



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

## **Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

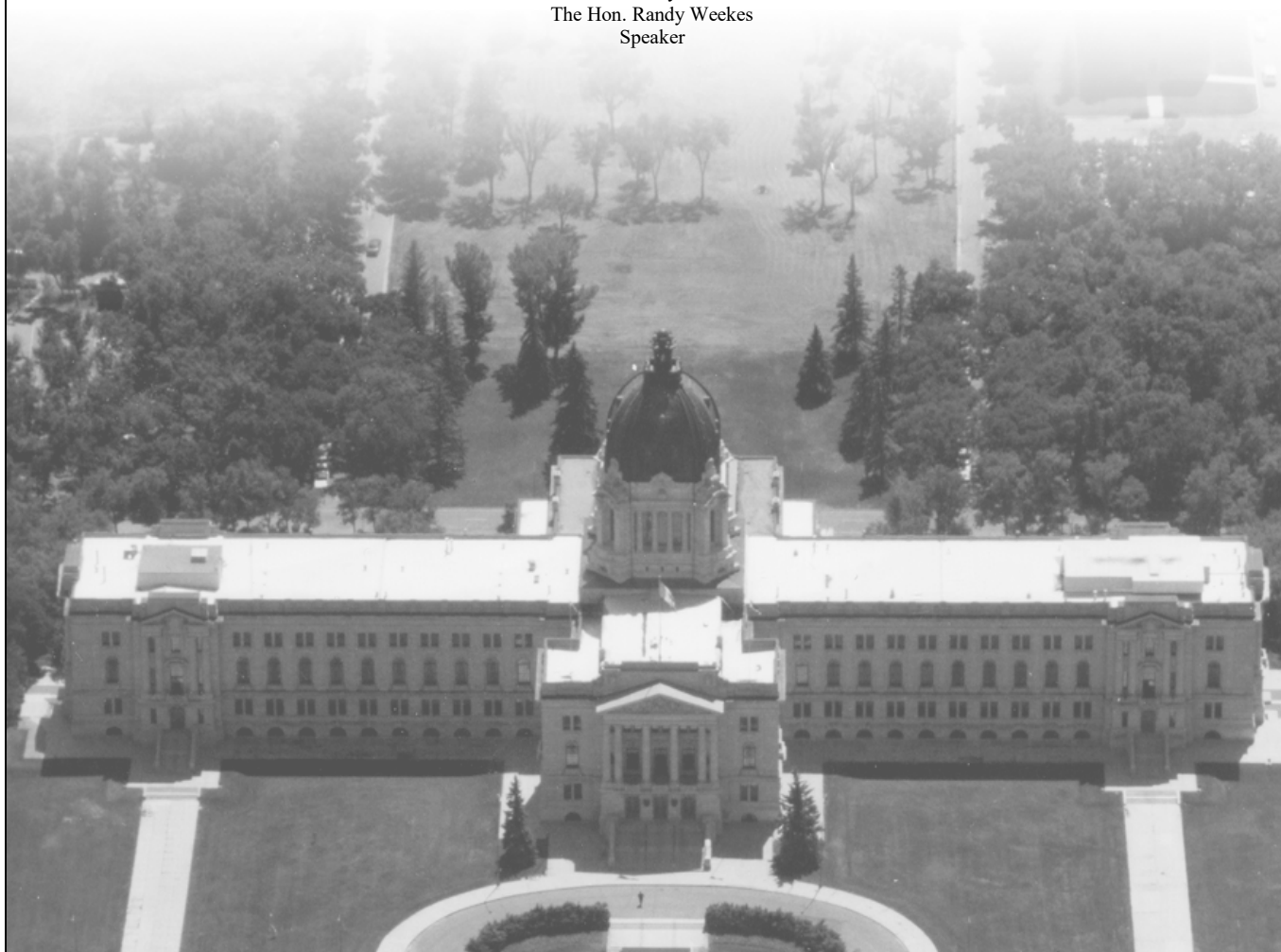
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# **DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 29th Legislature**

**Lieutenant Governor** — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

**Speaker** — Hon. Randy Weekes  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Ryan Meili

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**Belanger, Buckley** — Athabasca (NDP)  
**Bonk, Steven** — Moosomin (SP)  
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**Weekes, Hon. Randy** — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)  
**Wilson, Nadine** — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)  
**Wotherspoon, Trent** — Regina Rosemont (NDP)  
**Wyant, Hon. Gordon** — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)  
**Young, Aleana** — Regina University (NDP)  
**Young, Colleen** — Lloydminster (SP)

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

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

**Deputy Clerk** — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan regarding Hemlibra coverage. Brittany Lee-Acton's son Vaughn has lived experience receiving Hemlibra through a compassionate program. Vaughn is five years old and lives in Saskatoon. Along with severe hemophilia A, he also has autism spectrum disorder.

Before starting Hemlibra, he had 15 to 25 internal bleeds per year, and he struggled with the trauma of IVs [intravenous] every one to two days. In the 16 months since starting Hemlibra, he has had zero bleeds, zero hospital visits, and receives subcutaneous treatment only every two weeks. His mental health has improved dramatically, which has also improved his socio-emotional and academic development. Vaughn receives Hemlibra based on donations from the pharmaceutical company.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Minister of Health to work with the federal government to seek rapid approval of Hemlibra, so that all people with severe hemophilia A can have access to this therapy treatment.

This is signed by individuals from Humboldt, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in the Assembly to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for pay equity legislation. Mr. Speaker, I do so as the first male member of our caucus as I follow the lead of my amazing female colleagues. And I do so also to proudly stand here as an ally to my female colleagues and to all women and girls in our province. I'm mindful of this as a father, and I envision a future where the economic potential for my daughter will be equal to those of my sons.

I'll read the prayer. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender wage gaps in Canada, which is a result of systemic gender discrimination. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation, which has not yet been pursued by the Government of Saskatchewan.

While *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* prohibits gender-based compensation discrimination, the complaint-driven process puts no positive obligation on employers; that while pay equity advocacy primarily seeks to address gender-based wage discrimination, it must also be mindful of ability-, age-, identity-, and race-based wage discrimination.

The petition is signed by residents of Regina. I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Remembering Warren Montgomery

**Ms. Beck:** — I rise today with great sadness to recognize the loss of Warren Montgomery who passed away yesterday after a battle with COVID-19. Chef Montgomery was the visionary behind Regina's Big Easy Kitchen, a pop-up and catering service, a vision he put into action with the support of his wife, Roshelle, and their two young daughters.

From mac and cheese, gumbo, great big Louisiana-style seafood boils, and all things Cajun, Montgomery brought culture and comfort to the city. Warren worked tirelessly to build a strong business and to share his Louisiana roots with Regina.

Mr. Speaker, Warren was 42 years old. He was young. These stories are becoming more and more common in our province, but that does not make it easy or okay. Warren was known for his caring and bright personality. His experience coaching alongside Coach Brooks with the North Central Lakers impacted many. One of his players said, "He was one of my favourite coaches ever across any sport. His love for the game and his passion for caring about every kid will never be forgotten."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in extending our deepest sympathy to the family, friends, and co-workers of Warren Montgomery. Regina will deeply miss all that Warren brought to our community.

