chair. And, Mr. Speaker, my office has taken each and every call from any municipality that has any questions.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

#### Provision of Hearing Services

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, this government cuts first and measures later, but it's Saskatchewan families and our kids most in need who are being left short. The cuts to the hearing aid plan are mean-spirited and just plain wrong. They haphazardly announced this cut in the budget, but have no idea how big this impact will be.

Well, Mr. Speaker, families who know far better than the minister the impacts these cuts will have will tell you they are significant. Access to hearing services for children and for adults will be slashed. The amount of time people have to wait to see an audiologist will skyrocket, and so will the costs and the stresses to families.

This government cut the entire program and, along with it, 10 audiologists. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to how very deep these cuts are, the minister is either unaware or doesn't care. Which is it?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recognize concerns that many people have with this change, but I'd like to clarify, Mr. Speaker, that many of the services

around hearing, there's some misinformation out there. The cochlear implant, the bone-anchored device — those sorts of programs, Mr. Speaker, they're going to continue.

And the audiologists that provide those services will continue. The numbers that the member opposite provided on numbers of audiologists are not correct. Seven audiologists will continue under those programs. Five will be laid off as a result of changes to the hearing aid program.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't unusual in Canada with Saskatchewan moving in this direction. Seven provinces don't provide those sorts of services for hearing aids. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to clarify, people need to understand, under the existing hearing aid program, hearing aids are not free in Saskatchewan. They're still purchased from the hearing aid program.

There's already more audiologists practising in the private sector in Saskatchewan than there are in the hearing aid program. And again, while we recognize people have some concerns, rest assured the programs around it will continue. This is only the hearing aid program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the folks in the gallery today are not assured. There are 10 audiologists in the hearing aid plan in Saskatoon and Regina. Are they being cut or are they not being cut is the question? These folks here today would like an answer.

We are only one of two provinces, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't have a universal early hearing detection and intervention program currently, or in the works. Mr. Speaker, the limited services that we do have for this early screening are supported by — wait for it — the audiologists at the hearing aid plan. Mr. Speaker, that's the program that the Sask Party just cut. When it comes to access to audiologists and hearing services, the Sask Party is speeding up our province's race to the bottom.

Mr. Speaker, they don't have to take my word for it. There was a young boy at a rally last week who wore a sign that said, "The problem isn't that I can't hear, it's that you won't listen." So will the minister finally listen and will he acknowledge how terrible his cuts to these important services are? And will he reverse those cuts?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, seven audiologists will be retained to provide services: the cochlear implant, the bone anchor device, and, Mr. Speaker, the newborn screening that the member opposite was speaking of.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out again, when I said about some misinformation from the budget, that the screening program for infants has not changed. The member can certainly criticize, and we certainly are always looking at different types of programs and how we can improve services within the current economic situation. But, Mr. Speaker, that program, which will continue — the budget has had no impact on it — is

the exact same program that was under the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, to her original point about the people who are in the gallery and are concerned, if they wish, I would be more than pleased to meet with them after question period and discuss their concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

### **Provision of Teacher Education Programming in the North**

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, when the minister chose not to listen to northern leaders and students and cancelled NORTEP [northern teacher education program] and NORPAC [Northern Professional Access College] funding, she promised that, and I quote, "Students will be able to finish the programs under the same terms and conditions they had when they entered." Mr. Speaker, it's just weeks later and that promise has already been broken.

While the current program covered the costs of books and tuition for students with northern status, student costs for the new program at Northlands College are listed at \$6,900 per year, with no mention of any financial assistance. Current NORTEP students are being told they need to reapply, and they don't even have a guarantee that they'll be readmitted into the new program.

Will the minister acknowledge the damage being done to northern education, and will she reverse the decision to cancel NORTEP's funding and finally put students first?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we were frankly disappointed by the press release, which contained several mischaracterized and uncited quotes that the member opposite is referring to. And I would urge the students to contact us directly, Mr. Speaker. Certainly my door remains open.

We remain convinced that the parties will come together in the best interests of students and iron out all the details. It's still very early in the process, Mr. Speaker. The universities are meeting with Northlands this very day. And the best interests of students is certainly what we had in mind when we asked Northlands to deliver expanded teaching education programming to northern students and not cut it.

