



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

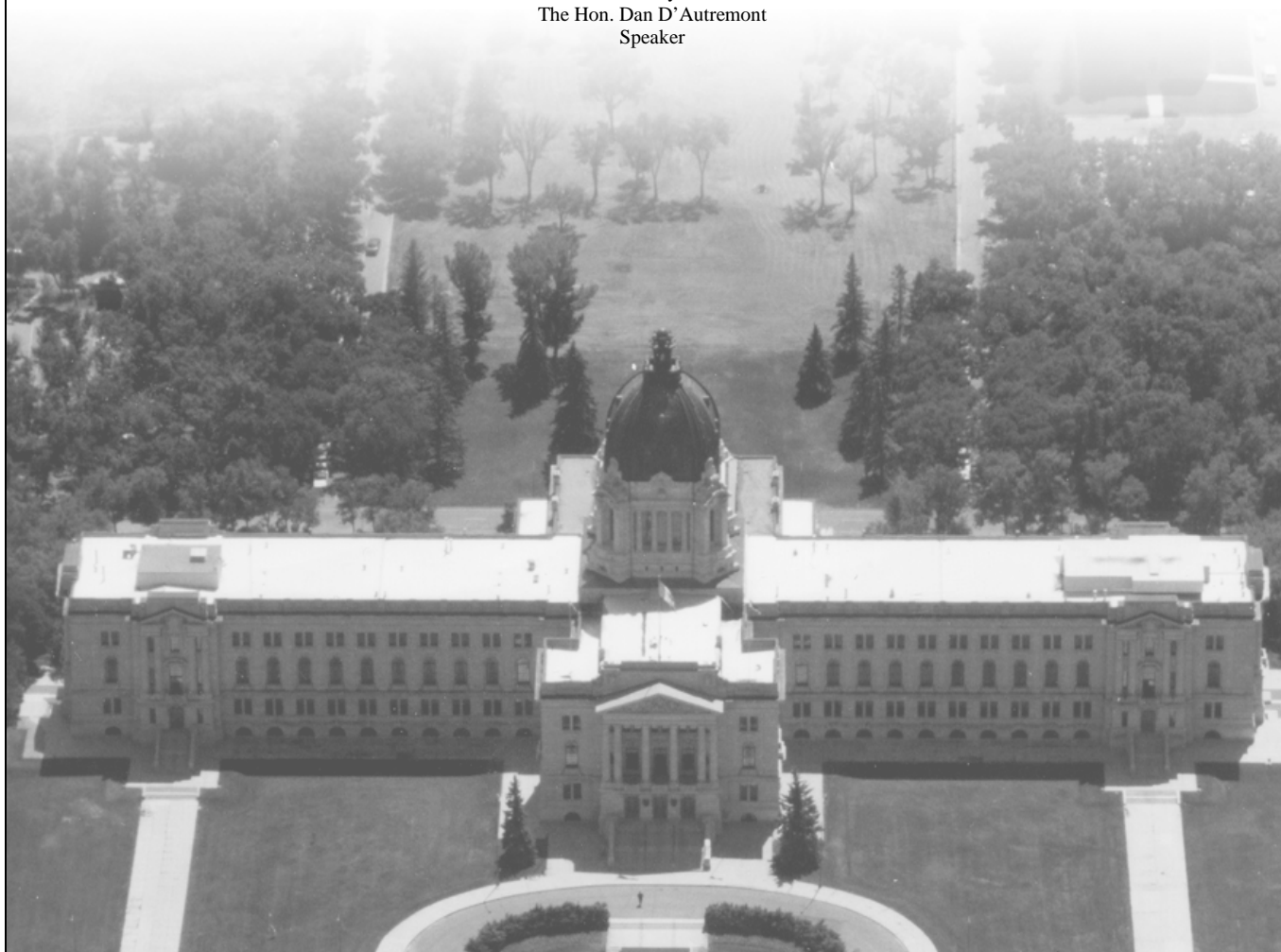
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to members of the House, it's a pleasure for me to introduce our candidate in the coming general election in the constituency of Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota, Bronwyn Eyre. She is currently a trustee for the Saskatoon Public School Board, ward 7, which includes Stonebridge where she lives. She's been a broadcaster — we'll know her through that work — and a daily panellist on CJME and CKOM. Before that she was a columnist in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*. Her columns appeared I think here in Regina as well in the *Leader-Post*.

She grew up in Saskatoon, attended Aden Bowman Collegiate. She took her post-secondary education at McGill and at the University of Saskatchewan where she graduated from the College of Law in 1996. From '95 to 2005 she worked as a senior writer and editor for two London, England-based legal publications, *Commercial Lawyer* and *European Lawyer* in London, Milan, and Frankfurt.

Joining Bronwyn is her mother, Sigrid, and her son Max Eyre. We want to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce some very special guests that we have in your gallery this morning, adorned beautifully in, I think it's blue, blue teal, for a specific reason, Mr. Speaker. Early this morning, we were out in front of the legislature raising a flag recognizing tomorrow as world ovarian cancer awareness day, Mr. Speaker.

With us today in the Assembly are both survivors, family members, and supporters of survivors and forwarders of the cause, Mr. Speaker. So to you and through you, we have Stephanie Gosselin, regional director of Ovarian Cancer Canada; Catherine Mazurkawich, Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope committee Co-Chair. We have Anne Chase, Ovarian Cancer Canada board member and volunteer. We also have Cheryl Hill, Gord Bonokoski, Barry Young, Marilyn Williams, Paul O'Byrne, Coralee Found, and Laureen Gatin. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members welcome these fine individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister in welcoming the ovarian cancer survivors or SOCS [Saskatchewan Ovarian Cancer Survivors] group here today and the folks from Ovarian Cancer Canada as

well. It's an important day tomorrow to acknowledge and recognize, and we appreciate having both survivors, family members, and supporters here in the gallery with us today: Anne Chase who is a Woman of Distinction, we might add. We have Stephanie Gosselin with Ovarian Cancer Canada and Mr. Bonokoski. Gord Bonokoski happens to be the grandpa of a fine legislative staffer we have in our office, Mitch Bonokoski.

And also I would like to give a shout-out to Jennifer Milne Bisson who is here today and is a good friend. So thank you for all that you do in supporting and advocating, supporting other family members and those who have lived with ovarian cancer, and for all the advocacy and fundraising you do to make sure that people's lives are better. And I'd like to ask all members to also welcome them to their gallery here today.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome Krystal Lewis who is my intern with the Saskatchewan legislative internship program. Krystal and I have only been working together for a couple of weeks, but I'd just like to tell you a little bit about her.

She's lived in Saskatchewan for most of her life and holds a BFA [Bachelor in Fine Arts] in media production and studies and a certificate in German, both from the U of R [University of Regina]. She's currently pursuing studies in international development. But the things that I'd like to say about her, I hear from one of my colleagues actually that she's a heck of a volunteer with folk fest here in Regina, with the Folk Festival here in Regina.

As well in my short time with her, I have learned that she . . . I've been very impressed and pleased with the high level of work that she's done for me, and I'm looking forward to having her come to Saskatoon Riversdale and see some of the things that I do in my office there. But I know she has an interest in population and public health, and I'm looking forward to introducing her to some of the organizations and individuals who support that work in Saskatoon.

So I would ask all members to welcome Krystal Lewis to her legislature today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a number of people from my constituency from the Wadena Elementary School. There are 29 grade 4 students here today. Welcome. With them are their teachers, Ms. Harvey, Ms. Helsted; school principal, Mr. Halyk; and the chaperones, Ms. Hiscock and Burghardt and Mrs. Haskey.

With them today, I would like to mention that Nevin Halyk, the principal of Wadena School, has been named as one of Canada's 40 outstanding principals by The Learning Partnership. He was nominated by his peers, the school staff, and community members to receive the award, and he's part of a group of over 350 exemplary leaders from every province and territory in the country.

So congratulations to you, and thank you for bringing this group to the legislature. I'm looking forward to meeting later, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I'd like to introduce two individuals seated in your gallery, two people from the fine city of Moose Jaw, Stacey Landin and her mother, Isobel Landin, who are here today. Both long-time observers of politics, and they wanted to come to the Assembly to watch the proceedings in person today. Stacey is also the president of the Moose Jaw and District Labour Council, and so I thank her for her work on that front.

And I should also note, Mr. Speaker, that Stacey worked for many years as a constituency assistant in Moose Jaw and helped many people in the community in problems and issues they have. And I know she's a passionate advocate for a lot of people in the city. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these two fine citizens of the province to the legislature today.

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce several people in your gallery who are associated with Mitacs, M-i-t-a-c-s, the national organization that supports graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in research and development internships with industry. Today I announced \$270,000 to support this program on behalf of taxpayers of this province, Mr. Speaker. Our government is very proud to support this program which benefits students and industry in Saskatchewan through contributions to research and innovation.

Three of the people in the gallery are students at the University of Saskatchewan, and all have benefited from the Mitacs internships. They are Richard Lomotey, Terrence Huang, and Nam Hoang. Seated with them, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery is Professor Ralph Deters, a professor of computer science at the University of Saskatchewan who is supervising the work of these three students. Professor Deters has supervised numerous Mitacs accelerate projects and is a champion of the program. Also with them, Mr. Speaker, from the Mitacs organization is Mr. Matthew Bongiorno.

I want to congratulate these students for their dedication and hard work in their studies and on being selected as interns under the Mitacs program. And I want to thank Professor Deters and Mr. Bongiorno from Mitacs for their commitment to this program of excellence. Please join me in welcoming them to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the three students and Professor Deters and Mr. Bongiorno from Mitacs here today to join us for the proceedings. Certainly graduate studies is a very important part of the post-secondary education system, and

certainly the work that those students do in terms of adding to our society's knowledge and to our economy's productivity is very important. So it's good to see long supporters of that kind of work here, both with the students and with Professor Deters and Mr. Bongiorno from Mitacs. So on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce today to you and through you in this Assembly, seated in your gallery, some special guests and friends of mine. Joining us today is Senator Curt McKenzie, a Republican senator from the state senate of Idaho. Curt, if you want to give us a wave. Curt was elected in 2002 and has been a senator in the state senate there ever since.

I've come to know Curt quite well over the last four years through our work with PNWER [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region], and I gained a lot of respect for his insight into matters that are important on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel. And we thank him for that and his energy and enthusiasm for the work that PNWER does, Mr. Speaker. I know we're going to have a great year. Curt is the incoming president of PNWER, and I'm certainly looking forward to his leadership over the next year and working with him. Thank you, Curt.

As well with Curt, we have Mr. Matt Morrison. He's the executive director of PNWER out of Seattle. He is the man that keeps PNWER running smoothly and does an excellent job. Matt has been, I believe, with PNWER for about 20 years now. You could say that he is the voice and I think the face of PNWER wherever we go. As the old saying goes, I think if you looked in the dictionary for the definition of PNWER, you'd probably see a picture of Matt Morrison. But he definitely is PNWER and brings a lot to the work that PNWER does.

He's done a lot to advance the interest and the profile of this association. And I'm impressed with the work that Matt does and the contacts and respect that he has not only in state and provincial capitals but both in Ottawa and Washington as well. And, Mr. Speaker, if you're ever looking for somebody, if you're going somewhere, to book you a 12- or a 14-hour day, Matt Morrison's the guy because he books full days for us. We definitely get our value when we go.

As well with them, seated up in your gallery is Ms. Shawna Argue, our province's private sector representative to PNWER. She is the past president of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan, and we thank her for the hospitality, the work she's done in organizing this visit. As well, seated in the gallery is Matt Smith. He's the senior international officer for the international relations branch of

Exec Council. I'd like to thank Matt personally for the work that he does. He's a phenomenal and very valued resource for me on the trips that we take, in providing background information and things that we need to address.

Mr. Speaker, members know that Saskatchewan has been a member of PNWER since 2008, and PNWER is a public-private partnership of governments, business, and non-government organizations from this area of North America. The member states, provinces, and territories that comprise PNWER include Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. We and they are all united in common cause to promote greater regional collaboration, improved competitiveness, achieve continued economic growth, and reduce trade and regulatory barriers. Senator McKenzie and Mr. Morrison, who have joined us, joined with Ms. Argue in Regina for the biennial capital visit of PNWER leadership. While in Regina, Senator McKenzie will have the opportunity to learn more about our great province. He and Mr. Morrison will meet with you, Mr. Speaker, a number of cabinet ministers, and representatives of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, and as well with APEGS [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan]. They will discuss how PNWER can best help us in advancing our shared interests.

Saskatchewan has been an active participant in PNWER deliberations and governance. We played host to a highly successful PNWER annual summit three years ago, and my colleague the Minister of Agriculture served as president of PNWER from 2012 to 2013. PNWER is an organization that encourages trade, builds relationships, works across borders, and provides a forum for discussing economic opportunities and issues common to this region. It has been described as the gold standard of US [United States]-Canada relations, and is unique in that it encompasses governments from both sides of the border as well as public sector interests in several different aspects, having over 20 working groups involved.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join with me in welcoming these guests to our Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming our friends from PNWER, and I want to say thank you to them for the work that they've done over many years. Senator McKenzie, it's a special pleasure to welcome you here as the new incoming president of the organization.

We know that you'll provide leadership that follows in a long tradition that, as my friend opposite said, Mr. Matt Morrison has been in this leadership for a long time, and part of his success I think is making sure he gets good people to continue to act as the president. Also, Shawna Argue, it's good to welcome you as well.