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

#### CFL Plans 2021 Return to Play

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have some great news to share with you today. The CFL [Canadian Football League] has announced its plans to return to play for the 2021 season. Soon we will be seeing our beloved Roughriders playing in our beautiful Mosaic Stadium. The target date to start the 14-game season will be August the 5th. And the Grey Cup will be held in December in Hamilton, Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the CFL has been working closely with public health officials in each province across the country to create a plan that will protect its players, coaches, staff, and ultimately our fans. They're also prepared to remain adaptive to the ever-changing environment of COVID-19, but it is our hope that as more vaccines are rolled out through Saskatchewan and

Western Canada, we will be able to attend the games in person to cheer on our green and white.

Mr. Speaker, we know that communities have rallied for this league for the past year. And having this potential start date as something to look forward to is very meaningful for fans and gives us a sense of hope that we are nearing the end of this pandemic.

Thank you to CFL commissioner Randy Ambrosie, Rider CEO [chief executive officer] Craig Reynolds, and the Rider board and staff for all their hard work. It is my hope that we continue to do our part and follow public health orders. Also when it's your turn, roll up your sleeve so we can stick it to COVID, and then we can stick it to the Bombers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Anti-Racism Advisor Appointed at University of Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great honour to stand here and acknowledge someone who has directly and indirectly changed the lives of so many teachers in Saskatchewan, myself included. Dr. Verna St. Denis is a member of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation. She's a resident of Saskatoon Eastview and a professor in the College of Education at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan].

Verna earned her education degree through the ITEP [Indian Teacher Education Program] program at the U of S and then went on to complete a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] at Stanford University. Near the end of January, Dr. St. Denis was appointed to a new position as special advisor on anti-racism and anti-oppression at the University of Saskatchewan, a role that provides guidance for the university on matters of race, racism, and other forms of oppression.

I applaud the University of Saskatchewan for taking this long-overdue step, and I congratulate Dr. St. Denis on this appointment. As we recognize the achievement of my constituent, I also ask to take her advice and the advice of her colleagues in the community of anti-racist scholars. In a unified voice, they say that the first thing we need to do to move towards anti-racism is acknowledge that racism, in all its forms, is real. Thank you.

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

#### **Saskatchewan Organ and Tissue Donor Registry Makes a Difference**

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is designated National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week to raise awareness of the need for more donors. In Saskatchewan, we have a lot to celebrate, but also more future work to accomplish in this area of great need.

Last fall our government fulfilled an important commitment to create and launch a provincial organ and tissue donor registry, [givelifesask.ca](http://givelifesask.ca). Mr. Speaker, one organ donor can save up to

eight lives, and one tissue donor can improve the lives of more than 75 people. And anyone 16 years of age and over can register to be an organ donor.

Almost 4,500 Canadians are waiting for an organ donation. Mr. Speaker, more than 250 people die every year before receiving a transplant — far too many. Efforts to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation are making a big difference to Saskatchewan's patients and families, and as a result, Saskatchewan's organ donation rate has almost doubled since 2016-17.

Mr. Speaker, Green Shirt Day was held on April 7th in honour of Logan Boulet. On that day alone, we had 650 Saskatchewan people sign up to the registry. So far there are 14,435 Saskatchewan people registered. I encourage everyone to recognize this week by visiting [givelifesask.ca](http://givelifesask.ca) and registering to become a living donor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Local Athlete Finds NHL Success**

**Mr. D. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Chamber today to speak of a young, local athlete that has had recent success in the NHL [National Hockey League], Tanner Jeannot. He hails from Oxbow and has been called up to play with the Nashville Predators of the NHL. According to the *Nashville Post* he's quickly becoming a Nashville Predators fan favourite. Tanner scored his first NHL goal playing in his third NHL game, versus Tampa Bay Lightning on April 13th. He played his minor hockey in Oxbow and Estevan, moving on to play under-18 hockey in Yorkton and junior hockey in Moose Jaw.

Tanner's parents, Pat and Jodi Jeannot, are both teachers and have taught my own son. They are terrific people, making a positive difference with many youth in our province. Mr. Speaker, Tanner has worked hard to get where he is, and he has been turning heads with his physical game. Mr. Speaker, Pat and Jodi are undoubtedly proud of the determination and work ethic that Tanner has brought forth to afford him these successes.

I am very happy for Tanner, a young, local Saskatchewan athlete doing what he loves and finding success along the way. Mr. Speaker, I now invite the other members in congratulating Tanner Jeannot on his first NHL goal, and best wishes on future successes. Thank you.

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

#### **Dental Therapists Week Promotes Oral Health**

**Ms. C. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, April 18th to the 24th is Dental Therapists Week. This week recognizes the important role dental therapists play in our communities and in helping Canadians understand the importance of maintaining good oral health practices.

Mr. Speaker, dental therapists are trained to perform a number of duties, including basic dental and preventative treatment, disease prevention, restorative dental treatment, and oral health promotion programs. They work in a variety of settings,

including private practice, teaching institutions, public health facilities, and First Nations clinics.

I'd like to express my appreciation for dental therapists and the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association whose vision is "Healthy Mouth, Healthy Body." Mr. Speaker, dental care is linked to quality of life. Taking care of our mouth, teeth, and gums positively impacts on other aspects of our lives.

We will continue to work together to promote access to dental care, prevention, and education for individuals across this province. Mr. Speaker, we recognize the work of Saskatchewan dental therapists to improve accessibility and promote good oral health among Saskatchewan people. And we thank them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Next Generation Agriculture Mentorship Program**

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Eight young agricultural leaders have been welcomed to this year's Canadian Western Agribition's Next Generation Agriculture Mentorship program. This program has agricultural professionals take young leaders under their wing to help them further develop their skills and expertise that they will need in this industry. Not only will they create a network for themselves, but they will also learn how to share the story of our products and how we create safe, high-quality food, not just for Saskatchewan but for the world.

Mr. Speaker, the eight finalists and their mentors for this year include Alexandra Clarke paired with Gerry Hertz; Sandra Hessdorfer paired with Sara Shymko; Megan Roger paired with Brett Halstead; Morgan Follensbee paired with Kim Keller; Blaine Lamontagne paired with Danny Petty; Grayson Berting paired with Joe Barnett; Ryan Grabarczyk paired with Shelley Jones; and Anna Karlsson paired with Heather Deobald.

Mr. Speaker, with this exceptional lists of mentors, we know these young leaders will be in the best hands for their 18-month mentorship experience. Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members to join me in congratulating the eight young leaders on being accepted into the Next Generation Agriculture Mentorship program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I got a text message this morning from Dr. Jeff Betcher. Dr. Betcher is the head of ICU [intensive care unit] here in Regina. And he described to me in this message how during the Battle of Britain, Winston Churchill would stay at Whitehall, much to the chagrin of his cabinet and his aids. He'd even sit on the roof and watch the raids. He didn't hide in a bomb shelter. And the next morning he certainly didn't think it a distraction or inappropriate to go out and walk among those who were rescuing survivors or recovering the dead, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

And that reminded me. It reminded me of Stephen Harper and how he flew to Kandahar at the height of the mission in Afghanistan, or Brad Wall and how he visited farms outside Melville during the 2014 flooding or visited with firefighters in La Ronge during the 2015 forest fires. And, Mr. Speaker, this is what leaders do in hard times: they show up and they see for themselves.

And today Regina's ICUs are in very hard times. They're not just full; they're overflowing. They're double-bunking. The patients are younger; they're sicker; they're staying longer. And those who leave are too often not leaving out the door we want them to.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier doesn't want to see that with his own eyes. He doesn't want to acknowledge how bad things are because he wants people to think he's doing a great job.