And Northlands university programming is already up and running in La Ronge, Creighton, Buffalo Narrows, and Ile-a-la-Crosse. They have big plans. It's full of good faith, Mr. Speaker. It will welcome new and returning students with open arms and has said so, and it's open for enrolments as we speak. Supports and housing, the intention has always been for as seamless a transition as possible, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago this minister quoted a press release from Northlands that said that those programs would stay intact and that those students would have the same access. And she promised that this change would somehow make education better, saying that the funding would go directly to northern students. Instead, Mr. Speaker, students are facing massive tuition fees and the possibility of not being able to finish their degrees.

Mr. Speaker, students are wondering why what the minister said is not matching what she's done. NORTEP and NORPAC have been highly successful programs, training hundreds of teachers who remained in the North after finishing their degrees. It's no exaggeration to say that the minister's shutdown of this program has put the entire northern education system at risk. Will the minister admit that this cut is a serious blow to northern education? Will she put education first and end this terrible sell-off of our northern education program?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Mr. Speaker, that commitment has been made absolutely clear by Northlands that those students will be seen through, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin professes great concern about students and student supports, as he should, but it is interesting in light of some of the comments he made during what was a bit of a leadership tour last week, Mr. Speaker. For one thing, he spoke out in favour again of the carbon tax, which would cripple this province, including the livelihood of all students and their families, Mr. Speaker.

But he also left the impression that the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship had been cancelled, when the exact opposite is true. He was all over the map, Mr. Speaker. He talked about getting very minimal details, and yet hidden away in the second sentence of our news release on budget day, it stated explicitly that high school graduates from Saskatchewan will continue to receive \$500 a year in direct tuition relief through the Sask Advantage Scholarship. The member opposite also said, "I still don't know exactly what's going on, and I want to dig into it more."

Let me help, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Advantage Scholarship, a universal scholarship, receives \$9 million in funding this year, part of \$137 million in student supports committed to in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

#### **Support for Meewasin Valley Authority**

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are big changes under way at the Meewasin Valley Authority because of the Sask Party, and I'm just not talking about the one member we all heard about yesterday that was kicked off the board. No, Mr. Speaker, the changes are because of the cuts the Sask Party has zoned in on the jewel of our city. The Sask Party has forced the Meewasin Valley Authority to cut programs and staff that make Saskatoon great. Meewasin is cutting their staff for the summer,

abandoning important conservation sites along the river that paddlers and hikers have used for years.

With the changes they are ramming through, the Sask Party is removing the requirement for stable, predictable funding from the province. Mr. Speaker, they didn't want to fund Meewasin, so they got rid of the rules that required them to.

Mr. Speaker, just like the school boards, libraries, and municipalities, these cuts are Sask Party cuts. Why is the Sask Party forcing Saskatoon to pay for the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member for the question. Although as he goes through the information, Meewasin issued a news release yesterday outlining how they're working their way through the budget challenges. Yes, they received a 17 per cent cut, but they're working their way through it.

Some programs have to be modified. I'm told that the contest for the arrival of the pelicans, for example, is now being taken over by a radio station. And others that are more serious are being looked at.

The important thing is Meewasin is committed to working through the challenges. This government is committed to working through those challenges. We are working together. And, Mr. Speaker, of course the city of Saskatoon has a tremendous potential because of the revenue sharing that they share. Back in 2007, the city of Saskatoon received \$17.8 million in revenue sharing. They now receive \$46.4 million. Mr. Speaker, that's an increase of 161 per cent. Again we are committed to working with Meewasin to get through these challenges. Thank you.

[14:30]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

#### **Government Strategies to Attract Business**

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly Meewasin takes care of a beautiful river. It's obvious though that the river that that minister's more familiar with is the denial.

The Premier recently came under question for offering up tax breaks and office space to oil companies in Calgary, Mr. Speaker. Monday night in committee, I asked the Minister for Central Services if the Sask Party had figured out what it would cost to host some of those companies in government-owned buildings should anyone take the Premier up on his offer. The minister said, "... we would find a way. We would manage it here, manage it there; that's what we do. And we have the STC building now," Mr. Speaker.