[10:15]

I think we should all remember that this organization was

established by Deputy Premier Jim Horsman of Alberta and one of the state senators from Washington, Mr. Bluechel. And they had a common interest in seeing how Washington and British Columbia, where Mr. Bluechel had grown up, and Alberta and Idaho and all of the Pacific Northwest could work together. That's expanded to include us because it's so much a part of our history as well. I know that many of us have family in Washington, Idaho, British Columbia, and right across all of the different states.

And so I wish you all the best in the future. I know that the meeting this summer in Big Sky, Montana will continue the work that you have done so well. So welcome to you here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce my cousin who's sitting in the west gallery. Mr. Trevor Langen is a long-time resident of Regina. However this is his first time coming to watch the proceedings here today. Being an entrepreneur, I had to talk a little extra to take some time out of his day to stay and watch the proceedings after our meeting this morning. So to you and through you and to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce Mr. Trevor Langen.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like first of all to join with the member from Kelvington to welcome Mr. Nevin Halyk who I believe has just stepped out of the Assembly now, I've noticed. But being recognized as one of Canada's top 40 principals is a remarkable achievement, and I'd like to welcome him here today along with the fine students from Wadena here today.

While on my feet, I'm very pleased to have a very special group that's joined us here today. And by a bit of coincidence we have the other principal that was recognized here in Saskatchewan of the top 40 principals, and that's my friend Mr. James Wahl who's joined us here today from St. Francis Community School here today. And Mr. Wahl is a remarkable educator and a fine leader and fully engaged in our community. It's a pleasure to host him here today, and I know he does good work within our community. I know he's . . . Certainly the Regina Catholic schools are also very proud of him. And I know at one point, I've heard that he was quite the point guard, despite that stature, for the Sheldon Williams Spartans, Mr. Speaker.

He's joined today by some student leaders that I'd like to introduce: Ms. Asha Dzisah, a grade 7 student — give us a wave; Emily Wenarchuk, a grade 6 student; Miguel Cruzat, grade 7; and Taiwo Akinwale, grade 8. These are student leaders from St. Francis. I ask all members to put their hands together to welcome Mr. James Wahl and these students to their Assembly.

While still on my feet, there's a couple of other people I'd like to recognize, certainly the PNWER delegation but a few other people as well. It was mentioned that Mitch Bonokoski, who

works within our office, has his grandfather here today. And I'd like to welcome Mr. Gord Bonokoski, a long-time teacher and principal in Lumsden, was once a city councillor, a long-time Lions Club member, and I understand one very fine fisherman and someone who loves gardening as well. It's a pleasure to welcome Mr. Gord Bonokoski to his Assembly.

I would like to mention a good friend that's here today, Ms. Jennifer Milne Bisson who, along with her husband, Steve, are absolutely remarkable people, a fighter and a survivor and dealing with adversity that many of us can only imagine, with such beautiful grace. Wonderful to have my friend here today.

And I'd also like to recognize Mrs. Lauren Gatin who's here today. I don't know Lauren very well but I certainly know her son quite well, Mr. Brian Gatin, a teacher over at Thom Collegiate and a good friend, an incredible cook, but not much of a fisherman or hunter, Mr. Speaker. I've seen him in the field and I've been out on the lake with him before, and I don't think I've ever seen him catch a fish. He tells me he has, Mr. Speaker. But I do know he's a fine teacher and one exceptional football coach, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these fine guests to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the House my SLIP [Saskatchewan legislative internship program] intern for this portion of the internship. And it's Shalyn Rousseau up in the gallery, your gallery. And she is an enthusiastic intern, just really keen about the work that we're doing, particularly around social justice. She's here from Regina, and she's working on a double major with political studies and religious studies. I'm just so delighted to have her with me. This is an important program. So I'd ask all members to welcome her to her legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of better schools here in Saskatchewan. We know that far too many of our classrooms are overcrowded and under-resourced and that the Sask Party government has eliminated hundreds of educational assistant positions and that students don't often get the one-on-one attention they need. And none of this, Mr. Speaker, is acceptable given the record revenues this government has had over the past eight years. 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 call on this government to immediately stop ignoring schools and start prioritizing students by capping classroom sizes and increasing supports for students and developing a real, transparent plan to build and repair our schools here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. The people who signed this petition would like the Assembly to know that there is a definite need for a long-term care facility in the Creighton-Denare Beach area, and that the health region is in a code red when it comes to senior care beds. And they want the Assembly to know that most seniors in the North cannot afford private care homes and that the lack of services in Creighton and Denare Beach puts a huge financial burden on the elderly and their families. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to treat northern Saskatchewan senior citizens with respect and dignity and immediately invest in a new long-term care facility in the Creighton-Denare Beach area.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many good people of Creighton. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too rise in my place today to present a petition asking the provincial government for greater accountability and transparency on some of their P3 [public-private partnership] deals that they have concocted, Mr. Speaker. And I'll present the petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately pass *The Public-Private Partnership Transparency and Accountability Act*.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this particular page are people from the city here, but the many pages that we have presented as it relates to this particular accountability Act have been signed from all throughout the province of Saskatchewan, and I'm very proud today to present this petition. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm rising to present a petition in support of retaining Yarrow Youth Farm. We know that the government has closed Yarrow Youth Farm and created an open-custody wing in Kilburn Hall to accommodate Yarrow's residents. We also know that the provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has declared he can't endorse such a rationalization as low-risk teens could be influenced and pressured by close proximity to high-risk youth who may be involved in serious crimes or gangs. We also know that Kilburn Hall has a more institutional environment that could intimidate and alienate teens that have committed minor offences. And so 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 keep Yarrow Youth Farm open to ensure a caring home environment for youth who have committed minor offences and provide support to help these young people redirect their lives by setting more positive goals.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

World Ovarian Cancer Day

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow is World Ovarian Cancer Day. This is the third year that World Ovarian Cancer Day has been recognized, and it's a time for ovarian cancer survivors and supporters to stand in solidarity and raise awareness.

In our province, the Saskatchewan Ovarian Cancer Survivors, or SOCS, is a network of families and survivors that offer support and information to those affected by ovarian cancer. When someone receives a cancer diagnosis, it's one of the most difficult experiences of their lives. The important work being done by SOCS helps women to cope with this life-changing diagnosis and provides a safe space where women and their families can share their concerns and fears.

SOCS also spends a great deal of time and energy fundraising for research and national awareness campaigns. Every year they organize a walk of hope, a fashion show, and a number of other events to raise funds to find a cure and to support families.

One of the women who has been working with SOCS for many years is Anne Chase. She was recently awarded a YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] Women of Distinction Award for her years of service with SOCS. Congratulations to her on that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in marking World Ovarian Cancer Day and thanking Anne Chase and everyone else with the SOCS team for the work they do in supporting those affected by ovarian cancer. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, May 8th, marks World Ovarian Cancer Day, the day we draw attention to a disease that kills about 1,750 Canadian women each year. Earlier today the Government of Saskatchewan raised the Ovarian Cancer Canada flag at the legislature in recognition of the need for wider understanding of this disease. And today all members on this side of the House are wearing teal ribbons to recognize and honour those in support of ovarian cancer disease.

Awareness of this disease is particularly important because there is no test to screen for it and few women know the symptoms to watch for. Even when symptoms are noticed, they often are not acted on or are attributed to other causes.

Mr. Speaker, if we can increase awareness, we can save lives. About 2,600 Canadian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year but often only after the disease has progressed.

Because of this, only about 45 per cent of women are still alive five years after being diagnosed. Their survival rate rises to 90 per cent when ovarian cancer is detected in its early stages. I urge anyone interested to get more information from advocacy groups like the Canadian Cancer Society and Ovarian Cancer Canada.

With the right information, women can be alert to one or more of the warning signs and seek medical help sooner. Survival rates are on the rise, thanks to increased awareness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Regina Educator Receives National Recognition

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly to recognize a great teacher and educational leader, Mr. James Wahl. As I said earlier, James is in the gallery here today and he is principal at St. Francis Community School here in Regina.

He was recently named as one of Canada's top 40 principals by The Learning Partnership for his commitment to providing the best possible education for his students. This national recognition is certainly well deserved and James serves as but one fine example of the many exceptional leaders and teachers and educators across Saskatchewan. In the citation for his award, The Learning Partnership, said:

James considers unique opportunities as ways to demonstrate a sense of originality and overall excellence of service to the community. He believes that innovation must be actionable and demonstratively productive in terms of student achievement outcomes. These innovative initiatives include his "3-Way Goal Setting Conferences," which began as a school-based project but has now spread district-wide.

James is making a real difference in the lives of so many young people and we are so lucky to have him as an educational leader here in Regina. I've witnessed it first hand during my visits to St. Francis.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Mr. James Wahl as well as Principal Nevin Halyk from Wadena on these well-deserved awards and to thank them for their service and leadership to students every day all across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Fundraiser for Neural Health Project Planned for Saskatoon

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 24th the member from Saskatoon Riversdale and I had the opportunity to attend an important announcement where Olympic and NHL [National Hockey League] coach Mike Babcock and Saskatoon doctor, DeeDee Maltman, announced a new mental health initiative.

In July 2013, Mr. Babcock and Dr. Maltman lost two of their

friends from Saskatoon, Ian Buckwold and Jordan Chartier, to mental illness. Following this tragic loss, the pair decided that they wanted to help in a major way. They founded the neural health project, which aims to study the outcomes of using integrative medicine approaches to treating mental illness.

Mr. Speaker, the pair decided that if they wanted to make a meaningful difference, they needed to launch a major campaign, a fundraising initiative, to raise awareness and funds to support their project. This led to the One Voice Fundraiser to be held on July 24th in Saskatoon with a goal of raising \$1 million.

Saskatoon will be buzzing with celebrities, Olympic athletes, NHL greats, who are coming together to support the neural health project's One Voice fundraiser. Tim Gitzel, the CEO [chief executive officer] of Cameco, and his wife, Bonnie, constituents of Saskatoon Silver Springs, are the title sponsors for this incredible event.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Mr. Mike Babcock, Dr. DeeDee Maltman, the Gitzel family, and Cameco for their commitment to helping build a better future for people with mental health issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

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

Access to Magnetic Resonance Imaging Services

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government has introduced innovative new legislation in the House that paves the way for patients to choose to directly pay a private facility for an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] scan in Saskatchewan.

Providing timely and high-quality diagnostic imaging services to patients is a priority for our government. While there are many jurisdictions across Canada where patients can choose to pay for specialized medical imaging services, current legislation does not allow for this in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, our government wants to remove legislative barriers and add choice for the residents. We want to improve patient access and satisfaction with health services.

The MRI Facilities Licensing Act will provide the ability to make and update regulations that will require private vendors to provide a second scan at no cost to a patient on the public list every time someone chooses to pay for their own MRI. The unique requirement for a private provider to deliver a second scan will increase MRI capacity in the health system. It is also expected to reduce overall wait times.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to putting patients first by investing in new facilities like the Moose Jaw Hospital which will be home to another MRI unit this fall. However this innovative approach is just another way we will provide choice for Saskatchewan people and increase access for all individuals who require MRI services in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Mother's Day and Maternal Mental Health Day

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in case a few of us need an extra reminder, this Sunday is Mother's Day. As a time to celebrate and appreciate the moms who brought us into this world, it is also a time to thank all of the aunts, close friends, and yes, grandmothers, who have done one of the hardest jobs in the world. As our province continues to grow, it is important for people to remember where they came from and remind us to pause and give thanks to the people who are responsible for who we are today.

Fittingly, May 7th is also Maternal Mental Health Day. For all of the love and care our mothers give us, it is equally important to bring awareness to the 20 per cent of women who are pregnant or who have given birth that will develop postpartum anxiety or depression. These are the women who nurture us, wipe our tears, and give us the extra encouragement we need to always do better. Yet most importantly, they have dedicated years of care to make sure that we were the best children and the best adults we can be.

I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking all of the mothers of our province, as well as wishing them a very happy Mother's Day. And on a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I'm very fortunate to still have my mother, and I would just like to at this moment say thank you, Happy Mother's Day, and I love you, Mom. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Comments During Estimates

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday during estimates that Leader of the Opposition said that the Health Quality Council is "... a mouthpiece and a political speech machine ...". Mr. Speaker, that is beyond insulting to the members of the Health Quality Council board.

Dr. Susan Shaw was appointed in 2009. She practises critical care and anesthesiology with the Saskatoon Health Region and is an assistant professor with the College of Medicine.

Dr. Dennis Kendel was appointed in 2002 under the NDP [New Democratic Party] and is the CEO of Saskdocs and previously served 25 years as a registrar for the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Dr. Ross Baker was appointed in 2005 under the NDP and is a professor, the director of the master's degree program at the Institute of Health Policy.

Dr. Charlyn Black was appointed in 2002, again under the NDP, and serves as CEO of the health region, Five Hills Health Region, since 2009.

That's just a few people that he smeared, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition needs to stand up and apologize for calling these incredibly accomplished leaders mouthpieces of the government. Whether it is the Health Quality Council, government officials doing international work on behalf of the province, or even Saskatchewan businesses,

anyone can fit under the Leader of the Opposition's bus. A drive-by political smear is no substitute for good policy, Mr. Speaker, but . . .

The Speaker: — Oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Release of Information Concerning Worker

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier said that he has no regrets, no regrets whatsoever about directing his chief of communications and operations to leak confidential information about a private citizen. Is that actually true? Does the Premier have no regrets about this incredible mess that he has created?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've stood in my place on a number of occasions this week to answer the questions that the Leader of the Opposition has put to us. And I'm not sure if he's expecting a different answer, but I'm going to disappoint him again today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a process here. The Information and Privacy Commissioner has a number of investigations that are under way. We are going to await the results of those investigations, and that will inform the next steps that we need to take, Mr. Speaker. So at this particular point in time, we'll wait for the Information and Privacy Commissioner to complete his work, Mr. Speaker, and that will inform what we need to do.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is unwilling to stand up and say that he has no regrets about this, perhaps he's starting to realize the severity of the mess that he created when he directed the leak of confidential information on a citizen. The Premier, he personally directed the leak of this confidential information. He's confessed to that. He did it to get himself and his government out of a conundrum. That's what he said.