Well he needs to know the truth. We all need to know the truth, Mr. Speaker. He should go and see for himself. But if he won't, if he's unwilling to do that, will he at the very least commit to sitting down this week with Dr. Betcher and hearing the truth about what's happening in Regina's ICUs?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I remember correctly, when we vaccinated the first two people in the province, I believe Dr. Betcher was one of those individuals that was vaccinated at the very . . . well one of the first individuals in the province, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to take the opportunity to thank him for a few things: one, for providing that leadership to step forward and to show that he is going to step forward and be vaccinated at the first opportunity that he had; two, for the leadership that he is providing in our ICU here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

We are aware, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Health is in constant contact throughout each and every day with all of the staff throughout the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and the reporting mechanisms that they have through the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker. We most certainly are aware of the challenges that we have with the high hospital numbers here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

However we do have provincial capacity across this province, Mr. Speaker, in large part due to investments that have been made in our health care system over the course of the last decade or so, Mr. Speaker, investments that this government and the people of the province are extremely proud of.

But I would go back to Mr. Betcher taking that very first vaccine, Mr. Speaker, setting the example for the rest of this province. Ultimately what is going to drive all of the other numbers that we have in the weeks ahead in this province, whether it be daily cases, whether it be our hospitalizations, it's going to be our vaccination rate. And we want everyone else to go out and do what Mr. Betcher did: take their vaccine when it's their first opportunity.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Courage finds a way;

cowardice finds an excuse. That's all I'll say about that, Mr. Speaker.

At the beginning of February, New Democrats called out the alarm on what was happening with the arrival of the UK [United Kingdom] variant here in Saskatchewan. The Premier saw the model. He knew what was going to happen ahead with the variants.

And yet what did he choose to do? He chose to relax restrictions, to ignore the advice of epidemiologists and health care workers. He sat on his hands and waited until Regina was seeing a huge spike in variant cases before he'd take any action at all. He ignored all the signs. Once again he ignored the signs of the coming spread, and now we have a devastating third wave across the province.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the P.1 variant, or the Brazil variant, has arrived in Saskatchewan. This more dangerous, more contagious variant we know spreads more easily, makes younger people sicker. And we still don't know whether the current vaccines are effective in protecting people from P.1, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier: he's failed so many times. Will he ever learn the lessons from these failures? Will we see a real plan to address P.1 variant in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, whether it's the UK variant, the South African variant, they're all COVID. But we are aware that a number of these variants do transmit much more quickly and in much shorter exposure rates than the original COVID did, Mr. Speaker.

So the fact of the matter is this: it is this government that has had the courage all along to put in some of the most stringent public health measures that have ever been enacted in the province of Saskatchewan. It's this government that has then increased those public health measures most recently in the city of Regina, in our capital city, Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of a higher concentration of variants in this city, Mr. Speaker.

And it stands to reason, as Dr. Shahab had said yesterday, that yes, over time they are going to spread and be the predominant strain that we have in our communities. But we have limited that spread due to the action and the courage of this government to take that action to ensure that we are limiting that spread across the province, providing us time to deliver the vaccines that we have received from the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say with respect to our vaccination program, there's three factors. There's three factors that will determine how quickly we can get those vaccines out: one, Mr. Speaker, how quickly we offer those vaccines, which we're leading the nation with; two, how many Saskatchewan people take those vaccines, which we're leading the nation with; and three, ultimately how many vaccines the federal government can provide us with — leaves some work left to be done, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those comments just show again this Premier doesn't get it. He's completely clueless and unwilling, unwilling to learn from his own failures, Mr. Speaker. He just doesn't get it. He needs to listen, needs to listen to health care workers. He needs to listen to those on the front lines. And he needs to listen to the families of those who are sick and dying right now.

People are sick and tired of this, Mr. Speaker, and they're angry and rightly so. They need and deserve to see a plan from this government. So once again to the Premier: will he do a better job this time? Will we finally see a plan on the variants, or will we go down the same road of the third wave? Let's see the modelling. Let's see all of the advice he's getting from SHA experts, not more spin to downplay a very serious situation.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, the plan of this province is to continue with the public health measures that are in place. And we would encourage everyone in this province to pay particular attention to what they are doing each and every day as we go through these last number of weeks of our COVID pandemic, Mr. Speaker, so that they are following those public health measures to a T. They are extremely helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19, and we all need to do our part.

The second thing I would ask Saskatchewan people to do, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that when it is their turn that they are taking the opportunity, at whatever form of access that they have, to ensure that they are making an appointment and getting their vaccination. Mr. Speaker, our way through this pandemic, everyone's plan to get through this pandemic, is for as many people to get vaccinated as quickly as possible. Whether it's the original COVID strain, whether it's the UK strain, and increasingly it's looking like the South African strain as well, Mr. Speaker, are all controlled reasonably well with the vaccinations that are provided.

That's why we have put forward the most robust vaccination plan in the nation, Mr. Speaker. We intend on augmenting that plan in the days ahead as we do start to receive additional vaccines, Mr. Speaker, and working with neighbouring jurisdictions as well, to vaccinate additional Saskatchewan people.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again this Premier is demonstrating his inability to change course when the virus changes, his inability to learn from his own mistakes.

Yesterday, what did he do? Yesterday he held up North Dakota as an example, Mr. Speaker, North Dakota as a model of the response to COVID-19. This is the state that has the highest per capita cumulative cases in the United States, a country that has not done well when it comes to COVID-19, Mr. Speaker. And those cases are rising. Those numbers are on the rise.

The minister himself talked about how bad things were in North Dakota a few weeks back. Hospitalizations are rising. Case numbers are rising. And when we look at the reality, that state, that state of 700,000 people, has registered a tragic 1,482 deaths, Mr. Speaker, 1,482. If we translated those numbers to our



population, that'd be nearly 2,300 people that had died, Mr. Speaker — five times the already far-too-many and avoidable 465 we've seen in this province.

And that's the model this Premier is looking to, Mr. Speaker. If he's trying to hold up that record, now we start to understand his inaction, his failures, his complete ineptitude. So to the Premier: will he have a plan for what's happening now in Saskatchewan? And it better be something more than following in the footsteps of North Dakota.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, the other day President Biden said that all Americans over the age of 18 now have the opportunity to go get a vaccine. Mr. Speaker, we're nowhere near that position here in Saskatchewan or Canada, but in Saskatchewan that is leading Canada's vaccination effort.

North Dakota, yes, had some fairly alarming numbers throughout their approach to COVID over the course of the last year. Where they sit today . . . And I'll correct the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. They don't have increasing hospitalizations. Where they sit today is slightly over 100 cases a day, Mr. Speaker, 35 cases in the hospital . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well if the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to hear the facts, Mr. Speaker . . . 35 people in the hospital as of yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in North Dakota.

When you look at how North Dakota has . . . look at the COVID infection over the course of the last year in North Dakota, Mr. Speaker, and you look at the way that they have rolled out their vaccination program, about 500,000 doses have been provided to 760,000 people. You translate that into Saskatchewan numbers, we're probably about three-quarters of a million doses here in Saskatchewan.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker? That would put us 75 to 80 per cent of folks in Saskatchewan would have received their shot, Mr. Speaker, where we would be in our numbers if we had access to that type of vaccine. Vaccines do work. Let's all go out and get our shot when it's our opportunity.

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

### Management of Long-Term Care Facilities

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, nowhere are government failures on COVID more apparent than in its failure to keep seniors in care safe and alive. This government's broken promise to staff up long-term care is an insult to seniors; it's an insult to their families and loved ones; and it's an insult to the staff who work in these facilities. This is especially true when it comes to seniors and staff who live and work in Extendicare facilities where many lives have been lost so far.