The minister can't tell us how much taxpayers will be on the hook for, but when it comes to bankrolling the Premier's corporate head office fishing trip, she can say that we have the STC building now, Mr. Speaker. Scrap and sell off this

important public service for cancer patients, seniors, rural communities, and more, all to make room for the big corporations that bankroll that Premier's party. Mr. Speaker, how does that make any sense?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll make no apologies for trying to attract businesses to the province of Saskatchewan. That's what we have done since 2007, Mr. Speaker, and we've done it in a number of ways. Sometimes we take Peter Lougheed's advice and we ask companies to locate here. Sometimes we do it through competitive taxes, and sometimes we do it through infrastructure . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes we've done it through partnership and innovation. Sometimes we've attracted investment and new jobs through the infrastructure program of the government, like the bypass that's created 8,200 jobs, Mr. Speaker. And though we have a lot more work to do, the net result is that since 2007 there are 60,000 more jobs in the province than there were when we began, Mr. Speaker, and there's now 1.15 million people living here.

Moreover, I would point out that in the last two months we've seen — and this is unique for the last little while — two straight months of year-over-year job growth, including two reports ago where we led the country, Mr. Speaker. It's part of the growth plan that we pursued. We give credit to the economy, Mr. Speaker, but policies do matter.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the relocation initiative, new growth tax incentives were improved in budgets two years ago. The member was here. He would have been participating in that budget debate. Those new growth tax incentives can be used by a company if they locate here and create new jobs for whatever they want, including relocation expenses, Mr. Speaker. They're revenue neutral to the province.

But I would just say this: as long as we have the opportunity to serve on this side of the House, we will pursue investment and jobs for this province. We will do it on the strength of a growth plan that offers competitive taxes, infrastructure investment, Mr. Speaker, and, I would say, a plan that has turned the worst job creation record that we had under the NDP into the second best in the country.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 68 — *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 68, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved

introduction of Bill No. 68, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

Why is the Opposition House Leader on his feet?

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leave for a point of order.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

## POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd request . . . In question period the Minister of Advanced Education quoted from a document attributing remarks to the member from Meewasin. Could that minister be so kind as to table that with the Assembly?

**The Speaker:** — I find that point of order out of order because the request for tabling of documents does not need to be placed in a point of order.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 63

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 63 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative de 2017 sur l'éducation*** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into the debate on Bill 63, *The Education Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is an Act that certainly warrants some attention and has captured the attention of many people around this province. I think, as I've talked about before, Mr. Speaker, there is always good cause to look at the context in which any piece of legislation is presented in this legislature and the reasons why and some of the events leading up to the presentation of a bill such as the one that we have before us.

And, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. This is a very, very important bill in the history of this province. In fact it's transformational. This, if passed, signals the issuing in of a very new era, a very different era with regard to school board governance and how school boards are run in this province, Mr. Speaker.

School boards in this province have a very long and distinguished history going back to the very beginnings of this province, Mr. Speaker. And I know that many members on both sides of this legislature, really this is where they started their political careers was as representatives on local school boards. And this is something that is valued, I would expect and would hope, by members of both sides of this Assembly.

What this bill before us, Bill 63, proposes to do is to turn essentially everything that we currently know and value with regard to school boards on its head. I'm quoting the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] when I say, "This bill would take out of what is now required to happen in the light of day and allow that to be done in the dark."

Specifically this takes a number of current responsibilities for locally elected school boards and places them in regulations, Mr. Speaker, and that is something that is deeply concerning, deeply concerning all in of itself, but certainly even more concerning when we look at sort of the broad history of what school boards in this province have been through in recent history. I'll go back to 2009, Mr. Speaker — that was the first year that I was elected to the Regina Public School Board — and some of the changes that we have seen since that time. 2009 was another one of those very big shifts with regard to school board governance in the province but, I would argue, not nearly even as big as this shift if this bill were to pass.

In 1909 — 2009 rather, a century ahead from there, Mr. Speaker — in 2009 what happened was, through legislation, the boards lost their ability to set their own mill rates, so essentially made them financially beholden, in terms of the amount of money anyway, to money that they received from the provincial government as they had then assumed the ability to set mill rates — so through education property tax as mill rates set by the government and grants from the provincial government. But they retained their ability to set priorities around how they spent that money, and that has continued to this day.