The Premier and his chief of communications and operations are being investigated for breaking the law. He says he didn't say this, Mr. Speaker. Well I challenge him to stand up and say that he has no regrets about this. Yet he has no regrets whatsoever about what he has done. Talk about the height of arrogance we see. Does he at least recognize and does he at least have regrets that he didn't pull off his chief of operations and communications sooner on this file?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier answered that question yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, we have complete confidence in the Information

and Privacy Commissioner to do his work. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would express some confidence in the Information and Privacy Commissioner, an independent officer of this House, Mr. Speaker. We will await the work that he is doing. That's going to inform our decision, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said earlier this week, Mr. Speaker: he's anxious to see the Information and Privacy Commissioner complete that work. So let's let him do his work.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what I don't have confidence in is the tale that this Premier is telling about what he knew and when he knew it. Without a question, Mr. Speaker, the story doesn't add up one single bit.

On April 23rd, the Premier was told there were specific details in the leak. On the 27th, the Premier was told again very specific details were leaked, and the Premier was told about a second email sent out by his chief of communications and operations. On the 28th, Mr. Speaker, there were media reports about very specific details, and the Deputy Leader asked questions to the Premier about this issue. Yet the Premier claims somehow, strangely, bizarrely, unbelievably, that he didn't know about this until the end of last week.

It is not in the least bit credible, Mr. Speaker. How is it remotely believable that the Premier was presented with facts by reporters, by the opposition, and he never even bothered to ask his chief of operations and communications about it? How is that believable in the least bit?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions were asked and answered in estimates yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

We have confidence in the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker. We'll wait for him to do his work. We'll not speculate on the results of that work, Mr. Speaker, nor speculate on anything that may come out as a result of that work. I'm glad the Leader of the Opposition has expressed confidence in the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We certainly have confidence in him to do his work, Mr. Speaker. So again my answer is, we will wait for the Information and Privacy Commissioner to do his work, and that will inform us, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the commissioner will do his work and, in the meantime, the Premier has some explaining to do as to how this bizarre story that he is telling makes any sense because it's not backed up by the facts in any way. The Premier is actually expecting us to believe that he does not listen in media scrums, that he doesn't listen to what is asked here in the House, that he doesn't read the newspapers, and that he doesn't have conversations with his chief of communications and operations because that is the only way that his story is believable in even a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

Well I don't buy it for one second. The Premier's fingerprints are all over this, and his story is not adding up. Every time he was told that there were specific details, he said he was comfortable with what he shared, and he insisted that the information was "general enough." He's been asking questions about it, Mr. Speaker, but he's not telling what he knew and when he knew it.

The Premier's story doesn't add up. It's not credible, Mr. Speaker, and it is astonishing that this Premier would say that he has no regrets whatsoever. My question to the Premier: why can't he just stand today and admit that he made a mistake?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, these questions were asked and answered yesterday in committee, and I'm not sure why the Leader of the Opposition continues to insist on not allowing the Information and Privacy Commissioner to simply do his work. That work will be done, Mr. Speaker, and that will inform us. I have great confidence, as does this side of the House, in the independence of that commissioner, Mr. Speaker, and in the independence of the work that's going to be done in his office. So again, these questions were asked and answered yesterday in committee.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, nice try. This Premier needs to explain why this story that he is telling is believable because it's not backed up by the facts.

This is the Premier, Mr. Speaker, who yesterday, when he was willing to stand up in the House, said that he had no regrets about leaking this confidential information, no regrets about breaching privacy for a private citizen. This is the Premier, Mr. Speaker, that laughs off the fact that he has travel scouts going around the world with a personal rider to have his favourite pop in the fridge. That's a big joke, Mr. Speaker.

The sense of entitlement, the sense of entitlement, the level of arrogance that we see building in this government, Mr. Speaker, is growing and growing. And it's concerning because that entitlement and that arrogance leads to bad choices being made, and it leads to misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker.

Here's a question for the Premier: will he at least admit they seem to be concerned about the Privacy Commissioner's investigation? The Premier needs to explain his story as well. The findings of the investigation absolutely need to be sent out of province, Mr. Speaker, to be reviewed by an out-of-province prosecutor. My question to the Premier: will he stand today, go on the public record, and will he confirm that any findings from the investigation will be sent out of province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has asked this question before in the House. We will not speculate on the work that's being done

by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, nor will we speculate on the results of that work that's being done, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, the work of the Information and Privacy Commissioner will inform us, Mr. Speaker. Decisions will be made based on that, but we will not speculate on the work that's being done, nor will we speculate on the results.

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

Provision of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Services

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier once promised that he would never allow someone "to use a bulging wallet to jump the queue." Why is he now breaking that promise?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We sure welcome this question from the Leader of the Opposition. Not long ago, I spoke in the media about the potential for us to review the policy whereby there was no option for private MRI availability in the province of Saskatchewan. I want to thank the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health for undertaking a consultation and a review of the options.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday he announced another Saskatchewan innovation. This is a province of health care innovation. And so what will happen in about a year from now, Mr. Speaker, is that private MRIs will be available to people.

They'll purchase an MRI. It's going to be their choice to do that. But the condition is this: the company that provides that private MRI must also provide a free MRI on the public system. So we'll be reducing the wait times because the person opting to pay will come off the wait time, and the clinic providing the MRI will supply yet another, yet another scan on the public system, lowering the wait-list, Mr. Speaker. This system is inspired by an operation, by an example that's currently in place in the province, and I can't wait to talk more about that in the next answer.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what this Premier is really facilitating is queue jumping, Mr. Speaker, and not ensuring that patients get the right kind of care when they need it.

Alberta, Alberta has user-pay MRIs. In Alberta the typical wait time for an MRI is 80 days. Meanwhile here in Saskatchewan, the typical wait time for an MRI is 28 days. That's 52 days sooner than Alberta. Ninety per cent of Albertans that need an MRI receive one within 247 days. Meanwhile here in Saskatchewan, 90 per cent of people that need an MRI receive one in 88 days. That's 159 days sooner than Alberta. My question to the Premier: so why is the Premier following the failed example of the Alberta PCs [Progressive Conservative]?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this isn't a model based on Alberta. In Alberta you simply buy the private MRI. Under this

model, this pilot project, this pilot project model, the person will be able to purchase their own MRI, and the clinic providing the MRI will provide another free public scan, thereby reducing the public system.

Now this system existed in the province prior to yesterday's announcement and introduction of the bill by the minister because, Mr. Speaker, Workers' Compensation in the province of Saskatchewan, the WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] uses this exact model, the two-for-one model. Now when did that two-for-one model come into existence in the province of Saskatchewan? 2003 under the New Democratic Party.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if the Premier would look at the evidence, if he'll look at the experience in Alberta, he would see that this approach, this approach of the two-tier system, it will not bring the best result for Saskatchewan patients.

Mr. Speaker, I prefer policy that is based on evidence, not ideology, and all the evidence is very clear. Private MRI facilities draw resources away from the public system, and private MRI facilities, they do not result in shorter waits. So here's an idea. Why not improve the MRI system for everyone in the province, not simply those who have the deepest pockets? My question to the Premier: how, how does his plan not allow those with lots of money to access surgery more quickly?

The Speaker: — I would ask both sides of the House to tone down the noise while the questions are being asked and while the answers are being provided. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Here are some facts. Since our government took over, scans in the public system, MRIs in the public system are up 115 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and they're scheduled to increase again. Capacity increased by 5 per cent. Once again it's a good example of the NDP talking about the importance of public MRIs but not actually providing enough when they were in office. We're going to shorten the wait-list, Mr. Speaker, through this policy by allowing the private MRI to be purchased and the clinic that provides it providing a free scan to the public system.

Now this will then actually provide for all of the people of the province of Saskatchewan what the NDP provided for Workers' Comp clients and one other organization because, under the NDP, they pioneered a two-for-one MRI system, just as we're advocating, to the Saskatchewan Roughriders. That's their government. When they were in power, that's exactly the system they offered. My question to the hon. member and the NDP is this: why would that system be good enough for the Riders and not good enough for the rest of the province?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if we look at the evidence, if we look at the fact that resources will be pulled from the public system, if we look at the experience in Alberta where they have this two-tier approach but there are actually longer waits for MRIs, we will see that it is not the best approach based on the evidence.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: how is it, how is it that he can claim that bringing in this reality where those with the deepest pockets can access MRIs faster . . . How will this not allow those individuals to jump the queue and get surgeries faster?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — This is a debate. Now this is an important debate and one we welcome. This is the same argument that member's made against private clinics working on our surgical wait-time initiative. He's opposed to it. He said if he ever formed the government, he would eliminate the private clinics from the system whereby we're using them to reduce surgical wait-lists in the province.

Mr. Speaker, here's the actual results, the evidence with respect to that particular choice that was provided, private clinics in the public system. Surgical wait times are down. They used to be the longest in the country when those folks over there were providing the government in the province of Saskatchewan, and now Saskatchewan has the shortest wait times in the country.

May 16, 2007 under the NDP government, here's a letter. Here's a letter from the Ministry of Health related to the health care region regarding the Saskatchewan Roughriders football club. It lays it all out. The NDP said, we kind of like this two-for-one system in Workers' Comp. We now want to extend this two-for-one MRI system — you pay for two and get one — to the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Again to the hon. member: why the double standard? Why is it okay for Workers' Comp and it's okay for the Saskatchewan Roughriders and not good enough for the rest of the province?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, no answer to the question. How can the Premier claim that user-pay MRIs will not allow individuals to jump the queue and get surgeries faster?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the fact that people could access private MRIs in Alberta while the NDP were in office means that under their term of government, people may have been "jumping the queue." They allowed Saskatchewan patients to go to Alberta, get an MRI. Those patients presented that MRI to their doctor. Their doctor didn't ask for the providence about the MRI. The member for Lakeview knows it. The member for Lakeview was the minister of Health and he knows . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I can start pointing out a few names on both sides. If you want to continue the debate, you have the opportunity later to do that in private members' motions, so I invite you to take it up then and not now. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is this: the so-called queue jumping was pioneered, started under the NDP when they allowed folks to go to Alberta

and get a private MRI and bring it back. That's the fact.

This will allow Saskatchewan people to stay here. And by accessing this choice, those clinics, instead of simply just doing that scan in Alberta and that was the end of it, will do it here and then provide a free scan to the public system, shortening the wait-list. That is a way better plan, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the status quo is not satisfactory at all. We need better care for patients in the province. We need better care, but the answer is not this government's approach to expand and to allow queue jumping to take place, Mr. Speaker. The answer is to improve the system for everyone, improve the system for everyone so it's not simply those with the deepest pockets that can have access to surgery faster. We want to see improvement, but we want to see it for everyone, not simply those who can afford it.

Alberta has tried user-pay MRIs, and they do not, they do not result in better wait times. The typical wait time is 52 days longer in Alberta. Ninety per cent of people in Saskatchewan who need an MRI receive one 159 days sooner than in Alberta. My question to the Premier: why will he not just look at the evidence?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are improving the system for everybody in this province, first and foremost by ensuring that we are doing more publicly funded scans within the system, a 115 per cent increase from when the members opposite were the government to today. And in fact, despite a difficult budget year, the number of scans is going to go up another 5 per cent this year. So we are increasing capacity. We're also adding an additional machine in the city of Moose Jaw later this fiscal year, so we're adding on the public side.

But we do know that people today in Saskatchewan go out of province. They've always been allowed to do so, Mr. Speaker, and that continues today. What we are going to provide for is an option for people to do that closer to home. But it will have this, Mr. Speaker: it will have the benefit of removing them from the public list. What isn't provided in other provinces, what the members discount: it will provide for us to remove somebody from the public list, essentially having two people provided off of the wait-list for MRIs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the record of this government is clear. We are not happy with the status quo. We have never been happy with the status quo, but what we're doing is looking outside of the box for different answers . . .

The Speaker: — Next question. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2008 the former minister of Environment, now Minister of Highways, announced that this government would reduce greenhouse gas

emissions by 32 per cent in the year 2020. A year later, she watered that down to a target of 20 per cent, but she insisted that the time for talk was over and she introduced *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*.

That's now six years ago, Mr. Speaker, and the promised Technology Fund is still out there in the promised land. The Go Green Fund has essentially been wiped out. And when this government released its new environment code it didn't even include a chapter on greenhouse gas emissions.

This government's lack of leadership is unacceptable. And so to the Environment minister: why has this government dragged its feet so badly on this vital issue?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. I was expecting maybe a question to this effect yesterday during the three hours of Premier's estimates, Mr. Speaker. I heard two answers on it, but I didn't hear her question.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this government will always balance the economic and population growth that we have in the province of Saskatchewan with the environmental protection in this province of Saskatchewan, on behalf of these people. Mr. Speaker, that is showing results now with public and private investment and low carbon technologies in excess of \$5 billion. Mr. Speaker, that's showing real results in SaskPower with 25 per cent of their power allocation now coming from renewable sources including, Mr. Speaker, the Boundary dam carbon capture project, which is quite likely the largest single reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in this province's history.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, for this minister to suggest that this government's approach is balanced is ridiculous. This government's track record is abysmal. At every step of the way, the Sask Party government has failed miserably when it comes to showing any real leadership on the environment.