But this government ignored the warning signs for years. Report after report, dating back to 2014, repeated the same refrain: significant infection control risks, short staffing, problems with ventilation, and four-bed room designs that the SHA's own documents show do not meet current standards of care.

As this government watched the pandemic rip through homes in the first wave, why didn't they act on all of the information they had about the situation in Extendicare homes that could have saved lives?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've discussed in this Chamber before, this particular issue, you know, the deaths that took place at Extendicare are indeed tragic. And I extend my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives there. It's why, you know, as part of the response, that we've engaged with the Ombudsman's office to conduct an investigation into what happened at Extendicare, and we await the results of her findings and her reports.

Mr. Speaker, the outbreak that occurred at the Extendicare Parkside facility in Regina was declared over on January 21st. There was a co-management agreement in place there with the SHA until about the middle of February, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Health and the SHA provided extensive support to Parkside throughout that challenging time, Mr. Speaker. And as I've said previously, we look forward to the recommendations from the Ombudsman's report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, the point of the question is to point out that this government had all the information they needed ahead of time and could have prevented what happened. Instead they sat on their hands. Instead of getting ready, they willingly left seniors in Extendicare homes vulnerable to the second wave.

We saw the consequences of this failure to act in the death rates that were reported in committee last week, especially with those reported in for-profit facilities. I'll review those numbers for you, Mr. Speaker. In SHA-owned and -operated facilities, we saw one death for every 193 beds. In Extendicare for-profit facilities, one senior died in every 14 beds, 1 in 14, Mr. Speaker.

This is a damning indictment of this company and this government who sat on the sidelines and allowed this to happen. What more evidence is needed? What does this government need to see to do the right thing? Will this government commit today to ending the deadly relationship with Extendicare?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Extendicare is one of many organizations that the government currently has a contract with. Mr. Speaker, I just want to go back to, you know, one of the member's earlier questions with respect to raising concerns about the four-bed room set-up in some of these facilities. It's my understanding that since 2007, none of the new facilities that have been constructed in this province have been under that model, Mr. Speaker. And we are, through the ministry and the SHA, actively moving away from that model as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

In addition to that, the SHA has been involved in, not just with Extencicare, but a number of long-term care quality assessment tours across this province since 2013, Mr. Speaker. The results of these tours are posted online publicly, and since the start of that there's been a number of significant improvements that have been identified and have been made since that point in time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, nearly 7 per cent of seniors in for-profit homes died so far. That should keep this minister up at night. This government needs to do something to make this right, to make sure that this situation never happens again in our province. They need to end their contract with Extencicare and bring these homes under the management of the SHA permanently, where, I'll point out, more than 99 per cent of seniors survived. Will he commit to that today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has made some substantial investments into long-term care facilities across this province over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker. And it is a commitment that we take very seriously. There is continued funding in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker.

I've spoken previously about the 14 long-term care replacement projects that have already been completed in this province. And we're continuing to expand upon that across this province, Mr. Speaker, with new long-term care facilities in the communities of Grenfell and La Ronge, as well as investments into Watson and Estevan, Mr. Speaker. And these are important communities and important facilities in these communities.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have announced in this year's budget a half million dollars to be geared towards the planning of the replacement of long-term care beds in Regina which will take a look at the full scope of what's required for long-term care in the city of Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Sick Leave and Supports for Employees**

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has been going on for over a year now. We've been told to stay home and keep each other safe, and we've been told to stay home from work if we're feeling ill. This leaves tens of thousands of workers in a worst-of-both-worlds scenario, choosing between paying their bills and keeping safe. It's no wonder the call for paid sick leave has been amplified by working people for months, here and across Canada.

In the media, the minister recently said he isn't looking at paid sick leave. And I quote, "We think it would be an unnecessary imposition." Mr. Speaker, being admitted to the ICU after catching COVID from someone who couldn't afford to stay home sick — that's what I'd call an unnecessary imposition.

To the minister: why won't he bring in paid sick leave to help

keep people safe and get COVID under control?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and the workplace.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, thanks very much for the opportunity to participate in the discussion. I think all of us want to see people that have been ill from COVID or have to treat somebody or care for a loved one, we want to see them recover and get back to work, get back as quickly as they can.

Mr. Speaker, we're working with the federal government, with a variety of different programs, to try and ensure that we've got good support for our workers. In our province — and we were the first ones to do this — we introduced a special vaccination leave, giving employees up to three hours paid leave to go and get the vaccine.

We also created the public health emergency leave which can be accessed if an employer, physician, or the government requires an employee to stay home for public health reasons. We also extended job protection to employees that are accessing the federal Canada recovery sickness benefit, which provides employees up to \$500 per week, or the Canada recovery caregiving benefit.

We want to encourage people to use those federal programs. We don't want to duplicate those programs, but we want to make sure that the supports that we have dovetails into them, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to provide those kind of supports, and we will continue to work with and try and do things that work well with the existing federal government, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, the member for Lakeview and I asked several times about paid sick leave in committee last night. Absolutely no willingness to budge, even though the majority of outbreaks in Regina and Saskatoon are in workplaces.

WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] only covers COVID cases that are picked up at work. EI [employment insurance] sickness benefits have a waiting period, and even then still only cover a portion of wages. What about workers who pick it up elsewhere, are unsure if they have COVID, or face mental health challenges related to COVID-19? Nothing.

Doug Ford's Ontario, where COVID cases and hospitalizations are second only to Saskatchewan, has announced that they will be bringing forward a paid sick leave program. Mr. Speaker, are Saskatchewan workers' lives worth less than those in Ontario?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and the workplace.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I indicated what the supports are from across Canada and what is available from the federal government. Right now there are only two provinces in Canada that have any form of paid sick leave, and it wouldn't help the people that are suffering from COVID. In Quebec a worker is entitled to two days per year after six months of employment. In Prince Edward Island a worker is entitled to one

employer-paid day per year after five years of employment. So there's really nothing in those that will be particularly beneficial.

So as I indicated before, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the federal government. We will continue to make sure that our programs dovetail and fit with them. We offer job protection to employees who have short-term or serious illnesses. And what those do is they include 12 days of sick leave, leave for serious illness of a family member or for personal illness, and leave for a work-related injury of up to 26 days. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do those kind of things and care for the workers in our province.

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

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite referred to is 12 days of unpaid sick leave. I want to clarify that.

Mr. Speaker, Doug Ford changed his mind on this. A change of heart on this issue would not just be forgiven, it would be enthusiastically welcomed by this side of the House and workers across the province. Women, racialized workers, and workers in precarious jobs simply aren't making enough money to stay home.

The stubbornness on this issue, along with others like minimum wage, child care, and pay equity, show the Sask Party's ignorance and complete lack of empathy for working people. So again, why won't the minister consult with workers and implement paid sick leave today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and the workplace.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we haven't seen anything like this from NDP [New Democratic Party] British Columbia. We haven't seen anything like this from the previous Ontario leaders. And I want to read a quote from NDP leader Andrea Horwath . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker. You don't want to talk about Ontario? You're the ones that were raising the issue of all this taking place in other jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, I have a quote I'd like to read from Andrea Horwath: "It is really important that we don't put up barriers, or in fact that we actually take down barriers that are preventing people from getting the vaccine."