But what hasn't happened between 2009 and today in the province with regard to school boards is there hasn't been a whole lot of clarity. And it's really been marked by uncertainty and a lot of promises about a funding model, Mr. Speaker, a funding model that I know the Saskatchewan School Boards Association requested some predictability, adequacy in that model, amongst other requests. And that hasn't necessarily been

something that we've seen. So we haven't quite fixed that, and we're on to this very new era with passage of this bill.

In 2014, to give a little bit of history, there was some work to align priorities within the education sector, and work was undertaken to come up with an education sector strategic plan. And this was a process that required a certain amount of co-operation and collaboration around the province, and shares a certain level of, enjoys a certain level of support from a wide variety of people within the sector — not unanimous support, but there is some acknowledgement that this is a sector plan and these are the goals of the sector.

One of those goals within that sector . . . There were a number of targets around graduation rates, the gap between First Nations and non-First Nations students, First Nations and Métis students and non-First Nations and Métis students in the province. Literacy, numeracy, graduation rates, Mr. Speaker; a readiness for children leaving the kindergarten system — all of those goals were there. And there was also a goal in that strategic plan, there remains a goal for some efficiencies within the sector, and in fact the number that was placed on that was \$5 million back in 2004. This is a plan that extends to 2020. I don't have the report in front of me, but I believe I trust my memory on that, Mr. Speaker.

What happened up until last year, the boards have now found about \$20 million in efficiencies, and some of that have been difficult decisions, I'm sure, for boards. But they have taken up that challenge and surpassed it, so instead of finding \$5 million in savings from within the sector, they have found 20.

But that wasn't enough, Mr. Speaker, for this government. We learned last night in committee and the night before, that a new target has been set and that target is now \$60 million within the sector. This is a sector that is not shrinking in terms of students. Many divisions have . . . We continue to see about 2,000 students, additional students into the system every year. And this growth has not in my memory been ever fully supported, but now we're looking for an additional accumulated \$60 million within the sector.

And just in case that wasn't enough and the boards . . . I'm not sure why there wouldn't be a reason to trust that they would act in good faith — they, as I noted, have found \$20 million in savings up to this point. The minister has proposed this bill which allows the minister to direct all financial decisions of our publicly elected school boards which seems more than a little heavy-handed, Mr. Speaker. It fundamentally changes the nature of boards and their role within our public education system. It essentially makes them agents of the minister in terms of his ability to direct financial decisions and many other decisions. I think that there was a list that I went through previously. I'm just going to read from some of them.

This bill gives the Minister of Education the power to issue directives to school divisions with respect to the number of approved trustees. So the number of trustees which, of course, we just had school board elections last fall here in the province and people went out and voted in a democratic process for their trustees. Well that now can be determined by the minister — the number of approved trustees, their compensation levels, the spending of capital and operating funding provided by the

government.

[14:45]

But here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. Now essentially all of the funding, operating and capital funding is provided by the government because also introduced as a budget bill is a change to taxation which would . . . Currently school boards . . . The education property tax levy is collected by municipalities, submitted to school boards, and they remit to the provincial government.

This bill would bypass boards altogether in that process, which is not entirely the problem except in that they're requesting that that be properly accounted for, and there's some concerns about that. And frankly I understand where their concerns lie given the lack of transparency and clarity and consultation that we've seen characterize this, well, this budget, the sector, and frankly the conducting of business by that government at this time, Mr. Speaker. So that essentially means that all of the money that school boards are responsible for now can be directed by the minister.

And it also removes the following rules out of the Act and into the regulations. And, Mr. Speaker, as we know here but perhaps folks at home aren't as aware of, when you remove sections from the Act and put them into the regulation . . . When they're in the Act they're protected, so to make changes we have to go through the legislative process. There's room for public debate as we're having now. Once they're moved into the regulations, they can be changed by an order in council. So while this body is not sitting, the cabinet can decide and remove any of these powers.