This week I introduced a private member's bill entitled *The Green Energy, Green Jobs and Diversified, Sustainable Economy Act*. The opposition New Democrats would love to work with the government to achieve some real, meaningful results on this crucial issue. So to the Environment minister: is he open to working with us to boost green energy, create more good-paying jobs, and diversify our economy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, what's ridiculous is a question coming from . . . When they had an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, they made policy decisions that caused the economy in this province to stagnate. People were leaving the province by truckloads. All the time, greenhouse gas emissions . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I would like to point out to the member for Saskatoon Centre, the member for Athabasca, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the member for Arm River-Watrous, the member for Regina Douglas Park, and a number of other government members . . . And I ask that you quit interrupting. The next time I'm on my feet, you will be getting an early day off. I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know there's been questions around what is quite likely the single largest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in this province's history, and that's the carbon capture and storage project at Boundary dam 3 in Estevan, Mr. Speaker. We've talked to the merits of that, of reducing carbon, greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 250,000 vehicles off the roads in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of quotes and support for the importance of that project, and I'd like to read one into the record here. It goes like this, and I quote, Mr. Speaker, "The possibility of coal generation with near zero emissions, along with enhanced oil recovery and permanent sequestration of carbon dioxide, has tremendous potential for both the provincial economy and the environment." Mr. Speaker, that was the minister of SaskPower at the time, the current member for Lakeview, on September 10th of 2006.

[11:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, he talks about that project. It's less than 2 per cent of this government's emissions in greenhouse gases. We had that minister, the previous minister promising 32 per cent. They've got a long, long way to go. It's so frustrating to have this government dragging its feet on this important issue, and it's so frustrating that this government doesn't even seem to recognize that there would be major benefits to our province if we boosted green energy and invested in green innovation.

To the minister: when can we expect the GHG [greenhouse gas] chapter of the Environmental Code to be completed? When can we expect the Technology Fund to be established, and when can we expect the Climate Change Foundation to finally be created? What timeline is going to be acceptable to this minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is proud, proud of our record when it comes to balancing the economic growth that we have in the province of Saskatchewan with the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, Mr. Speaker, in this province. The fact of the matter is that we've stabilized greenhouse gas emissions over the last number of years in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there's been investment, public and private investment in excess of \$5 billion, Mr. Speaker, which is showing real results in decoupling the increase in greenhouse gas emissions from the increase in the positive economic growth that we have in the province, Mr. Speaker.

What we will not do is make policy decisions, Mr. Speaker, that drive people out of this province, that decrease economic investment in the province, and allow greenhouse gas emissions to increase by 70 per cent.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Student Rights and Safer Schools

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure today to enter into this debate, and it's an important debate that we have. Too many of our youth are facing challenges in our communities that we can do something about, we can do something about. And we are here as legislators, it's the work that we do, and we should use the tools that we have to make sure our kids are safer in their communities.

And so today I'm very interested, and I'll read that motion now but I'll also read it at the end. But I want to make sure people at home know what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker. So I move today:

That the Assembly call on the government to enshrine in legislation the right of students throughout Saskatchewan to establish and lead groups that promote respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, including with the name, gay-straight alliance or gender sexual alliance or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's my motion. And we're going to have a good debate; I'm very proud that we're going to be talking about this today. We've been raising this issue for several years now, and yet we have not seen the government move to concrete actions that kids can count on in our schools. And that's what we're talking about today, concrete actions that everyone knows that when we say that our schools will be safe, they will be safe. And when we mean that, we mean that. And too often with this government, they like to have their platitudes, but when we try to find out what does that really translate into, it's just, just not there.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know that Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, they have a program, schools are caring communities. And they talk about this comprehensive school community health approach that states, and I quote, "Each child in each school in each of our communities deserves to be healthy, safe, engaged, and supported."

Very lofty and very important, but when it comes to making this goal meaningful and equitable for all students, Saskatchewan unfortunately sadly lags behind other provinces here in Canada. And that's particularly true, ensuring that our gender and sexually diverse students — and often we refer to gender sexually diverse students as GSD students — that they are not treated in the same way and they are not reaching their full potential and not gaining equitable access to all aspects of school life, whether it be academic, social, or extracurricular.

So we know, we know — and the research is out there, and it's solid research — that school-based groups, the GSAs, gender and sexual alliances or gay-straight alliances, GSAs can help accomplish this goal. They're an integral part of our political, social, and educational landscape with respect to upholding human rights law, supporting anti-oppressive and pro-respect educational frameworks, and providing an inclusive, healthy environment which improves student learning, responds to students' needs and creates a supportive social climate, honours child and youth safety and strengthens proactive bullying prevention and, as well, it incorporates family realities into the learning communities in our schools.

Now provinces across Canada have recognized the vital role that GSAs play in meeting these goals, and they support educational outcomes and improve overall school-community health. And in some provinces the importance of GSAs are now protected by law. We've seen that in Ontario with Bill 13 and Manitoba with Bill 18 and just recently in March with Bill 10, which legally requires a school to meet the request of a student for a formation of a GSA. But here in Saskatchewan, unfortunately the situation is that students are permitted to form GSAs on the basis of administration discretion, and this is the crux of the problem. This is the crux of the problem because we have a minister who says that he'll leave it up to the administration.

We know that while there has been good gains made, that it's not protected in law. And that's what we need to have. So while school boards across the country maintain specific anti-homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia policies that bolster the effectiveness of GSAs in an integrated and holistic school-community approach, not a single school board in Saskatchewan has explicit protection for GSD students. And fortunately while there has been some progress within the Saskatchewan context . . . And I just want to talk a little bit about this.

We had a member's statement around Camp fYrefly. That was a really worthwhile initiative in terms of having a healthy supportive summer camp for students who are GSD, and this government now is providing \$25,000. Clearly that's a very good step. We appreciate that, and we all applauded the member's statement to that effect. But it's not complete; it's not finished. And we know unfortunately in Saskatchewan . . . And I'll be talking about some of the situations that cause real concern for families here in Saskatchewan.

But there's an intensifying need for tangible results in creating safer schools. You know, an expanding youth voice is asserting and they're really, they're stressing this. And I've met with students across Saskatchewan, met with students, talked with students at Breaking the Silence Conference, met with students this past spring from Vancouver, that they're saying their lives matter. Their lives matter. And parents are demanding that their children be treated with dignity and respect. And so a growing community is asking and really demanding that Saskatchewan schools support the implementation of GSAs to help meet educational and social and bullying prevention needs.

And I just think about the march that happened in Saskatoon last October where over 60 people met and walked across a bridge in Saskatoon, demanding action. And it wasn't a very

nice day, in fact it was a rainy miserable day, but they still met and said this is an important issue. This is an important issue. So if we do this, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan can move closer to schools being caring communities for all students and for all family realities in a much more meaningful way.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to just talk a little bit, and I know the time is going quickly, but we need to just step back and understand that GSAs, and the term GSAs, it's from gay-straight alliance but has, like I said, has evolved into gender sexual alliance. It's said to have originated in the early 1980s and refers to school-based, student-run groups that provide a safe space for youth to discuss issues related to diversity and sexual and romantic orientation.

But today GSAs in our schools are welcoming spaces for all students that provide a niche for social interaction and education. They provide like-minded camaraderie and connection, much like other school-based that are commonly found in our schools, such as drama groups and astronomy group clubs. But GSAs are inclusive right across the spectrum of diversity — gender, attraction, expression, family and friend realities. And there is no need for students to self-identify or articulate their orientation in order to join the GSA group unless they wish to do so. Respect and acceptance of diversity are the only requirements for membership. GSAs are recognized as anti-oppressive spaces within the school community, and many students who feel they are on the outside of the larger, normative majority seek anti-bullying refuge, safety, and friendship, and shared expressions within the GSA groups.

In some schools, GSAs act simply as a crucial space where students are able to eat lunch safely and find necessary reprieve from bullying and assault. And I just want to stress this, this is especially relevant with statistical reality that GSD students are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers, and over half of GSD students have seriously considered suicide. Additionally, studies have shown that Canadian schools with GSAs may reduce the odds of suicidal thoughts and attempts among GSD and straight students. And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to highlight that because that's a huge issue here in Saskatchewan and I'm quoting from a report: *Suicides, Health Provincial Ranking: How Canada Performs*.

And here in Saskatchewan the question is, how has the suicide rate changed in the provinces and territories over the past decade? Over the past decades suicide rates in Canada have actually been in decline. But what is concerning is the suicide rates have risen in half the provinces. Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan all had higher suicide rates in 2011 than in 2000. And so here we have a real issue, Mr. Speaker. And I think that when we are talking about providing safer schools, we just can't be saying that with lip service. This is a real issue and has life and death consequences when you have students who are having suicidal ideas, that we really need to do something. And when the stats are in about Saskatchewan, the fact that we're one of the provinces where suicide rates have gone up, this is a problem.

And I want to just refer to a news story on March 13th, 2015. And the headline is, "Morgan says no GSA legislation planned for Saskatchewan." He refers to, and it says here: "Saskatchewan's Education Minister Don Morgan said

Wednesday that introducing similar legislation would be unnecessary because it's already an expectation and a part of education policy." And we have not yet seen this policy. And we heard that this would be coming through with the bullying report that was done. That's fair enough, but that's been now some time. We have not actually seen this policy that was referred to by the Premier yesterday or the minister. He keeps referring to this policy but we have not, we have not seen the actual policy.

So we hope by the end of this debate that the other side would table the policy. I know that they might be quoting from it today, and I hope they do. And if they do, that they will actually table the documents so that we can actually see the policy that the minister keeps referring to and the Premier keeps referring to.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe every student in Saskatchewan, regardless of factors like where they live and what their school community looks like, should be guaranteed fundamental rights. We should be entrenching best practices for preventing discrimination and bullying and promising that those best practices will be followed for every student in every school.

[11:15]

Just as culture shifts and society evolves, so must our learning communities. Governments and school boards across the country are working to protect the rights of GSD children and youth through a commitment to resources and supports which assist in ensuring all students are reaching their full potential and gaining equitable access to all aspects of school life.

This is being done through legislating that a student's request for life-saving support of a GSA cannot be denied, by creating policies that uphold human rights, and by supporting diversity includes the professional learning and capacity building amongst school staff. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the gist of the bill that I introduced just a week or so ago, 612, the respect for diversity and student bill of rights.

Mr. Speaker, there's lots of people that are watching this today and have done an awful lot of work. And I want to thank the folks at Avenue Community Centre, Amanda Guthrie and Rachel Loewen Walker. Those folks are strong advocates in saying this is the kind of work that needs to be done. And also Chandra McIvor from Egale Canada, who's worked tirelessly on this for many years. I want to really also give a shout out to people, Breaking the Silence folks.

Every year they put together a conference in Saskatoon about creating a safe space for GSD students to be able to talk about their challenges. And this is one that's important to them. So Don Cochrane, Margie Corbett, Fran Forsberg, so many; the Vancouver kids that I met with today and the Saskatoon kids; and Halla Scott here in Regina, who had the courage to come forward and raise the concern about not having a GSA in her school.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the motion I'd be putting forward, and this is:

That this Assembly call on the government to enshrine in

legislation the right of students throughout Saskatchewan to establish and lead groups that promote respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, including with the name "gay-straight alliance" or "gender sexuality alliance" or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important motion. I'm glad we have the opportunity here to talk about this. Kids are watching this, and we're listening very closely to what the government will say about this today. I would like to table my motion right now. I move my motion right now. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The motion by the member for Saskatoon Centre is:

That this Assembly call on the government to enshrine in legislation the right of students throughout Saskatchewan to establish and lead groups that promote respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, including with the name "gay-straight alliance" or "gender sexuality alliance" or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in my place and participate today in this debate regarding the opposition's motion which I will read:

That this Assembly call on the government to enshrine in legislation the right of students throughout Saskatchewan to establish and lead groups that promote respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, including with the name "gay-straight alliance" or "gender sexuality alliance" or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

Mr. Speaker, our students in Saskatchewan are getting services and support that they require, so therefore we don't need legislation, and I will discuss why. Do we need legislation to be kind to each other, to listen, to give respect? We as society, as a whole, collectively can do our part. As leaders, as parents, we can teach our children to be respectful and kind.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring schools are safe, and they will work with school divisions to establish supports and policy developments for all students. We, as a government, as society as a whole, want people to come to their own consciousness of identity, to arrive at their own sense of self, to have families and loved ones that they can mentor and enjoy a high quality of life here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan school divisions, all 28, are trusted to take care of the regional and different demographics that reside in our province. They have the best interests of Saskatchewan students, and the policy of this government is to work with students, teachers, and other school divisions to

implement recommendations in the province and the provincial action plan.

I have a letter here, April 28th, 2015, addressed to Minister Morgan. It says, "Best regards from the Saskatchewan School Boards Association," and I'll read you a paragraph:

I write this letter to advocate for continued endorsement and respect for the autonomy of locally elected school boards in our province. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association firmly believes that our 28 member boards are in the best position to make decisions at the local level, including the establishment of gay-straight alliances. Introducing legislation to make such decisions mandatory limits boards' autonomy and we feel it is unnecessary as school divisions are responding to diverse and changing student needs every day and will continue to do so.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, our government is also providing \$25,000 to the fYrefly Saskatchewan to support gender and sexually diverse youth throughout the province. The annual Camp fYrefly in Saskatchewan is a camp for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersexed youth and their allies between the ages of 14 and 24. The camp's co-founder, Kris Wells, developed the camp as he believed caring adults could mentor youth to live fully in a world that embraces diversity. It is called in Canada the largest gender minority youth leadership retreat.