So what we've done in this province, Mr. Speaker, and will continue to do, is make sure that people get paid time off to go and get the vaccine. I would encourage everybody to get the vaccine at their earliest opportunity, Mr. Speaker. Our problem right now is lack of vaccines from the federal government. We want to make sure that those people get every opportunity that they can to get vaccinated. We will continue to provide those kind of supports. We will make sure that our programs are dovetailed well with the federal government.

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

#### Funding for Child Care

**Ms. Beck:** — Yesterday the Education minister suggested that

because our child care fees aren't as astronomical as places like Toronto or Vancouver, that child care in Saskatchewan is doing just fine. Mr. Speaker, this government received nearly \$21 million for child care through the Safe Restart Agreement last fall, but they didn't roll it out to the sector until last month. Child care centres have closed for good as they waited for this government to act. Our economic recovery is dependent on expanding and not losing access to quality child care.

The Premier has talked about moving heaven and earth to bring back the 23,000 jobs lost in our province. Will the minister for child care commit to the same and move heaven and earth to ensure that every dollar from the federal government is deployed to fix Saskatchewan's child care system?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the critic for child care for the question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to engaging with the federal minister. I believe that we're going to be speaking later this week with respect to the plan that had been laid out by the federal government just in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

I look forward to having a discussion about him on how we can achieve flexibility here in Saskatchewan that will build upon a 98 per cent increase in total early years investments that have been made under this government, Mr. Speaker; a 122 per cent increase in the child care investment by this government on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker; a 77 per cent increase in the number of licensed child care spaces in this province under this government; as well as a nearly 200 per cent increase in areas as well that help our youngest citizens, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're going to look at a number of different areas that we may be able to improve the system here in Saskatchewan for every family that needs it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 32 — *The Vapour Products Tax Act*

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 32, *The Vapour Products Tax Act*. This new legislation implements the announcement included in the 2021-22 provincial budget. Mr. Speaker, this bill introduces a new vapour product tax, with a rate of 20 per cent on all vapour liquids, products, and devices sold in Saskatchewan, instead of the 6 per cent PST [provincial sales tax] rate, effective September 1st, 2021. The VPT [vapour products tax] would require retail businesses, including cannabis retailers that sell vapour products, to obtain a licence in addition to their PST licence and file a separate VPT return in addition to their PST return.

The new VPT would be communicated as a public health

measure aimed at preventing non-smokers from beginning to use vapour products and encouraging traditional cigarette smokers to switch to a slightly less harmful alternative. The new legislation will also require consequential amendments to *The Revenue and Financial Services Act* and *The Provincial Sales Tax Act*. It will include an immunity provision to protect ministry officials from civil litigation when acting in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 32, *The Vapour Products Tax Act*.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 32 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I would like to recognize the minister of Saskatoon Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to thank the minister for her second reading remarks and to provide a few initial comments on behalf of the official opposition.

I see you're getting some flak for promoting me, but I think it was an honest mistake, Mr. Speaker.

We in the opposition, you know, have been happy to work with government in ways to protect particularly our youth from the high smoking and vaping rates in our province. We need to be evidence-based and be ensuring that we're making policy in accordance with that, Mr. Speaker. We have made several calls over the last couple of years to treat vaping like smoking. That certainly includes having uniform regulations and enforcement and includes taxing it, Mr. Speaker.

We know that the rates are quite high in Saskatchewan, especially among youth. Saskatchewan youth smoking and vaping rates are among the highest in the country. This is certainly something we need to tackle. In following the evidence, one of the best ways to protect youth and decrease their use of these products is by introducing a tax on vape products. We know that most individuals who are vaping are under 25 years old. It has been borne out in the evidence that taxing these products makes a difference.

So on the whole, I would say that at first glance, the legislation seems very promising. I think we do have a lot of questions about how the tax rates are going to compare to other jurisdictions, what the plan is for revenues. We could certainly be using this tax revenue to increase prevention efforts, educational campaigns, that sort of thing, Mr. Speaker. And it certainly seems like a good thing that licensing is also part of this bill. I know several folks have made that call as well.

[14:15]

I know many folks are going to have questions and want to enter into this conversation, including the critic. But with that, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 32 for today.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 33 — *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2021*

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of amendments to Bill No. 33, *The Tobacco Tax Act*, 2021. These amendments implement a 2021-22 budget initiative to introduce a new 20.5 cent per unit tobacco tax on heated tobacco products. This change will provide Saskatchewan the ability to tax heated tobacco products at a higher rate than the current 27 cents per gram but at a lower rate than traditional cigarettes to account for the slight health advantage of these products over traditional cigarettes.

To implement this initiative, specific amendments to *The Tobacco Tax Act* are required to add and define the term "heated tobacco product" and to amend the current tax rates to include a 20.5 cent per unit tax on heated tobacco products and to add a clause permitting the making of regulations respecting the definition of heated tobacco product.

The legislation includes technical and housekeeping amendments to improve the enforcement of tobacco that will clarify that it is an offence for an individual to be in possession of marked or unstamped tobacco products if they cannot prove the products were legally obtained, and to add a marked tobacco possession limit to distinguish between quantities of marked tobacco that would be for personal use and that for retail sale, and to add a clause to permit the making of regulations respecting possession limits for marked tobacco.

Mr. Speaker, these changes strengthen and modernize the Act, sustaining the province's revenue base in today's ever-changing business environment. I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 33, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2021*.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 33 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the minister for her second reading remarks as well.

Similarly to Bill No. 32, you know, this legislation sort of goes hand in hand. We have called for vaping to be treated like smoking. Most of these provisions are to include vaping in the existing tobacco tax Act legislation.

And we certainly, you know, want to improve smoking and vaping rates in our province, particularly when it refers to our youth. We know that there are significant health effects for both, and the long-term effects of vaping are still being studied, Mr. Speaker. So we're starting to understand some of those short-term effects, and there should certainly be some educational campaign to make sure that our kids know what they're getting into here, Mr. Speaker.

We do believe in following the evidence and making sure that we are introducing taxes on vaping products. We do have some questions though as well. While this bill is open we could certainly consider why there hasn't been an increase in tobacco taxes in recent years. So what are other jurisdictions doing? How do we compare to other jurisdictions? I think that those will be

some good questions, as well as where the revenue from these taxes is going. So will it go toward supporting efforts of prevention and cessation efforts? I think those are some areas the government could be looking at, what we do with this money.

We could also consider licensing in this area. The previous Act talks about licensing vapes. We know that liquor is licensed, but we don't require the same licensing for tobacco in our province. I believe that we're one of only two provinces in Canada that doesn't make this requirement, so I think we, you know, could have some questions about why that change isn't being made, while we're in here, to align vaping and smoking. And what other provinces are doing and not doing, I think, becomes a central question as we move forward as well, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the other members and the critic are going to have a lot more to weigh into on this bill as well, Mr. Speaker, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 33, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### **Bill No. 34 — *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021***

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. This legislation implements amendments included in the 2021-22 provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes legislative changes to introduce a new \$150 annual fee at the time of registration of passenger electric vehicles registered in Saskatchewan effective October 1st, 2021. This new fee will be administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance and collected in full each year at the time of the vehicle's registration renewal date. In the event of a shortened registration period, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] will pro-rate this fee or provide refunds as required.

The name of *The Fuel Tax Act, 2000* will be changed to *The Fuel Tax and Road Use Charge Act* to reflect the broader association with road use. The legislation includes technical amendments that will provide an immunity provision to protect ministry officials from civil litigation when acting in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 34 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join on Bill No. 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. Before I get into some of the minister's comments — and thank the minister for her comments and giving a little bit of information about the bill — I want to use a comparison. Back home we're travelling on our

northern roads. The highways are pretty bad. And you know, it's amazing you're travelling along and all of a sudden the vehicle in front of you will disappear and then it will pop back out again. And then you realize it's actually only a pothole you're hitting on the Sask Party highways when you travel up north.