So I'll make a list of those powers that are now currently able to be changed without any oversight by this legislative body: trustees' conflict of interest; disqualification of trustees; board meetings; quorum for school division meetings; voting at school division meetings; remuneration for trustees; the general duties and powers of the division school board, so essentially school boards, Mr. Speaker; school closures, as we've noted; special and annual meetings of the electors; and the submission of school division budgets; changes to school division boundaries — which was something we just went through, a process in this province where people indicated very clearly, and the minister has admitted that it was reported back by the education panel, certainly by Mr. Perrins, that there's absolutely no appetite for those boundary changes. But we don't get a say anymore, Mr. Speaker, if this bill passes. And also gives the minister . . . gives the cabinet, rather, the ability to dictate the establishment of new school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, this is completely against what we heard from people around this province in terms of what they wanted to happen with regard to local voice in education. It was signalled, and the minister has not denied this. In fact this bill was presented, this budget was presented, packaged in a way as, we listened to people and we've retained local voice. But, Mr. Speaker — the minister may want to look at my quote here — but they retained local school boards only in the most literal sense. What they have done is really quashed local voice with this bill, were this bill to pass.

There's a quote, and I want to make sure that I attribute it correctly. I believe it is from Shawn Davidson who is the president of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], who stated, we don't want to just be the face of public education; we want to be the voice of public education. And that is certainly what people across this province signalled. They will be there to essentially implement the minister's cuts, to sit at those tables with employee groups and be blamed and responsible for these devastating cuts.

We're not just talking about the minus 3.5 mandate which will be devastating to the sector, but in addition the finding \$54 million from this sector, from a sector that already is struggling to maintain service on the front lines. And this despite the fact that they will stand to collect an additional \$67 million through education property tax in this budget.

So we have some very significant concerns about this, in fact to the extent that we are asking that this be shelved altogether. This is disingenuous to suggest that this bill would keep local voice in education. School boards have indicated very clearly . . . I know that we saw a rather lengthy scum with the president of the SSBA yesterday, indicating his very significant concerns with this piece of legislation. I've started to hear from certainly my own constituents and other bodies around the province, but also constituents from the members opposite. And I know we've been out in constituencies around this province, some that are held by our members, but really held by members on all sides of this Assembly. And we're hearing very clearly that they want local voice in education.

They thought when the budget came out and they saw that press release, we're retaining local voice, you know, they breathed a bit of a sigh of relief. But when we see the details of this bill, people are starting to recognize that this is not what they were promised in any way. This comes in the context of devastating cuts within the sector that will impact our classrooms. And just in case there's any doubt that school boards, were this bill passed, are going to implement them, the minister has assumed that he will just take over those decisions and take over the very existence of school boards, right out of *The Education Act* and put them into the regulations.

So for that reason and many more, we will be paying very, very close attention. We will continue to meet with our partners throughout the sector to have consultation, meaningful consultation. There's enough to go on, just in the report back of the Perrins report and the report of the panel, that really contradicts the measures that we're seeing in Bill 63. It is our hope that this bill would be repealed, that it would be shelved, that there would be some admission on part of government that this is wrong headed and this is not at all what people were asking for when they were consulted over the last several months in this province.

I will have an opportunity to continue this discussion with the minister and his officials in committee. I will take every opportunity to speak out against this bill and to speak with people around the province, to mount pressure both inside this Assembly and outside this Assembly. Because, make no mistake, this fundamentally changes the face of public education in our province, and it is very clear that this is not the direction that the people of this province want to take. Yet here



it is before us.

It's along another theme in this budget where we have seen an increasing willingness to take over the powers from other organizations and levels of government, to pursue rather relentlessly the spending reserves of other organizations now that this government has spent all of their own and more. And we really think that this is a very wrong direction, a drastic and wrong direction for the government to take, and frankly they have no mandate to do so.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we send this bill to committee, and I will continue discussion there. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 63, *The Education Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 63, *The Education Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

### Bill No. 64

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 64 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to stand and provide some comments with regards to Bill No. 64, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017*.

Mr. Speaker, this Act of legislation has been discussed quite thoroughly, oftentimes every day in sitting here. And I've had lots of communications with many municipal leaders across the province and their concerns about the changes to this legislation and the hastiness of it, and the fact that there was very poor communication within the government to the municipal level of governments. And so we're really concerned about some of the purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker. And so it's really important that we get a lot of discussion on it.

First, Mr. Speaker, I want to kind of talk a little bit about the

history of the . . . It's called grants-in-lieu. Some places it's called payments-in-lieu. But, Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure you well know, many communities . . . There was 109 that are being impacted with this change and they have agreements that were signed and made years and years ago, some from the 1930s, '40s, '50s. This has been decades of agreement within the province and these municipalities.