Supporting diversity, Mr. Speaker, is nothing new to me. It's nothing new to our government. The spirit is here in Saskatchewan with the way we live our lives of acceptance and tolerance of each person's uniqueness. Working together, we can make Saskatchewan a great place to live, to raise your family, to work. This government is a team that is committed to positive growth and change, and we value Saskatchewan people's strengths and all that they bring to the diversity of our great province. All aspects of Saskatchewan should be embraced and celebrated.

Mr. Speaker, released on March 16th, 2015 is a Saskatchewan report, "Government Continues to Respond to Bullying Report." I will read you a part of it.

"Our goal is to ensure schools and communities are safe, welcoming and inclusive for our students," Education Minister Don Morgan said. "This investment also supports our government's commitment to working with community organizations to help respond to the recommendations in Saskatchewan's Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying."

It also goes on to say:

"fYrefly in schools is a welcomed educational initiative in Saskatchewan," Camp fYrefly Saskatchewan Co-Chair Reverend Carla Blakley said. "The Y in fYrefly is capitalized because youth are important. fYrefly in schools aims to reduce discrimination and bullying, especially against sexually and gender minority youth, so that a safe, caring school environment can be provided for all Saskatchewan youth."

Mr. Speaker, the NDP calls for rights that already exist. They are calling for the right to freedom of conscience, opinion, and belief; freedom of expression; and freedom of assembly in association. However, Mr. Speaker, this already exists. In section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it states:

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association.

Mr. Speaker, I have a quote here from Dan Shier of Queen City Pride, Global News Regina, dated March 12th, 2015, when asked if Saskatchewan needs legislation for GSAs: ". . . I don't see it [currently] as being a huge necessity [just] because students are getting the services and the spaces that they require."

Mr. Speaker, the proposed 2015-16 budget allocation will support the continued implementation of Saskatchewan's action plan to address bullying and cyberbullying. Our government has a policy in place and we don't react to everything with legislation.

The Ministry of Education has taken steps in 2014-15 to implement the provincial action plan, including training and learning opportunities that are being provided to school divisions. Twenty-eight school divisions have completed or committed to training to access and respond to violence or threats in their schools. The Canadian Red Cross is training adults and youths to prevent and address bullying and promote positive relationships, using respected programming. The Saskatoon restorative action program models school-based restorative action programs for others in the province.

In spring of 2014, over 900 participants engaged in a massive open online course intended to support students in learning appropriate and responsible behaviour online. There's a policy guide for schools to further support appropriate and responsible behaviour online which will be available in spring of 2015, and our government has also taken steps, including an online professional resource to assist school divisions to provide safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for all students including gender and sexual minorities . . . are being finalized.

So, Mr. Speaker, our government is addressing this without legislation. Action has been taken to support students in having an anonymous, safe place to seek help through Kids Help Phone, and 40 classrooms-to-counsellor sessions have increased awareness of mental health issues to reduce stigma and promote help-seeking behaviours in children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, there is more action. We're influencing positive social change in their schools, communities, and online through the I Am Stronger community grant program. This program provides small grants of up to 1,000 each for youth-led initiatives to address bullying and promote healthy relationships.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that schools are safe and inclusive environments for students and that student success is appropriate, a priority, and that everyone feels safe and included. Research and practice indicate that when students do not feel safe and supported, their learning and well-being are undermined. So I hope if the opposition feel that someone . . .

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Moe: — To ask for leave for introductions.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly for granting leave to introduce 22 grade 7 and 8 students from the great community of Blaine Lake and from the Blaine Lake School. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Silver Springs explains to me that all good things come from Blaine Lake. But I would ask everyone to welcome them.

With them, Mr. Speaker, they have their teachers, Mr. Rob Jardine, Ms. Megan Crittenden, and Mr. David Guenther, as well as educational assistant, Mrs. Leanne Donohue. I would just for a moment . . . Do we have Abby Radics up there who is a daughter of a cousin of mine, just to single her out and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly?

But I ask all members to join me in welcoming this fine group of grade 7 and 8 students from the community of Blaine Lake to their Legislative Assembly, and we do have a Dilly Bar or two for you in a minute.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Environment, the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook, to introduce the group from Blaine Lake. I had an opportunity to spend 12 great years in Blaine Lake Composite School. It's a wonderful community, a wonderful school. I had the opportunity to make many friends, to have the benefit of wonderful teachers, many of whom I consider friends today. So I'll give you a big, "Go Comets" and

welcome you to the Legislative Assembly. And enjoy your day here today.

[11:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Student Rights and Safer Schools (continued)

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate here this afternoon as it relates to the rights of students and the rights to the freedoms and safety that all students and people deserve. And I do so . . . It's nice to actually have the group from Blaine Lake, the grade 7 and 8 students here today along with their teachers here today, to be a part of this discussion, and certainly I'd be interested in hearing their specific perspective on this matter as well, Mr. Speaker.

But quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we see an opportunity to provide the leadership that Saskatchewan students deserve, that Saskatchewan people deserve, by enshrining rights that are theirs, Mr. Speaker, but rights that far too often are compromised, Mr. Speaker. And when we think of the pressures that so many gay and lesbian or bisexual and transgendered students are facing across Saskatchewan, or adults and those within communities, Mr. Speaker, we owe it to them to provide them a law of the land that enshrines their right to freedom, to respect, and to make sure that there's the ability to have a GSA, a gay-straight alliance be able to be formed within their school.

And I know there's been many leaders on this front in Saskatchewan, and to each and every one of them I say, thank you. And I think of so many individual leaders, even within the gay rights movement itself in Saskatchewan, that have worked to advance the rights of many, Mr. Speaker. And I say, thank you.

I hear stories, Mr. Speaker, of a different time that wasn't so long ago, that when it was the annual time to come together, to put together a gay parade, Mr. Speaker, that those individuals were very few that would get out and march. And many, Mr. Speaker, felt they had to cover their faces with bags because they felt that there'd be repercussions and vindictive actions within the community, Mr. Speaker. This is not long ago in Saskatchewan. Those brave leaders have helped advance the rights of all in this province, Mr. Speaker, and to all of those leaders that have been a part of that movement — the movement, Mr. Speaker, for the advancement of human rights — I say, thank you.

I know now the difference, Mr. Speaker. We have significant progress at all levels of society, but we have a lot further still to go. But I know soon we'll be coming around to the Queen City Pride activities, and I look forward to being engaged. I look forward to marching proudly in support with allies in that parade once again, Mr. Speaker, as I always do. I look forward to joining the flag raising, along with other members as well, Mr. Speaker, and with confidence, showing our respect for one another.

And I also think of so many within our community who have shown leadership on this front. And I think of Camp fYrefly and the leaders there, whether it's James McNinch or whether it's Carla Blakely, and so many others that have come together to provide this program and these supports that are so critical to those that are able to connect with it, Mr. Speaker.

I've been out to Camp fYrefly, Mr. Speaker. I've listened to some of the stories being shared about some of the isolation and exclusion that occurs with kids from all across our province despite, I suspect, very good efforts of many within schools and communities, Mr. Speaker. And I hear of the feelings, Mr. Speaker, and the pressures around self-harm, and we know the tragic and ugly circumstances around things like suicide, Mr. Speaker. We know about too many young people not being able to grow and be all that they can be, Mr. Speaker. We know too many that are limited, Mr. Speaker. So I think of those like Camp fYrefly.

I think of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Pride Centre, and I think of the leadership here to establish the University of Regina Pride Centre. These are important centres that connect and change a culture of a campus and provide supports and confidence and safety to all, Mr. Speaker.

I think of Dan Shier and the Queen City Pride here in Regina and so many other members with Queen City Pride. I know so many of them well, and I thank them for their leadership.

I've noticed that Mr. Shier's been quoted often by government opposite trying to suggest that he doesn't support legislation for GSAs, Mr. Speaker. Well that isn't the case, Mr. Speaker. They're not sharing the entire quote. So I'll provide the rest of Mr. Shier's quote from March 12th, 2015, the story. The quote from Mr. Shier is, "Having legislation I think would be a good thing . . ." Then his quote continues, Mr. Speaker. So I would urge members opposite not to play fast and loose with leaders' quotes within our community and to recognize the voice that they're providing, Mr. Speaker.

I think of leaders within the Avenue Community Centre, Mr. Speaker. I think of Amanda Guthrie. I think of those that have been involved there before and still providing leadership in other capacities, like Chandra McIvor, Mr. Speaker, pushing forward to make sure that society is finally providing and ensuring that promise, the way we should be to all Saskatchewan people, whether gay, whether lesbian, whether bisexual or transgendered, Mr. Speaker.

I think of those founders of Breaking the Silence and those that come together every single year up in the University of Saskatchewan, working with educators, working with academics, working with everyday people in the community, Mr. Speaker. And I think of people like Don Cochrane and Fran Forsberg who have been pioneers and leaders on this front in pushing for progress.

I think of TransSask Saskatchewan and people like Mikayla Schultz who's provided me a greater perspective and understanding on this front, Mr. Speaker. I think of that important leadership. And to recognize something that we've worked with government on as an accomplishment would be the changes to the Human Rights Code. Something that we

should now be looking at directly is enshrining the rights of students to form GSAs within their schools, Mr. Speaker.

I think of the United Church, Mr. Speaker, and other faith leaders and organizations, Mr. Speaker. But the United Church for which I grew up in, Mr. Speaker, I think of Reverend Ken Powers, Mr. Speaker, and the debates that weren't so long ago about having a gay minister, for example, Mr. Speaker, or about gay marriage. And I remember those pressures and discussions within a church and the tensions at times that were present in those discussions. And I remember people like my dad, Mr. Speaker, who was an educator as well and affirming as well and taking on that debate within the church in resolving ourselves together as a group to make sure we were affirming to the rights of many, Mr. Speaker. And you know, these are many people, Mr. Speaker, stepping out, speaking out at times where rights often weren't protected, Mr. Speaker.

So what I'm trying to get at, Mr. Speaker, is the leadership in this province has come, but from the work of many. I'm proud of the record as New Democrats to advance agendas around human rights and gay rights, Mr. Speaker, and human rights. I'm proud to continue to provide that advocacy, and I'm thankful to the school boards across Saskatchewan and to the historical schools and the roles of the associate schools to work towards making sure this happens.

But it's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, to simply allow this, you know, to sort of be the unwritten rule of the land. It's important, Mr. Speaker, to enshrine these rights by law, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we're calling for. Mr. Speaker, the realities for too many kids across Saskatchewan is that they're isolated. They're left in a spot of hurt. They're left in a spot of harm, Mr. Speaker, and we shouldn't accept that. We should let them know that they're not alone.

We shouldn't leave it for a grade 7 student or a grade 5 student or a grade 11 student who's figuring out who they are, Mr. Speaker, and realizing that they might be different from their friends, to be the one that has to provide the leadership, Mr. Speaker. We, with the strength of this Legislative Assembly, and us as members of this Assembly should be providing that leadership. And we should have the confidence, Mr. Speaker, to do that here in this Assembly. They deserve nothing less.

I also think of the teachers, Mr. Speaker, that this is an important, affirming, enshrinement of a law, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I've, as a teacher before entering into elected office, I have friends, Mr. Speaker. And I think of one friend who is a teacher and a lesbian, Mr. Speaker, who lived that in isolation from her school community, Mr. Speaker, lived that in isolation from many of her staff members, lived that in isolation from the community at large. And these are the kind . . . And this is not very long ago, Mr. Speaker, in fact just a few years ago. I know how difficult it was for her to come out to that school community and the very pressures.

So I think we owe it to future generations, we certainly owe it to current generations to stand up, Mr. Speaker, as an Assembly and to enshrine these rights and to make sure that gay-straight alliances are able to be formed all across Saskatchewan. So I'm thankful for our school board partners. I'm thankful for the teachers that are working across Saskatchewan. I'm thankful for

those pioneers and leaders, Mr. Speaker, that have pushed and worked for progress, recognizing we have a long ways still to go, Mr. Speaker.

I've been appreciative of government to work on aspects with transgendered rights with the Human Rights Code. Now it's time that we take the important step and enshrine the right of gay-straight alliances all across Saskatchewan. It's my honour to enter debate here today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, indeed a pleasure to rise to be able to speak to this motion today, and I want to approach it from a little bit different perspective I think than what we've heard so far. You know, Mr. Speaker, as adults, as parents, as community leaders, as teachers, I believe that we have a slightly higher purpose in life. You know, Mr. Speaker, we realize and agree that there are bad people out there and that sometimes we need laws to protect the public, but I believe that our goal is somewhat higher. We need to be able to create a more civilized society, and in that sense our goal is somewhat greater.

It's important that we advance humankind in general, to teach our children to be creative, critical thinkers, and problem solvers. To be kind and judicious, I think that's what our role is, to respect and treat all others with respect like they treat themselves, to do unto others as they would have done unto them. I have to ask the question, Mr. Speaker, do we need to legislate that? Or do we teach that through modelling it through the values that we live by on a daily basis?

You know, Mr. Speaker, there's a saying that we have: you can do things right or you can do things the right way. By doing things right, in my mind, there's a hint that there is some process, some regulation, some laws that we must follow. By doing the right thing, I believe that there's a morality to that, an approach that is just and right and that all people should live by. And as parents we need to model those values for our children.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a while back my wife and I were playing, we decided to go and play a few holes of golf after supper out at the Wascana golf course. And at that time the green of the second hole bordered the grid road called Fleet Street and what we in Regina kind of know as Rainbow bridge. Some will be familiar with Rainbow bridge.