And then you know, well it's amazing to see. And I'm thinking to myself, I know we want the Minister of Highways to fix the roads and I know he has a big budget. He's got millions upon hundreds of millions they spend on highways, but there's these potholes. And more and more, Mr. Speaker, I'm seeing more and more of them. And the government is asking, the government is asking for more help. We need to fix these roads, these potholes, huge. They're terrible highways. Even the Finance minister is now saying it because she needs more money.

And I was thinking, Mr. Speaker, they must have had a plan. They must have said, how could we get 60 more thousand dollars to fix all those highways and those potholes? And they came up with a plan. They said, well you know, I think there's people driving electric vehicles. They're the problem in La Ronge and area and the North, tearing up the roads. If we could only get 60,000 more dollars in our hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars we're spending on highways, we could fix so much more highways.

So they came up with this plan. And they said, let's find . . . How many vehicles out there? I don't know. But I went and asked somebody and I said, did you count them? They figure there's about 415, I think, in the province, you know, if I have my numbers right . . . [inaudible] . . . I'm not correct. I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, it's only what I've been told, and I haven't always been told right. But having said that, so I said, okay, 415 and 150 apiece — \$60,000. Wow, is that ever going to do a lot of repairs.

Now I've heard some people comment who have electric vehicles. And they're wondering, okay if we're trying to do our part and help . . . It almost feels like they're feeling like they're being penalized, I guess, is what they're feeling. Or why would you do this? Wouldn't you want to encourage us?

So having said that, I know that the Liberals, your Liberals didn't give you as much money as you wanted. Yet you like saying they give you more money, and you're always asking for more money. Well maybe you guys can get a little bit of help, and you know, you can ask those that are driving electric vehicles to help you more. And that's what you've done. You have found a little bit of money, and you get it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go on long about this bill because it's very short and it affects very few. So you know, I think one of my colleagues that were in this Assembly had an electric vehicle. Yes. They were from Regina. Now I think about this. I think the government probably consulted with those that have the electric vehicles. And if they did, they'd probably find out, well a lot of those are in Regina. I wonder how many of those actually leave Regina and go and wreck the highways. But it's interesting. How many of those electric vehicles are heading off on the highways. Because there's so many of them.

But, Mr. Speaker, sometimes I understand the government, you know, needs help so they decide how they're going to get it. And

the Finance minister with her budget definitely needed some help. We know what the budget looks like, and we know the debt of our province. So I guess they're going to say, wherever we can find money, we'll find money. And I think that there's a lot of areas that are suffering like that.

So you know, I'm not going to go on much longer, Mr. Speaker, because the bill actually talks to . . . strictly is about a fee. And they're going to get SGI to collect it when the person registers that electric vehicle. So those individuals . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, the member said he wants me to speak a little more. Well, Mr. Speaker, you know I can go back to these . . . And I was talking to some of those highways, okay? And I'm back home and I'm talking to people and I'm saying to them, what would you like really if you could ask the government? They said, you know if we could ask the government, we'd ask them to please fix the roads.

And now I can tell people back home I did say it in the Assembly. I asked the government to fix the roads, the highways. I've asked them but they said, you know, they didn't have the money to fix those highways, because we got so much highway in Saskatchewan. But you know what I'm going to tell the people back home now? They found \$60,000, you know, from some people who drive electric vehicles. They found \$60,000 and that's what their whole budget is and the highway is going to be fixed on it. They're counting on that 60,000. It's going to be amazing how it's going to fix so much. How many inches of highways do you think it will fix, 60,000?

But anyway, I guess that's what they've wanted to go with and they've done that. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go on much longer unless members would like me to. I mean, I could do that if they would like. So really, Mr. Speaker, at this point I know my colleagues will have more to say. You know, some people actually have taken this pretty serious, and I heard some people who own electric vehicles are not happy. They've taken it very serious. They're upset. They're wondering why they're trying to do their part and it feels like they're being penalized. So I will, on their behalf, you know . . .

Obviously I know my colleagues will have more questions. We'll consult and again we'll come back. The critic will have more questions as this process goes through the process. But I just wonder, how many of those people did they consult when they went with this new money we need to fix the roads, because we don't have enough of the hundreds and hundreds of millions that they're been spending, they talk about. But on this point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. I'm prepared to adjourn, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### **Bill No. 35 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2021***

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I'm here today to move second reading of Bill No. 35, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. This legislation implements the income tax initiatives announced on April 6th, 2021 as part of the 2021-22 provincial budget. Mr. Speaker, the 2021-22 budget includes revenue initiatives to foster continued investment into the diversification of the province's economy and to help families with children participate in culture and sports activities while keeping taxes low for Saskatchewan people.

[14:30]

I am pleased to announce the following two income tax initiatives in support of these objectives. First, beginning with the 2021 taxation year, this bill returns the active families benefit. Having children and youth participate in sport, culture, and recreational activities contributes to better overall quality of life with social, emotional, and physical benefits for those children and the community. The new active families benefit provides a benefit of up to \$150 per child with an additional amount of up to \$50 per child who qualifies for the disability tax credit to offset the registration cost of eligible children's activities.

Second, this bill modifies one of the rules governing the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive, which was introduced in response to the challenging investment environment in the tech sector. The program, which allows angel investors to continue to receive a tax credit for contributing funds to early stage start-ups in Saskatchewan, is being extended for five years. As part of that extension, this bill extends the carry-forward period for unused tax credits from four years to seven years. This will ensure that investors can take advantage of those tax credits, which in turn make this program more attractive to both start-ups and the potential investors.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also announces a number of technical changes designed to ensure the efficiency of the tax system and conformity with the federal tax rules. To ensure efficiency, this bill will remove references to old tax measures no longer in use. This bill also modifies rules that will prevent possible attempts to claim certain credits across multiple tax returns. And the bill ensures that the provisions of *The Income Tax Act, 2000* are in alignment with the federal Act in respect to COVID-19 relief measures.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 35, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2021*.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 35 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into second reading debate on this Bill No. 35, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. As the minister noted, this bill addresses a number of issues: the active families benefit, the angel investor extension, and some housekeeping changes to deal with efficiency and conformity and to take into consideration some of the COVID-19 relief measures.

I'm going to spend, I think, the bulk of my time and my comments around the active families benefit. Of course we've heard second reading on that bill in this Assembly. What this bill would do would be to make the necessary adjustments to allow

for those tax breaks within *The Income Tax Act*. So for those families who make under \$60,000 this is a reintroduction of something we saw taken away by this government, something we've seen a few times. It allows families to claim up to \$150 per child to participate in sports and culture.

I think we have agreement that that is good to have children involved in culture and sport. And to facilitate that . . . I know we've all paid a burden over the last year. Children have paid a very heavy burden. I spoke earlier of Coach Montgomery, and just thinking of the community that was formed around that football team and those lifelong relationships that children enter into with their peers and those special coaches and how important that is.

So I recognize that. I think we all have agreement that it is important. But to see this, you know, there is a bit of relief here, \$150. But if this is, you know, a measure to address affordability for families who make under \$60,000 in this province it's, I'm sure, welcome. But there are so many other things that need to be addressed to deal with that affordability. And often unfortunately, you know, families have to make the decision about the activities that their children can participate in or putting food on the table, being able to pay their bills. We've seen a real crunch with regard to affordability.