The history of that is that urban municipalities, while they were becoming more progressive and more modern, they were looking at ways of providing power for their residents. And once they started establishing some power within their communities, they started providing some power to some of the local communities, local people around their communities, and were working out those agreements.

And when, I believe, the best premier of this province came about, Tommy Douglas came in power, he decided that this was something that needed to be provided across the province. And so he got a group of people together and it was called Sask Power Commission at that time, Mr. Speaker. And so they got together and they went across the province and they looked at how could we provide power across this province and in a Crown corporation aspect so that the people of this province own this corporation. And so they came up with a plan and they presented it to him and he said, let's go. Let's go with this.

And so then these organizations went to these communities that were already providing this power and said, can we work out a deal because we want to have a consistent power grid across the province? And so this Sask Power Commission was then made into SaskPower Corporation that we have now to this day. And so they went to these communities and they made these deals with these communities, and these agreements, these negotiated agreements, Mr. Speaker. And yes, there's a little bit of different language in each of these agreements in all of these communities if you take a look at them, and I've had an opportunity to look at many of them.

But the whole purpose of these negotiated contracts basically remain the same: that the province would take over the creation of power in the province, but they would provide these communities a payment-in-lieu for being able to use their land or their buildings or whatever. And so these agreements were made. It was a consistent revenue stream that these municipalities had, and never did they think that this was something that could possibly be on the table, because they feel that there really was little to no consultation with regards to that from this government.

[15:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, once budget day came along, these communities were really floored that they were going to lose this revenue stream, and with no consultation. Like when usually you make a deal with someone, you sign a contract; you honour that contract. But if something comes about and you can't honour it anymore, you usually sit down with the leaders that you created that contract with and come up with a plan. And there has been no plan that's been established. There's been no talk about maybe even the government paying out their contracts, you know, or giving a financial payment-in-lieu for all of this. It's just basically, let's create a law so we can

eliminate it. And it really doesn't seem very fair, Mr. Speaker.

So like I said, a lot of the municipal leaders feel that there was really no consultation. And the minister did have a meeting, though, with some of the members of SUMA. And I'll read a quote that was from one of the SUMA members:

We were hopeful the meeting with the four cabinet ministers on March 29th was a first step in a meaningful consultation and further discussion with the provincial government. But less than two days later, before we could bring forward any suggestions, Minister Harpauer issued a press release. The decision to cap the payments-in-lieu cuts — but only for nine of the 109 hometowns, and only at 30 per cent of the revenue-sharing amount — came out of nowhere for us.

This was a quote from Vice-president Mike Strachan of SUMA. So basically they had a meeting, Mr. Speaker, and the leaders felt that, you know, oh well we might have gotten towards something. But then they were just blown away when they saw a media release that there's going to be these caps placed only to the nine of the 109 communities.

Then it says here:

To add insult to injury, within a week of agreeing to work with and listen to Saskatchewan hometowns, to find a better solution, the government introduced Bill 64. The bill would cancel all municipal services agreements — payments-in-lieu — and take away municipalities' right to legal action against the government or the Crowns in question.

And Mike Strachan quotes here, "We thought we were partners in building Saskatchewan, but this isn't how partners act."

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that they had a meeting and the minister said, look, we need to come up with these savings. And the municipal leaders said, okay, we get it. We'll come together. We'll come up with a plan. We'll talk with all of our leaders and see what we need to put on the table to make up that savings. So they worked endless hours of trying to come up with a plan. And then all of a sudden there was a media release that they were going to make the caps to those nine communities, and then there was the bill that was released in the House here with no consultation, Mr. Speaker. And to me that's poor governance, to do that and just sweep the rug right out from underneath their feet.

And so the impact of this is going to be greatly felt. And so the vice-president, Rodger Hayward, says:

Almost a hundred towns stand to lose their payments-in-lieu. Introducing this bill was a clear sign to hometowns that the provincial government is not interested in meaningful consultation with the order of government that's spent the last decade on the front lines of growth. We were doing our fair share during the boom, providing crucial services and creating the quality of life we all expect in Saskatchewan. We were paying, not profiting.

Because, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, the population of the

province has increased and a lot of the people who have come to the province have been living in the urban settings. And so a lot of these urban settings have had to make adjustments to the increase, and they were happy with that and they were willing to do that and they were going to do their part. And so a lot of the money that they had in their budgets and stuff . . . like they had to build new facilities. They had to accommodate for all this growth in our province, which was good. But now they feel like, again, like the rug was pulled right out from underneath them.