We were just finishing putting and walking off the green and in the distance I could see this motocross bike just screaming down the grid road. And I said to my wife, geez look at those people, they're going to kill themselves. As soon as that bike hits that grid road, it's going to go all over the place. As it approached, it got a little bit closer I said, you know Karen, I think that's our daughter. And as the bike screamed past us, I said to Karen, that is our daughter. And like the dutiful father I decided that we would put an end to that. So I hopped the fence and took a nick out of my thigh on the barbed wire fence, which made the blood flow a little bit stronger, and jumped out onto the road with the golf club hanging out and the other arm hanging out, standing right in the middle of the road. I was going to stop that bike on the way back, and we were going to

deal with this.

And sure enough that bike came screaming back. And they saw this guy standing out in the middle of the road, golf club out there, and I thought they thought they met their Waterloo, Mr. Speaker. The motorbike stopped. Our daughter looked at me and got off the motorbike. And it was really quite cute to see her walking down that bike path on her way home because she knew that's where she was going. And the young man, nice fellow that he was, got off his bike and started pushing it down the highway back to his home.

Now if I'd have done things right, I'd have reported that to the police; I'd have followed. He was driving without a licence, da da, da da, da da. But instead, at the urging of my wife, we did things right and kind of took things into our own hands and got our daughter home safely. And I knew that she thought she was going to be grounded for, well probably grounded for life, but that really didn't take place. And in her case, we had a conversation with her and talked about, you know, decision making, and as you grow older you're going to have to make other important decisions in your life.

[11:45]

And you know, Mr. Speaker, because of that particular instance — and I know in the young fellow's case as well — I know that our daughter is much the stronger mother for having had that situation dealt with in the right way, as opposed to doing things right and following some piece of legislation. So my point here is that some things require legislation and rules and regulations to guide us. Other things don't where we can model them and help grow our children.

I think of another situation that happened to me in one of the high schools that I was at, Mr. Speaker. And we had a Friday night dance, and I think you can all appreciate that on Friday night dances in a high school, sometimes things take place that we don't want to take place. And you've got a whole number of staff out there that are helping to supervise. They're giving up their Friday nights or whatever to supervise a high school dance, but invariably some things don't go quite the way they're supposed to. At the end of this particular function, we had about a 200-person melee out in the parking lot. There were visitors from other collegiates, etc. And it wasn't a lot of fun for me, as the principal, and for our staff as supervisors and for the parents that were there as chaperones, etc., etc.

Well Monday morning comes along and you have to deal with this. You've got a 600-student-body facility that is looking to leadership and their teachers for some sort of guidance. Now we could have done things right and ended all high school dances for the rest of the year, because that's what parents might have expected. That's what people around may have thought was a good and right thing to do. But if we had done that we would have taught our children nothing. And as a result of that, that particular instance, the staff got together and said, we're not going to punish the entire student body for the actions of a few. And in most of the cases it wasn't even our students, so why would we, why would we do that, Mr. Speaker?

So we did the right thing and we were able to have a conversation with our students about how we go forward and

the kind of decisions that we make. And I believe that as a result of that, the good work and professionalism of the teachers at that school taught those children how to become better citizens and behave in that society. So I make that point because there are times when you have to make a law. I don't believe that this is one of them.

You know, our . . . the member from Regina Rosemont is quoted in *Hansard* as saying, "What this side of the Assembly . . ." and I quote, "What this side of the Assembly is simply advocating is that government start listening to the school boards across this province." And as my colleague from Prince Albert noted earlier, that's exactly what this government is trying to do. We had a request from our school divisions, all 28 of them, to allow them to be autonomous, which is what we charge them to be. We've got 28 different school districts representing 28 different geographic and culturally diverse areas of our province, Mr. Speaker. They are the ones that are in the best position to make decisions around what's best for their communities, and it's our intent to allow them to do that.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, for me and in my mind, it should be for all of us. I believe that we fail our children, Mr. Speaker, and we fail society in general when we need a law to enforce what is morally right . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Holy smoke, one minute.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from a journal article that I discovered while looking at this:

A civilized society's first line of defence is not the law, police and courts but customs, traditions, and moral values. Behavioral norms, mostly transmitted by example, word of mouth and religious teachings, represent a body of wisdom distilled over the ages through experience and trial and error. They include important thou-shalt-nots such as shalt not murder, shalt not steal, shalt not lie and cheat, but they also include all those courtesies one might call ladylike and gentlemanly conduct. The failure to fully transmit values and traditions to subsequent generations represents one of the failings of the so-called greatest generation.

Mr. Speaker, and I continue the quote:

Policemen and laws can never replace customs, traditions and moral values as a means for regulating human behavior. At best, the police and criminal justice system are the last desperate line of defense for a civilized society. Our increased reliance on laws to regulate behavior is a measure of how uncivilized we've become.

Mr. Speaker, our school divisions, our schools, and our parents and our children are attaining that higher purpose, are making our society more civilized on their own. They are doing so without a law. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate on this motion:

To enshrine in legislation the right of students throughout Saskatchewan to establish and lead groups that promote respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, including with the name gay-straight alliances or gender sexuality alliance, or any other name which is consistent with the promotion of a positive school environment that is inclusive and accepting of all students.

We've got three jurisdictions leading the way here, Mr. Speaker — Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta — who have enshrined this ability of students to start GSAs in legislation. It's interesting. I listened yesterday to the Premier when he defended not entrenching the right of students to establish gay-straight alliances in legislation. He argued that it's not the Ministry of . . . he argued that it's policy, that it's the Ministry of Education's policy to support these when students ask and argued that they're happening without legislation.

Firstly I'd tell the Premier and the minister that they're mistaken when they say students haven't been prevented from starting GSAs. I know my colleague from Saskatoon Centre has some examples. And just yesterday I was chatting with a gay teacher, a constituent of mine, who was telling me about one school, two years ago, where she worked, and she said the kids were literally begging to start a GSA. The principal flatly refused because he said it wasn't the right image the school wanted to portray. Although this was two years ago, the teacher said that she's heard very recently from these students that this particular principal has not budged and there is no GSA in the school despite the students' desire and the real need for one. She talked about one of the students at this particular school, a gay student who was cutting herself, Mr. Speaker, and really could have benefitted from a GSA and knowing that she has allies in the school, and there were allies wanting to start that process.

Secondly there is a huge difference between legislation and policy. When this government's own Law Reform Commission talks about legislation versus policy, it points out that legislation has official status that emphasizes its importance and encourages compliance. As per the anecdote I just mentioned about the school and the principal being unwilling to allow the establishment of a GSA, this policy obviously isn't always being followed. Maybe not every principal is aware of it, or perhaps they realize how easy it is to ignore a policy as opposed to legislation. When you ignore legislation, Mr. Speaker, you are breaking the law.

We want the ability of students and teachers to be able to establish GSAs to be codified in law to ensure that these GSAs can exist. Having something in law isn't just about making sure schools are following the law. Ultimately that is what we want as a society, but it's also a great opportunity to educate citizens, teachers, young people, parents about why supporting all students regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression is important.

This law would be an opportunity to have a sustained dialogue about diversity and about human rights. It also makes it far easier for students to start a GSA when they know the legislation is on their side. It's a pretty scary thing being a teenager at the best of times, Mr. Speaker, speaking from

experience, having been one myself, and now having a teenager. Life isn't particularly smooth and easy, and imagine being a LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] student and being fearful and feeling judged already and having to go and ask a teacher or a principal, but not being sure that this is something that can happen.

Amanda Guthrie of the Avenue Community Centre in Saskatoon says the current method of having a student or group of students request a GSA potentially puts them in an uncomfortable position with their principal or a teacher. She says, "If that student knows there's provincial legislation backing that request, there isn't going to be as much fear when they ask their principal or teacher for a GSA."

It is also important to point out that this is a matter of life and death for some of our children. In Saskatchewan our suicide rates continue to grow. In fact, we have a higher suicide rate in 2011 than we did in 2000. We're going in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. Just to provide some context to those numbers and how they relate to the issue of creating safe and supportive schools for our children and foster better mental health, according to statistics from PFLAG Canada, 43 per cent of trans-identified students attempt suicide; 30 per cent of suicides are LGBT; gay teens are 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide and are 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression compared with peers from families that report no or low levels of family rejection.

These are some other stats that are shocking that I'll give you now, and that supporting GSAs in schools could improve. LGBT students hear anti-gay slurs an average of 26 times a day. Twenty-six per cent of LGBT students are told to leave home. Nearly a fifth of students are physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation, and over a tenth because of their gender expression.

This government's own mental health and addictions action plan — currently an action plan with no action, I might add — supports gay-straight alliances. Under recommendation 12.2 around improving service responsiveness to diversities including gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities, it says, "Gay-Straight Alliances in schools can help build social support networks and reduce isolation and stigma, which are risk factors for mental illness."

Mr. Speaker, I can cite statistics and tell you what I think, but sometimes it's best to hear from those who are impacted by the laws or lack of laws. As I mentioned earlier, I was talking to a gay constituent of mine yesterday who, when I told her of the debate here today, she said, "That is a debate I want in on."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to give her that opportunity. This is what she wrote to me:

To say that you are allowed to be gay and technically no one can do anything to you based on that fact, does not make up for the strong undertow of our heteronormative narrative and the homophobia that still plagues us as a society. For youth to thrive in their schools and communities, they need to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe and supported.

She went on to write to me of her own experiences. I'd like to outline them here because I think she says it better than me:

As a gay teacher who was once a gay youth, I feel for the students who do not feel safe and who do not have the support at home. In the short years I have been a teacher, I've had numerous students come out to me, telling me they haven't told anyone else. In this country, in this day and age, that is not acceptable. To have to hide an unchangeable part of who you are every day takes a terrible toll on both your physical and mental health. I know from experience.

I went through years of trying to change myself and hide myself. As a youth myself, it was never an option to talk about my sexuality. I want for the youth of today to not have to experience that, to be able to find acceptance of themselves and live up to their true potential. I know what it feels like to question yourself and to think there is something wrong with you. We can prevent this for today's students by having open dialogues in an environment where staff and students share a clear understanding that discrimination will not be tolerated.

Even the discussion of "should we allow GSAs in schools" is embarrassing and pitiful. To other people, such as myself, to hold meetings and press conferences to decide if we deserve the right to congregate and celebrate and lift up who we are, puts us in the category of "less than." Think about it — the lack of humanity LGBT people are given just through having to decide if we should allow GSAs in school.

But what if someone who doesn't support gay marriage or gay people in general becomes offended by their children hearing that gay people exist? [She asks that rhetorical question.] Then perhaps public education is not for them.

In the end, I am happy these conversations are happening, as insulting as I find them, in pure hope that there will be a positive outcome. People are gay. You don't have to be gay, and you don't have to believe in gay marriage. It exists. It is not dependent upon your beliefs. We exist.

As a gay teacher, I feel safe when I enter a new school and see that a GSA exists. I feel safe and I feel like I can relax and no one will hurt me. I feel when the administration and the staff have GSAs in a school, that I can exist as myself.

I'm 31 years old and still sweat and shake when introducing my wife to people. This does not come from an imaginary fear I've conjured up about how some people may react to me. This has come from real experiences: when I was told I could not teach a health class because of my sexuality; when I was told to lie about my spouse or else parents would be pulling kids from my class; when a student ran away literally screaming "get her away from me" when the class saw a picture of my beautiful albeit gay family; when on the playground kids yell "eww" when my daughter proudly introduces us as her two moms. This list hurts and, sadly, goes on. And so yes, the importance of GSAs in schools is very real for me.

I'm 31 years old and I'm still working through the same of my existence, because I live in society who on a grand scale accepts me, but on the day-to-day scale still has a long way to go.

Clearly I feel GSAs protect not only the students, but also myself against parents who may not agree with my gayness, against staff who morally object to who I am, and against students who have never received proper education on sexuality and so lump me in with pedophiles and believe me to be a threat.

[12:00]

I worry about my daughters having gay parents and being taunted or bullied on those grounds. A GSA in their school would put my mind at ease as a parent. The lack of GSAs in our schools causes harm to students of gay parents, to gay and trans students, and to gay and trans staff.

Having a GSA in a school causes no harm to anyone. It seems like a no-brainer to me. What we are looking at is the difference of possibly offending a population of people by having them, versus actual life and death of LGBT students and staff. Which one should take precedence? Offending those who have decided to take offence? Or disregarding the importance of the life and well-being of those who did not decide to be gay, bisexual, lesbian, or trans? Take it out of the hands of individual schools where the administration may not be supportive or staff may not be educated on the importance of the matter . . .

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the two claps, my colleagues.

I very much appreciate being asked to enter into this debate because I think it's an important debate and I think it's something that isn't certainly new to the province of Saskatchewan and it's not new to Canada, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Saskatoon Centre had mentioned that during Premier's estimates, and I think the member from Saskatoon Riversdale had mentioned that there was no policy that the government had formed, and I just wanted to give them an update. And again I think they have a little bit of trouble with this, Mr. Speaker, but uncle Google was able to help me out in about eight seconds and it was able to find the Minister of Education policy statement, Student alliances for gender and sexual diversity in Saskatchewan schools. So if they want this, Mr. Speaker . . . I know the member from Saskatoon Centre wanted it tabled, but it is on the Internet, and we can certainly help him out if they need something to be able to help one of their researchers be able to find this, Mr. Speaker.