We have stagnant wages in many cases. We have the lowest-in-the-country minimum wage, child care rates and subsidies that haven't kept up, pay equity. All of these things, you know, lend to the lack of affordability for many families. And again those families in that \$60,000 per year per family, you know, really are some of those families that are really struggling.

So it's a measure, as I said, is something that was given and taken away. It goes a small way towards providing some support to families. But I think there are other measures that I would hope to see, and I know that we hoped to see in this budget, that didn't materialize. We'll keep hoping. We'll keep pressuring, Mr. Speaker. But as for this benefit, the fact that there is an increased \$50 per child for children that have disabilities, I think that that also is a good measure, recognizes that children often require additional equipment or additional supports in order to engage in those activities. So I think that that is reasonable as well.

But I know that the critic will have further comments about this, and perhaps some of my colleagues will as well. But the member for Cumberland, he's got something he wants to say about it as well. I can't wait to hear his stories. I have driven on those northern roads with that member and I tell you, going around the potholes with him, that's an experience you'll not soon forget, Mr. Speaker. But I digress. I think that I've concluded my remarks on Bill No. 35, and I move to adjourn debate on this bill.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 36 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2021***

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 36, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes additional legislation changes to ensure that, as a vendor or a vendor's agent, marketplace facilitators, electronic distribution platform providers, and accommodation platform providers when collecting payment from Saskatchewan consumers are also required to collect and remit the PST on all sales made through their marketplace or platform.

The legislation includes technical amendments that will include an immunity provision to protect ministry officials from civil litigation when acting in good faith. It will add a PST exemption for vapour products, since vapour products will instead be taxable under *The Vapour Products Tax Act* effective September 1st, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 36, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2021*.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 36 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again this afternoon, this time to enter into second reading debate on Bill No. 36, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. I'm getting better at reading quickly through statutes to get up on second reading.

Again, there are a number of measures that are proposed with this legislation. As the minister noted, one of the sections deals with marketplace vendors and operators of online accommodation platforms. I think of course we have to always be updating the provincial sales tax and the Act to deal with, you know, a very changing marketplace out there, things that I think, maybe . . . I could be wrong. There are some members of this Assembly, I suppose, who are older than me that might have a broader perspective or a longer perspective.

But you know, I think that this last year has brought maybe as many changes to the way we interact and do business as any other time period. I may be corrected by some of the more senior members, Mr. Speaker, but I would submit that, you know, the way that we've done business has changed and probably has been forever changed. So we will probably continue to see some of those changes as we move through.

I don't know that there is a lot for me to add. I will note that one of the changes here is with regard to vaping vendors. There were other descriptions of that, but exempting the PST in order to put on the higher tax. As the member for . . . and my colleague for Fairview noted, I think that there's general agreement from this side as to the importance of looking at vaping rates in this province with children. Unfortunately when these products first came out, and I believe it's still the case, you know, a lot of them were so marketed at children. You saw flavours like bubble gum and popcorn, and you know, Slurpee. I think there was a slushy version as well.

So in addition to the taxation, which I know has been shown to be a deterrent to usage, the former member from Regina Lakeview, I remember having conversations with him about how effective the tax on cigarettes could be to curbing consumption.

I think there's good evidence there. But part of that picture also has to be, as the member for Fairview said, around ensuring that the message about the dangers is out there, and in this case probably targeted specifically to younger children, as we know unfortunately a lot of them have taken up the habit.

I think that one of the things that stands out, if I can hearken back to another time, and I think most people here, not the new members perhaps, but everyone else will remember a time when we used to have lobby groups and educationals in this Assembly. And one of the more memorable ones that I found was a presentation that the Canadian Cancer Society put on where they had young people come in and do teaching around vaping and the dangers of vaping. And I thought it was very effective. Those young people did a fantastic job. I've had the term "popcorn lung" in my mind since then, Mr. Speaker. It was something I went home and immediately talked to my teenagers about after hearing that. But I think we would like to also see some of those public service messages, maybe even recruiting some of those young people who did such a good job, to deal with messaging around the dangers.

Anyway, with that I think I am prepared to conclude my remarks. As noted, I'm sure the critic will have more comments and perhaps some of my other colleagues as well. But until then I will conclude my comments and adjourn debate on Bill No. 36.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 3

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Merriman that **Bill No. 3 — *The Massage Therapy Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate again today at this time on Bill No. 3, *The Massage Therapy Act*.

As critic for Health, I've been working to do a number of consultations on what this legislation looks like with relevant stakeholders and have had the opportunity to have a number of conversations with folks about the implications of this legislation. We know that the bill creates a new regulatory body for the province's massage therapists. And I think a lot of people don't really realize that massage therapy isn't a regulated industry within the province. So it is something that is important, that industry has been fighting for, for a very long time. You know, I've heard various years but I think the longest I've heard is 17 years in the making. So you know, for these folks to go out and really be able to work with other organizations to come up

with legislation that they can kind of be happy with, I think this has been a long time in the making.

[14:45]

This bill establishes the College of Massage Therapy in Saskatchewan as the regulator and governing body of massage therapists in the province. It will be a stand-alone regulatory body that's separate from the three existing member associations.

There have been a number of questions that have come forward as I've been speaking with folks. I know many of my colleagues have had these conversations as well, and we will have a number of questions in committee. And some of those questions revolve around what that consultation process looked like, how the makeup of the council was decided on. I understand that a lot of the bylaws are going to end up being the responsibility of the council, so I think that the powers that have been set out in that council are important.

We would be interested in how this legislation lines up with other provinces, as well as how it lines up with other regulated professions within our province — so we've heard talk about a template that exists for regulatory bodies and whether this was followed — and also how it harmonizes with the federal framework and federal organizations that exist.

I know that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has raised concerns about the current bill as it is proposed and has suggested a number of changes to the Minister of Health. I was also copied on that letter. I have expressed some of those concerns along with the critic for Labour, my colleague the member for Regina Lakeview. You know, we wrote to the minister about some of these concerns, asking for some clarity on some of these questions. We haven't heard back yet. I do hope that we'll be able to engage in that conversation and have that active conversation about whether any amendments have to happen at the committee level.

Some of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendations seem quite housekeeping in nature: related to the fact that it's 2021, referring to the internet, protecting people's personal information like their home addresses. I think a lot of these issues are things we should be looking at, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll be raising these questions, and I look forward to having that conversation with the minister and officials in committee. But with that we are prepared to let this bill move on to its next steps.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 3 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

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



**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

#### Bill No. 14

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 14 — *The Protection From Human Trafficking Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again this afternoon, this time to enter into debate on Bill No. 14, *The Protection From Human Trafficking Act*. Mr. Speaker, I did listen to the minister's introductory comments when he introduced this bill back on April the 12th, 2021 and noted some of his rationale and the reasons why we're seeing this legislation in front of us today.

Some points of agreement, Mr. Speaker: human trafficking is a heinous crime that preys on the most vulnerable. I think that that's something that members on all sides of this House can agree with. I think that the willingness and the urgency to deal with this issue is shared by members on both sides of the House. I think the goals are laudable and important. This is an issue that unfortunately has gone on for a long time and, you know, is another peril and pitfall that unfortunately too many, too many young women particularly, but too many people find themselves fall prey to.

So the bill is an entirely new bill. It allows individuals to sue for damages caused by human trafficking and creates the tort of human trafficking.