And so although the cities were happy that at this time municipal revenue sharing has stayed consistent . . . and that was the whole purpose of introducing revenue sharing, was to have a consistent flow of revenue. But they're saying now that, and this was a quote from vice-president Bob Maloney, "The province has been using revenue sharing as an excuse to keep passing responsibility down to municipalities."

And so they're feeling really that their voice was not heard. They might have had a meeting, but they weren't listened to. And so this is really concerning, Mr. Speaker. And so no one expects that the province will get the stakeholders' pre-approval of the budget, but certainly with a decrease in revenues that's this substantial, that maybe a little bit of consultation with the municipal leaders should have been the way to go about this. Because having no consultation is a complete insult. And during a time of austerity that we're facing right now, you really need to ensure that you have your primary stakeholders onside. And I think everybody's ready to tighten their belt buckle a little bit, but when you get a large substantial revenue taken away, that's a huge hit.

But we've got to remember, this isn't just a gift that was given by the province. This was contracts that were signed and agreed to. And so this is legal, binding agreements that this government is thinking that they can just pass this bill and just be done with it. And that's just not how things work, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to talk a little bit about the impact that these changes to the grants-in-lieu are going to have, these sudden changes. It wasn't even, let's work on a plan here. It was, this is what we're doing. You're losing all this money. We haven't told you how long this is going to last, if this is going to be this year or forever. We're not giving you any information.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of these communities . . . it's been 20 days since the budget, 12 days in a fiscal year already started, and a lot of these communities haven't even gotten any information from the ministry's office about what this impact will look like for them. How much are they losing? How much will their municipal revenue sharing for sure be? There's been no plans in place.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we know that within this budget the payments-in-lieu has been a huge, hard hit for the communities, but those aren't the only decisions that this provincial government has done that is going to result in major cuts and major changes to municipalities. Mr. Speaker, we also know that the libraries, a lot of them are getting 50 per cent cut or at least a big, substantial percentage of their budget, and they're being told to look at their municipal government for funding for

that.

And then we have STC that's going to be eliminated and virtually privatized, which is a broken promise. But that's going to have a huge impact on a lot of these communities as well, about what are they going to do for transportation and for their residents or even their goods and all that.

We also have, we have the city . . . the rinks, the grants for the rinks. That's going to be a huge hit. I talk for my hometown which is a small village, that they don't have many residents there and they're going to lose \$5,000 from the rinks. And also their municipal revenue sharing went down because of the recent census, because their population has gone down, because a lot of people have been moving to the bigger urban centres. So these small villages and towns, Mr. Speaker, are really suffering and struggling with a lot of the decisions in this bill, or in this budget. But also the urban parks have gotten a big hit.

And then the 1 per cent PST [provincial sales tax] is going to have a big, big issue in people's budgets, but also the 6 per cent on people who . . . construction materials. So if people are . . . [inaudible] . . . cities and towns and such are looking at . . . I was talking to the administrator from my hometown and he said that they were wanting to build a new fire hall. And so that's going to add the cost to that, you know, so the bottom line. So this is really going to be impacting on already hard-hit urban municipalities.

And so I wanted to talk about a few . . . Like I know the city of Prince Albert, they said that if they were to try to make up for all the money that they're losing because of this budget, they would have to raise taxes 8 per cent. And they chose not to do that on this budget, but they did say that residents need to expect that that's going to be a large tax hike next year.

There's also been talk about a lot of the police budgets in a lot of these communities are going to be cut. And we're still waiting to hear from . . . the results from when the group of members went across the province to talk about crime in our province. And we know crime is getting out of hand. It's an issue, especially for a lot of these communities, these small-town communities, the towns and villages and RMs [rural municipality]. And so if their budgets are shrinking and they're going to have less money to put towards policing, that's going to have a big impact on the communities as well.

And I was watching the Regina City Council, and they had — it was a full chamber there — and they had lots of people coming to present because they're worried about programs that are going to be cut here as well. And they had a big contingent of people coming from the Leslie lawn bowling greens, and they talked about how it's a matter of thousands of dollars to keep that lawn bowling green open, but it is one of the items that are on the table, you know, and that's something that's really important to many residents here.