But I guess one of the things I want to talk about first of all, Mr. Speaker, is, again this is nothing new. Bullying, sexual diversity is not something new that just happened with this government. And I guess my concern is, Mr. Speaker, on what the opposition did when they were 16 years in government, why they didn't introduce some anti-bullying legislation, why they didn't step

up to the plate. As the member from Regina Rosemont said that a lot of the people unfortunately had to put masks over when they went to the pride . . . And I guess I don't understand why they weren't more supportive now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the people out there. Why weren't they introducing some legislation then?

And I also want to allude to a couple of things that my colleagues were able to say, and I think the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Saskatoon rivers put it very eloquently, Mr. Speaker, is we need to be respectful to each other. And this is not something that the government is in charge of, is being respectful to each other. And as the MLA from Douglas Park, the very vocal person during question period, Mr. Speaker, was saying, is this is something that we have to teach our children.

Now there's a difference between teaching your child and sitting down and having a conversation with him about everything, about bullying, about GSAs, about life, about them going through difficult times in their life. This is not something that the government needs to be able to step in between a relationship between a parent and a child, or the child and the school, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The reason that the legislation I think is coming from, the request for legislation is coming from the opposition is they don't understand and they don't see the perspective of the . . . You know what? The school boards, the autonomy of the school boards and the conversations between school boards, parents, and students is critical. This is not something that the government needs to be jumping in the middle of and telling everybody what to do.

On the bullying side of things, and again this isn't something that is brand new, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that anybody can stand up in this legislature, or at any point in time, and say that they weren't bullied or intimidated by somebody or that they weren't somehow feeling inferior or less than worthy with the rest of their peers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I guess it's how we teach our kids to deal with that.

The Minister of Central Services worked for months doing our anti-bullying, cyberbullying report, Mr. Speaker, and it was something that was very, very timely, Mr. Speaker, because we needed to make sure that students felt safe. And now talking specifically about the GSAs, anecdotally we've heard from them a couple of . . . while that there was some school boards . . . We heard something from the member of Riversdale, the MLA from Riversdale, that happened two years ago. Well I think things have changed in the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, that the GSAs are in schools.

We do have something. We have policy in place to be able to say to the school boards, you must provide this if it is required. Now why would the opposition think that we have to tell them that they must do this? That goes everything against the school boards' autonomy, Mr. Speaker. They are in there for a specific reason, to be able to look out for their local needs. They're voted into their positions just like we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be able to make decisions for their area.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very concerning again why the NDP seem to think that they know better than everybody else, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They need to be able to tell the school

boards what to do because obviously they think that the school boards don't know enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And then even yesterday they went on a little further and they went again today in question period, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is they went on to say that the Privacy Commissioner wasn't capable of doing their jobs, that we had to have a person to check the checker on what was going on certainly.

And I don't understand again, again yesterday, and today I did it in a member's statement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why the NDP think that they know better than everybody, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They know better than the public servants that are out there working on our behalf. They've thrown many public servants under the bus. The Privacy Commissioner, they obviously don't have very much confidence in that because we haven't even let the Privacy Commissioner do their report yet and they're already questioning their report. Again, public . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and thank you, the Health Quality Council. Again in my member's statement the Leader of the Opposition just absolutely slammed them. They want everybody in Saskatchewan to believe that they know better than everybody else in Saskatchewan. They know better than business. They know better than school boards, public health commissioners, and certainly, especially on the gay-straight alliance, they know better than everybody else. They've heard some anecdotally.

The minister has stood up here and said he has not received any complaints from any school board saying that there was a refusal to set up a GSA, so why do we have to force them? Why is it the NDP's position that government always knows best? Sometimes government needs to get involved, as the member from Douglas Park said. Sometimes we need laws; we need laws to protect people. But sometimes we just need to be able to make sure that everything is in place for them on the policy side of things, and we don't need to ram some legislation down their throat, Mr. Speaker.

It's very, very disappointing. I think it's overall arching of the NDP policy is they want to control everything, Mr. Speaker. They want to control the school boards. They want to control the health boards. They want to control everything they possible can and absolutely eliminate any type of free thought amongst the people of Saskatchewan.

The school boards are there for a very specific reason. They're there to look out for the best needs of their students, primary. Secondly, they're looking out for their staff and they're looking out for their community. And I think the school boards in Saskatchewan are doing a great job at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think as a government, we need to step out, let them be able to run their school boards.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this motion that is brought forward is certainly not relevant because it's one of those motions that the NDP are just trying to be able to bring things forward to create some stir within the community. We have policy in place. We've heard from the school boards. We've heard from the gentleman from Regina Pride on that there's no need for legislation.

So I guess the question would be is, who are they consulting, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because they don't seem to be consulting

the School Boards Association. They seem to be supportive of this government's line. But they seem to think that they know better than everybody else.

And I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it just goes to speak that the arrogance of the NDP, that they always know better than anybody. The leader stands up and he certainly knows better than all of us. He always seems to think he's the smartest person in the room, but I guess the Saskatchewan people will decide that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — The time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. After listening to my fellow colleagues and members from Saskatchewan Rivers and Regina Douglas Park and Saskatoon Sutherland, I know and I believe that we have across this province dedicated and caring school board trustees who are committed to ensuring that the staff they hire and the governance they provide reflects the respectful, moral, and caring environment to support all the students they serve.

And on April the 28th, 2015, the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] sent a letter, as you heard earlier, to the Minister of Education, stating:

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association firmly believes that our 28 member boards are in the best position to make decisions at the local level, including the establishment of gay-straight alliances. Introducing legislation to make such decisions mandatory limits boards' autonomy and we feel it is unnecessary as school divisions are responding to diverse and changing student needs every day.

Mr. Speaker, does the member from Regina Rosemont oppose the SSBA's request to maintain the autonomy of locally elected school boards?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's pretty rich coming from that government that has actively run roughshod over the autonomy of school boards on front after front after front, Mr. Speaker, to now try to deny human rights of students on those grounds, Mr. Speaker. School boards have been leaders on this front. Teachers have been leaders on this front, Mr. Speaker. Now it's time for this government to stand up and provide the rights to students that they deserve.

I quote Amanda Guthrie of the Avenue Community Centre on this front. "If that student knows there's provincial legislation backing that request, there isn't going to be as much fear when they ask their principal or teacher for a GSA." Well I think it's our responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to create the culture of care and support, yes, but to enshrine in law the right to GSAs across Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, right across this country, Ontario, Manitoba, even Alberta under the former premier, Jim Prentice, legislated the opportunity to have GSAs in our schools. That's a reality in Canada.

And we also know the reality for too many teenagers in our schools. They are thinking about suicide because of bullying, particularly homophobic bullying, and that's a reality. And when we have in Saskatchewan . . . We're one of the worst provinces in Canada when it comes to suicide rates. That's a reality. I want to know from the member from Saskatoon Sutherland, what will it take to make GSAs legislation relevant?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. I guess what I would have to answer, the quick question is, we have made it relevant. We have made it very relevant. We have policy in place. We have approval from the school boards to make sure that they are in line with what we're doing. We're doing our consultation on what is happening within the school systems, and I hear what you're saying is anecdotal about what you're hearing from different people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just don't understand why they think that this is a new issue. Mr. Deputy Speaker, are they over there saying that there was no homophobic slurs before this government, before the Saskatchewan Party formed government? They did absolutely nothing on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They didn't do anything on the bullying. There's been bullying going around forever, and there's been GSA requests for a long time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that they need to step up to the plate and admit that they failed the people of Saskatchewan back when they were in government.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — The member from Regina Rosemont thinks he knows what school boards want. On November 13th, 2013, the member said, "What this side of the Assembly is simply advocating is that government start listening to the school boards across this province . . ."

Well, Mr. Speaker, this side of the Assembly has listened. Will the member from Regina Rosemont finally acknowledge that the Saskatchewan School Boards Association does not want legislation?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Again, Mr. Speaker, pretty rich from that government that has basically had an agenda that hasn't listened to school boards on so many fronts, that's left school boards with massive shortfalls right now that they're having to deal with, making cuts across our very school divisions here in Regina and Saskatoon, across the province: they better start listening to the school boards on those fronts, Mr. Speaker. School boards in Saskatchewan have been leaders on the front around GSAs. So have teachers. So have students.

Now it's time for that government to show some leadership and enshrine GSAs for all students all across Saskatchewan. And for the member in the back there from Saskatoon Sutherland to suggest that action hasn't been taken on this side, it just shows he has no history or understanding of the leadership in Saskatchewan when it comes to gay marriage, when it comes to the Human Rights Code. And it's just such a dismissive approach, Mr. Speaker, to a very important issue. And to speak about issues as being anecdotal as far as suicide statistics and tragic losses is absolutely unacceptable.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In terms of the protestations on the part of this government around there's no need for legislation, it brings to mind the protestations we had heard earlier on in the life of this government around there being no need to enshrine the rights of the transgendered community in the Human Rights Code. Thankfully they came around on that, Mr. Speaker.

I guess when it comes to enshrining the human rights of students to form gay-straight alliances in their schools, again we hear the same kind of protestations we heard around that. But I guess my question is to the member from Saskatoon Sutherland. How long is it going to take for them to come around and do the right thing and enshrine this right in legislation?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And again a very similar question that I got last time. We do have some policy in place. And more importantly, and I think this letter has been read a couple of times, but I want to take a direct quote out of it:

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association firmly believes that our 28 member boards are in the best position to make decisions at the local level, including the establishment of gay-straight alliance, GSAs. Introducing legislation to make such decisions mandatory limits boards' autonomy and we feel it is unnecessary.

I'm not quite sure what part of that they're not understanding. We've had three members read that from this side. We're more than happy to provide the letter for them so they can read it and see that this is something that the Saskatchewan school boards are looking for, and what they got from our government. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, it's hard to understand the question that's coming from that side. We know that currently boards of education respect diversity and are committed to providing students with opportunities to connect within their schools. We also know that school divisions in Saskatchewan are ensuring students have a place that are supportive and safe to secure club meetings. That is their policy, and this government stands behind it.

Mr. Speaker, to the member from Saskatoon Centre: do you know of any students that have made a request for a GSA in their school and have been denied?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course. We all do in this legislature because we had Halla Scott come here, and I introduced her to everyone in this House. There's her and several others, Mr. Speaker.

I find this really incredible coming from that member. Last week on April 28th, when we were talking about the Day of Mourning, he was talking about, you know, Saskatchewan has the second-highest injury rate in the country. And he said in the *Times-Herald*, we need stronger occupational health and safety regulations and laws.

The same with this: when we have a situation in our province where we're seeing suicide rates like we have, and there are people out there, kids saying we need strong legislation that allows them to call for GSAs, that should be in place. I find it very odd that he would even have the nerve to get up and talk about it today.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Douglas Park gave some examples of certainly good parenting and certainly good judgment as well, and I appreciate that, but it's not an either/or on this front. I mean to compare cancelling a school dance to not providing and enshrining the right to establish a GSA is a very different thing. The fact is, the marginalized and the vulnerable grade 7 or grade 5 or grade 11 or grade 10 students that could be helped by this deserve us, in our positions of strength, to stand up and enshrine the right to a GSA. Why won't the member from Douglas Park support this?

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to take this whole line of questioning from the members opposite really as an affront on several groups. First of all, it's certainly an affront on the autonomy and the integrity of our school divisions. Having been a school board member, Mr. Speaker, I know and understand and appreciate the dedication and commitment that goes into decision making, and I believe that school . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Members, the time for the 75-minute debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 3 — Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure

today to rise to make some remarks about this motion. I would just like to read the motion in now, and then I will move it at the conclusion of my remarks:

That this Assembly supports the actions taken by the government to prevent the spread of zebra and quagga mussels into our province, including recognizing May 10th to 16th, 2015 as Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week in Saskatchewan.

And I'll move that motion at the conclusion of my remarks.

This is a subject, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is very front and centre in my mind and I think should be front and centre in the minds of all people in Saskatchewan. What I'd like to do today is make remarks kind of on five different aspects. Firstly, I'd like to talk a little about how I found out about quagga and zebra mussels, and then I'd like to talk a little bit about species information and then the history of these two aquatic invasive species here in North America, the economic impact of the invasion of these aquatic invasives, and also what steps we need to take to prevent any future spread of these very dangerous aquatic species.

Mr. Speaker, about three or four years ago, it was through our association in Saskatchewan here with our affiliation with PNWER that I first became aware of quagga and zebra mussels, and I'm sure there was probably a lot of people, likely in this Assembly and in this province, that knew about them before I did. But anyway, I heard about them first . . . And it's very appropriate that we have a member here from Idaho today because Eric Anderson was a man who was very passionate about containing these species, and he was the first one that I talked to about it.

Initially I thought, you know, here in Saskatchewan, that isn't going to be a great problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it seems like it's 40 below for half of the year and our lakes are frozen over, and what damage can these things do? So I've since certainly changed my attitude about that, and I'll talk more about how these things are spread and are very close to us, being over one province to the east right now.

I talked very briefly earlier today about PNWER and our affiliation with PNWER, so I'm not going to go into a lot of details about that. But one of the working groups in PNWER of course is an aquatic invasive species working group, and I'm very pleased to have been able to sit in on some of their meetings. At each of our summits, summer and winter, we have an invasive species working group that keeps us updated on what's happening in the jurisdictions in the PNWER group.

I'd just like to talk a little bit about the history of how these aquatic invasive species came to be here in North America. They originated in the Dnieper and Volga river systems and the Black Sea area of Russia and Ukraine. In that environment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they aren't a huge problem. The waterways, the water bodies in that area is not high in calcium content. These mussels need calcium to build shells and maintain their shells. That's what they're looking for in the water. They're not a huge problem there, but of course when they came to North America, to the Great Lakes first of all, our lakes are high in calcium so they thrive and multiply exponentially.