And the Snowbuster program and the PlayEscapes program is also being considered as maybe needing to cut those programs as well.

The PlayEscapes program, Mr. Speaker, this is a program that is really valuable, especially to some of the more inner-city kids

and families for recreational options. And when we're talking about cuts to parks and cuts to libraries and then now cuts to these programs, like families who are the most vulnerable are really going to be the ones who are going to be struggling the most from this budget. And so this program was free for the community. There was 1,553 registered participants, but they also had a lot of unregistered people dropping in. And they have about 900 visits a day. And so this is a program that's really important, but the city really needs to make some tough decisions, you know, and so those are the types of things that are on the block.

And in Saskatoon as well, they said that with all of the cuts from this budget, they're losing about \$59 million, and that's huge. And so some of the provincial cuts were from Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority, Tourism Saskatoon, Meewasin Valley Authority, and the Lighthouse stabilization unit. And then the Saskatoon Public Library lost \$650,000, Mr. Speaker. And the provincial contributions to the West Nile virus, the mosquito control, and the Dutch elm disease is hundreds of thousands of dollars, you know, that's going to be lost. And so the big cities are struggling, but we can't forget about the villages and towns and everybody who is going to be having to be heavily impacted by this.

And I think the biggest insult to injury with this bill, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they've added a clause here so people can't even, you know, pursue legal action because of losing their rights to these signed contracts, these signed agreements.

[15:15]

And you know, we have a process of litigation so that people who feel that they have been wronged by our government have an opportunity to stand in front of someone who's an impartial adviser, the judge, and come up, give your piece, and then they give their piece, and then they make a decision on whether this was the right or wrong choice.

But obviously this government knew this was the wrong decision, and it was not a proper decision because even in the minister's statements here, and I'll quote:

The amending legislation was necessary to provide the government the option of redirecting the revenues to the General Revenue Fund and also to clarify potential legal situations that may have been raised by those impacted communities.

Mr. Speaker, that is wrong in all so many levels, like to take that right away from people. If you're making a decision, good, but make a decision that you know is legally binding and is the right decision.

And this is coming from a government here that, you know, they're feeling that a decision the federal government is imposing on them is wrong, and they're talking about seeking maybe litigation if this is being imposed to them. But then yet they're going to take the rights away from our municipal governments for them to have that same exact ability to voice their concerns. It just doesn't seem right, and it just doesn't seem like it's the right decision to make. And using your power and authority to get what you want is the wrong thing, and it's

not democratic society. This was not something that was brought up at the election. People did not vote on this, and now taking their legal, their rights away is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And so obviously you can see I'm pretty passionate about this issue. Talking to all the community leaders, it's been heartbreaking hearing the decisions they're going to need to make and the fact that they feel that they haven't been heard or listened to. And these leaders are so very important in our province here, Mr. Speaker, and so I'm going to continue to have those meetings with them.

But I'm looking forward to having more discussion with regards to this bill in committee. We're going to have some good discussion about it, and I'm looking forward to that, Mr. Speaker. So I'm going to move this bill off to committee, and I'll cease my remarks right now and have more discussion there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 64, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 64, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that this House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:19.]



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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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**President of the Executive Council**  
**Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs**

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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

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Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport  
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

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Minister of Finance

**Hon. Dustin Duncan**  
Minister of Energy and Resources  
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Telecommunications

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Minister of Advanced Education

**Hon. Joe Hargrave**  
Minister of Crown Investments  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Government Insurance  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Transportation Company

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Minister of Government Relations  
Minister Responsible for First Nations,  
Métis and Northern Affairs

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Liquor and Gaming Authority  
Minister Responsible for The Global  
Transportation Hub Authority  
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan  
Minister Responsible for Innovation

**Hon. David Marit**  
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**Hon. Scott Moe**  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water  
Security Agency  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Water Corporation

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Deputy Premier  
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Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety  
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Workers' Compensation Board

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**Hon. Jim Reiter**  
Minister of Health

**Hon. Lyle Stewart**  
Minister of Agriculture  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop  
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Minister of Central Services  
Minister Responsible for the Provincial  
Capital Commission  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Gaming Corporation

**Hon. Gordon Wyant**  
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Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Power Corporation