They were first discovered here in North America in 1987 and 1988 in Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie in the Great Lakes system, and they rapidly, rapidly spread. They've now been found in all of the Great Lakes, in the St. Lawrence River, in the Rideau Canal, in the Trent-Severn Waterway, and throughout all of the other minor lakes around in the Great Lakes system in southern Ontario.

How they got here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was basically on the hulls, the anchors, the chains of ocean-bearing ships coming from the Ukraine and Russia areas. Ships take on the ballast, as you know, when they come over here empty. They dumped their ballast in the Great Lakes and took on their cargo to go back to Europe. The veligers, which are the microscopic larva of these mussels, were in the water in their ballast tanks and got dumped into our lakes and spread from there. From there they spread from the Great Lakes down to the Lake Mead area.

In January of 2007 they were discovered in Lake Mead, and of course there was a lot of conjecture and speculation about how did they travel 2,500 miles in that period of time, get from our Great Lakes in basically the northeast corner of our continent to the southwest corner of the continent. But it was discovered and, since, in research they found out that these things can live certainly three to five days out of water, and if conditions are right, they can live longer. And I'll talk a little bit more about that when I talk about the species particularly.

As I said, they were found in January of 2007 in Lake Mead. Two weeks later — how quickly they're spreading — they were found in Lake Mohave and Lake Havasu, and then they were discovered in the Colorado River system by the summer of 2007. So that's how rapidly they were spreading in that area. Of course that's a very populated area of the United States in that area. They since were discovered in the Colorado River aqueduct system and since that time were discovered in San Diego County, in the San Vicente reservoir, Lake Murray reservoir, Lower Otay reservoir, Lake Dixon, and in the Miramar reservoir; and in Riverside County in Lake Skinner and Lake Mathews.

The zebras, one year later, just one year later were discovered in the San Justo reservoir in the San Benito County. Of course that is a very populated area. There's lots of boat traffic from one lake to the next, from one river system, so we're believing that's how they got spread.

Talk a little bit about more closely to home here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In 2010 they were discovered in the Red River system in North Dakota, which of course is very close to here. And then most recently in 2013, they were discovered in the fall, I think in October, in Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba. As probably everyone knows here, that is the 10th largest freshwater lake in the world, a huge water body. It would be literally impossible to eradicate these things from Lake Winnipeg.

What they tried to do in Manitoba, at a cost of about \$500,000, was they injected a slurry of potash because potash is something that does kill these mussels. They injected it into four different harbours in Lake Winnipeg, and they were effective. They were effective in killing the mussels in those areas. However, they did escape out of those harbours either on boats and motors, or through the dams that they'd put up, and

they've now been discovered in the main body of Lake Winnipeg. So we know that the problem is ongoing and we must, we must contain them in Lake Winnipeg.

As I mentioned earlier, between January '07 and January '08, the border protection stations in the area of southwestern United States, in the area of the greatest infestation, they set up their protection station and inspections, and they stopped approximately 83,000 boats in that period of time. Of those boats they checked, 8,700 of them had not been cleaned or drained. And of that number, 104 boats were contaminated. So you can see that 104 boats, if they go to 104 different lakes, you can see the magnitude of how quickly these things can spread, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again closer to home, in Alberta last year they have purchased some portable wash units, similar to the ones I'm going to talk about here in a moment that we have here in Saskatchewan. They stopped about 3,700 boats in Alberta last year, and it was a voluntary thing that the people had their boats inspected. Of those boats they inspected, they found 10 that were contaminated. Seven of those had come up from the United States, and three came through Saskatchewan. Three came through our province, so we were that close to having quagga or zebra mussels in our province. Had those boats stopped in our province in one of our waterways, we would have had them here.

If I can just share anecdotally a situation that highlights how close we were to having these mussels sometime ago, and I don't think I'm talking out of school here because the fellow who owns this boat actually spoke at a workshop I attended in Saskatoon. I think we all know the paddlewheeler that plies the river in Saskatoon where you can host parties and weddings and receptions, etc. He purchased that boat down in Las Vegas. It had been on Lake Mead prior to that. He thought he'd had it checked. He had somebody look at it, thought it was clean. However when he hired the trucker to haul it back to Saskatchewan, they noticed, coming through Utah, I believe, one of the inspection stations there found them. They did impound the boat for 30 days, cleaned it up, and forwarded it on. Had they not done that, we would have had quagga mussels, zebra mussels in the Saskatchewan River.

The problem with some of the jurisdictions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, especially in that southwest corner around Lake Powell, Lake Mathews is that inspections are not mandatory. They have no regulations to force somebody to have their boat inspected; it's strictly a voluntary inspection. So that's one of the things that we need to address, and I'll talk about that later this morning.

[12:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the third thing I'd like to talk about is a little bit of species information about these two species. And I don't claim to be a marine biologist or a scientist or anything like that, but the generic names of these things are quagga mussels and zebra mussels because they do have little stripes on their shells. The zebra mussel has stripes. The quagga mussel . . . By the way, quagga is an extinct subspecies of African zebras, so they're also a zebra-striped thing and that's where they got the name. The quagga species name is *Dreissena*

rostriformis bugensis and the zebra's species name is *Dreissena polymorpha*. So as I said, I'm not a biologist so I'm not going to go any deeper into that.

An Hon. Member: — You know your Latin.

Mr. Cox: — Yes, I think that was Greek. I'm not sure. They're very small-sized mussels. They are about the size of a fingernail normally, but they can grow larger, and we'll talk a bit more about that later. Their larvae, their young, are called veligers. They're microscopic in size and certainly can't be detected, and that of course is one of the problems. If they're in the livewells, the ballasts of our boats, or in the legs of our motors, we can't detect them.

These mussels are what's known as filter feeders. They basically take everything out of the water that they need and of course, as I mentioned already, they're looking for calcium for shell building and maintenance. One mussel can filter in excess of one litre of water per day. So when you have millions of these things in a body of water, you can see how much filtering activity can go on.

Basically what they do is they strip all life-supporting algae from the water, and the algae is the basis of the food chain in an aquatic ecosystem. okay? At high concentrations of quagga and zebra mussels, the algae just simply cannot reproduce fast enough to replace the algae that's being eaten by these mussels. They remove the phytoplankton, the zooplankton, the algae, and they even eat their own veligers when they're in the microscopic stage. And that is kind of one of the only plusses of this whole situation, that at that stage of their life cycle, they actually have about a 99 per cent mortality rate. Ninety-nine per cent of the veligers get eaten.

But I'll talk a little bit about how rapidly they multiply. These mussels are what's known as bivalve molluscs, meaning that they can excrete back out through their incurrent siphon any undesirable particulate that they can't use. And there are some that they don't. When they spit this back out — it's called a pseudofeces — it's wrapped in their own mucus when they excrete it back out. And the mucus in these tiny mussels . . . Their toxins bioaccumulate so that these pseudofeces that they spit back out is approximately 300,000 times more toxic than what the water that they took in. So that's the danger that they do, what they cause to other species in the water. Any particulate that they can use is discharged out their excurrent siphon, and of course doesn't cause any harm.

Since we've been researching these quagga and zebra mussels, it's been discovered that the quaggas are far more adaptable than the zebra mussels, but both of these species are what's called polymorphic, which means that they can readily adapt to new surroundings, to an extreme environment, which of course they are doing here in Saskatchewan in colder water and deeper water than where they came from.

As I mentioned, the quagga is actually more adaptable to colder water. They've been found in deeper water, not uncommon to find them at 450 feet, but in some cases they're as deep as 540 feet. Whereas the zebras have been found up to 180 feet deep, but normally they're only found between 6 to 12 feet below the surface of the water. The quaggas can also reproduce in colder

water. Initially it was thought about only 12 degrees they could reproduce. Quaggas have now been known to reproduce in 9-degree water, and the zebras at 12 degrees.

As I mentioned, they're typically fingernail size, but they can be up to 2 inches in size. The quaggas, again, are a little more adaptable. They can colonize on either soft or hard surfaces like rocks, boats, docks, dams, anything that's there. And what they do is they attach by their byssal threads. Once they reach the adult stage, they glom on to whatever's in their surroundings, whereas the zebra mussels prefer hard surfaces only. They attach only to rocks. They don't attach to mud in the bottom of the ocean or to the sand beaches, whatever, like the quaggas do.

Their larva is microscopic. It's called veligers. Reproduction is exponential. One female mussel can produce as many as 40,000 eggs in each reproductive cycle, and up to a million eggs in a spawning season. One female can produce a million eggs in a year.

As I mentioned earlier, they can survive normally up to three to five days out of water — so that's how they get transported — depending on the temperature and the humidity. But if it's cooler and damper, they can survive up to 30 days out of water in the right conditions.

The quagga mussels are taking over from the zebra mussels here in North America. In 2000 in Lake Michigan, the zebras accounted for about 98.3 per cent of the mussel population. By 2005 the quaggas accounted for 97.7 per cent. Zebras are found in a density of about 899 per square meter. And later on the quaggas are now almost 7,800 per square meter, so you can see the size of the colonies of these things.

Again, because of their filter-feeding activity, thus reducing the food available for fish and other aquatic species — the phytoplankton and zooplankton — the food chain has been disrupted in our waterways. They do avoid certain types of plankton, so that causes more toxic algae to build up in our lakes, which also is very dangerous.

I mentioned the pseudofeces earlier on. What happens is that settles on the bottom of the lake. It decomposes, creates an environment where botulism type E thrives. And in recent years that botulism type E has been blamed on the outbreaks that's killed thousands of fish and has resulted in avian botulism that's also killed thousands of birds in the Great Lakes. They've also been responsible for a dramatic decline in the native clam populations in Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair because they attach . . . And I know one of our members is very fond of clams, and that would be an issue for him as well.

Large colonies of the zebras also affect the spawning schools of some of the fish, and thereby affecting the survival of their fish eggs.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, there are no known predators for these things. It has been experimented with yellow perch and redear sunfish that will eat them to a certain point, but of course we don't know the danger of having them ingest the toxins that are in these molluscs because toxins do tend to biomagnify as they go up the food chain.

I'd like to talk a little bit now just about the economic impact of these mussels that are in North America. We don't fully understand the total amount but, at this point, we're estimating the cost in the United States is between 3 billion to \$5 billion.

Here in Saskatchewan, we're blessed with some beautiful lakes, beautiful waterways. Water is important for recreation, for commercial fishing, for our irrigation for our agriculture sector, our hydro power dams, and of course water for our potash industry.

In the Great Lakes alone, some 70 to \$90 million a year is being spent to alleviate the problems caused by these. Alberta estimates that it will cost \$75 million a year if quaggas or zebras get into Alberta. Because of the damage to the freshwater clams, again we don't know what the cost will be to that.

In the Colorado River system for example, the reservoirs in the southwest of the USA [United States of America] I talked about, divers are going down, scraping these mussels off the Hoover dam. And of course at this time we don't know the extent of the damage, because they do take the calcium, if there's going to be any damage to the concrete because of depleted calcium in that concrete.

The value of our cottages around our lakes is going to go down, the demand for our campgrounds. Our tourism industry is going to be affected. There's going to be so many ramifications if we allow these mussels into our province.

And again, anecdotally I talk about . . . Last year in Ottawa, when we took this issue to Ottawa and talked to the Environment minister there, one of the staff members related the story that their family has a cottage on one of the lakes nearby, and they literally can't walk on their beach or go out of their cottage without putting on shoes. These things are sharp on their feet, they cut them. So this is one of the things that's going to deteriorate the value of our recreational properties. They cause a lot of damage to our boat motors, to the props on the boats, get in the ballast, in the live wells. So this is a very dangerous thing.

So I'll just conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by talking a little bit about what we can do. These mussels have no known predators, so it has to be a man-made, a known man-made way to eradicate them. So the reason for this motion today and the announcement that we're going to make later on this afternoon is to raise awareness. We absolutely must raise awareness. The only way to prevent these is containing them at the source, which our closest source of course is Lake Winnipeg. The ones in the States, they're working in the southern states to do what they can there.

We need to update regulations in some jurisdictions. Fortunately here in Saskatchewan we have made some changes to our regulations, and we do have the authority to search some boats here. But we need to do it on a federal level, both here and in the United States.

Again I'd just like to read a couple of things that we're doing here. Our program is going to include new signage, web-based content, educational materials, and two new portable

boat-decontamination units for the province which we're going to be unveiling later today. And we'll be moving around the province to try to catch any boats that may be contaminated.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to say that we need to increase education. We need to have people aware of this problem. We need to have people want to have their inspections done because we're not ever going to be able, in a province this size with as many roadways as we have, we're never going to be able to catch every boat that comes and goes out of our province, to and from the province, whether it's local people, snowbirds coming back from the States, people buying boats in the States. We don't stop all the speeders. We don't stop all the impaired drivers. We're never going to stop all the boats. We need to impress on people that they have to have their boat inspected, and that's the only way to protect our waterways. So having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports the actions taken by the government to prevent the spread of zebra and quagga mussels into our province, including recognizing May the 10th to 16th, 2015 as Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from The Battlefords:

That this Assembly supports the actions taken by the government to prevent the spread of zebra and quagga mussels into our province, including recognizing May 10th to the 16th, 2015 as Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week in Saskatchewan.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And first off, I want to thank the member from North Battleford for doing so much work on this file and bringing the attention that is needed to this issue of aquatic invasive species resulting from the quagga and the zebra mussel. I know that these have a large impact on our economy and a large impact on our waterways, and I look forward to talking more about this in future debate. And I would like to adjourn debate right now.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved to adjourn debate on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that the House does now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:44.]

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Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for The Global
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