And I know that the critic for this bill has consulted quite widely into the legislation. I know that she has some concerns, and we have some concerns as well or questions just around who was consulted with regard to this bill. I think that unfortunately there are, you know, there are examples of well-meaning legislation or well-meaning measures that when they fail to consult those who are most impacted, can unfortunately at best not be effective and at worst can actually do harm.

I think of some of the measures around prostitution, for example, and attempting to, you know, move the sex trade into certain areas and actually make people more vulnerable. I think some of those concerns here exist. The concern noted has been if this actually creates new protections and remedies for human trafficking survivors or whether similar protection might also exist and just some questions about how this might actually reduce the risk of human trafficking.

And part of the way that we can do that is by reducing people's vulnerabilities. Certainly some people have multiple vulnerability factors — some are socio-economic; some are due to trauma. And those I think need to be part of the picture and part of the consideration when we're looking at drafting actual effective legislation.

As I noted — and I will highlight this because I think it's very important — the other piece that is always very, very important is consulting with the people who are going to be most impacted by the legislation. And that's something that if it has been done, it hasn't been mentioned in the minister's second reading speech. And I think it's something that we're very interested in hearing more about.

And then there's the other piece, you know, adjacent concerns. One of the drivers of human trafficking in Canada for sure has been gang activity. We've seen measures that have not only gone towards improving gang activity, but actually we've seen cuts by this government to effective programs to reduce gangs. All of those things have to be taken in concert I think, Mr. Speaker, when we're looking at this issue, the vulnerability and how we go about actually implementing effective legislation.

So I guess in conclusion what I'd like to say is, it's important. I think legislation is reasonable to deal with this problem, but let's make sure that we've got it right. And I know those are some of the questions the critic will have in committee and some of my other colleagues before that. So I think with that, I am prepared to conclude my remarks and to adjourn debate on Bill No. 14.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 15

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 15 — *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter in this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 15, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act*. As expressed by the minister, the Act sets out to make a couple changes. One of those changes is that it allows the ability to terminate a lease if a tenant experiences a sexual assault in their home. Certainly we're supportive of any measure that will better protect and support survivors of sexual assault, and this is one measure.

Certainly there are many other measures that we've called for on this front, Mr. Speaker, and that those that are directly involved in providing supports on this front, like the Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan, that they've brought forward. They've brought forward an action plan. We don't see any measures contained in this that reflect the calls to action brought forward by those directly involved in this work. But certainly we are supportive of any measure that's going to better protect survivors of sexual assault, that are going to work to end sexual assault in Saskatchewan.

There's a second piece of this Act that's actually really concerning though, Mr. Speaker, and that's the provision that

changes the ability for landlords to serve non-payment eviction notices after seven days — just seven days, Mr. Speaker — a change from 15 days. Now this has been spoken to by my colleagues, or some of my colleagues already at this point. I know it'll be something that you'll be hearing more from with respect to our critic on this front, and a critical piece when we are going through the committee process.

But this is a serious concern and it's something that will have a, you know, a negative impact on many, including those that are survivors of a sexual assault, Mr. Speaker. And this being brought forward in the middle of a pandemic where hardship is real, where job loss has been significant for so many in this province, where so many are scraping and grinding and doing all they can to come up with the monthly costs, it seems totally heartless, Mr. Speaker.

So this is an area that we have very serious concern with. We see it as being incredibly regressive of this government to walk back this time period, which will create great hardship for many. We know, and I know out of my office . . . The Minister of Social Services would know that often Social Services itself is well behind on payments owed to individuals who are scraping by without any other dollars.

And the minister would know this because they have folks like me, MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] like me and many others, I'm sure, that are calling in regularly and pushing the government to make sure the timely receipt of dollars that are owed to Saskatchewan people through programs like income assistance, Mr. Speaker. And I know those delays in payment far exceed seven days in many situations. And it's just completely inconsistent for this government to not be able to live up to its obligations on that front and ensure support in a timely way, yet leaving those very people incredibly at risk to eviction, based on the changes that they've brought forward to this Act here.

We know that there's many other measures that this government needs to act on, that Saskatchewan people need and deserve with respect to responding to sexual violence in Saskatchewan, and supporting survivors of sexual violence. One of those things would be providing better funding for sexual assault centres across Saskatchewan. They haven't received an increase in over 10 years. Wait-lists, I understand, are incredibly long, often folks waiting, I understand, six months and up to a year for a counsellor. Mr. Speaker, this is wrong.

And I already referenced the Saskatchewan sexual violence action plan put forward by the Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan, and the important measures that they've brought forward. What we don't see in this legislation or in this legislature or in this budget are actions to support those important calls.

[15:00]

So we can do better than this piece of legislation. We will certainly support any measure that improves protections on this front, but we will not support regressive actions that put survivors of sexual violence in an even more vulnerable situation to deal with even greater hardship or all those across Saskatchewan who are facing financial hardship with respect to the provision around landlords being able to reduce notice from 15 days to 7 days. We

see that as a callous move that's just offside with the interests of Saskatchewan people, particularly at a time like this during a pandemic.

With that being said, I know our critic will be following up in a real thoughtful way, fighting for people, fighting for survivors. And at this time, I will adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 15, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 19

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 19 — *The Human Resources Profession Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise again this afternoon and put some comments on the record under second reading debate on Bill No. 19, *The Human Resources Profession Act*. I've had the opportunity to meet with a number of groups, virtually of course, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this bill.

A few things that I want to say about it. First of all the intention of the bill as stated by the minister is to establish levels of regulation for members who are human resource professionals in this province. We've seen legislation similar, legislation for other professional bodies looking to provide protection to the public and to the profession, to establish registration. This legislation doesn't provide for licensure, so there's no barrier to entering the profession for interprovincial mobility, Mr. Speaker.

But I also know that this is something that has been asked for by human resource professionals themselves. I believe . . . and again I'm going to let us wander back to a simpler time when we used to have lobby days and meet with groups here in the legislature, and certainly the human resource professionals were one group that came and were asking for legislation similar to this.

Now there is no single body in the province that currently represents human resource professionals, Mr. Speaker. I'm told by the minister that this is not an attempt at exclusivity, that this Act would not require a human resource professional to belong to only one of the groups that currently represent human resource professionals in the province.

But I also understand, and I know I've had ongoing conversations and the minister has had ongoing conversations with a number of groups in the province who have interest in this legislation. And I understand that perhaps they will be meeting very soon to talk with the minister about some of those outstanding concerns. Some support for the bill, and I know that I am currently getting a number of letters in from human resources professionals noting their support for this bill. So I think in terms of our interest and

our position as the official opposition, we would like to see those differences resolved.

By and large this bill is something that has been asked for by the profession. And as with any bill, I think it's really important to do that trouble-shooting, that canvassing of opinions and concerns prior to passage of the bill. So I have faith that that is something that is ongoing. I have spoken with the minister about it as well.

Being the critic for this bill, I will have time in committee to canvass any of those outstanding concerns, and in the meantime will be interested in continued conversations with all the stakeholders that I've been speaking with so that I might be fully appraised of all of the wishes and concerns prior to that time in committee with the minister. So I think we've sort of fully canvassed our thoughts on the bill. As I said, Mr. Speaker, talks are ongoing and I see no reason to delay passage of Bill No. 19 to next steps. So I will conclude my remarks and allow this bill to move on to next steps.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 19 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

### Bill No. 20

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Merriman that **Bill No. 20 — *The Publicly-funded Health Entity Public Interest Disclosure Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate again today, this time on Bill No. 20, *The Publicly-funded Health Entity Public Interest Disclosure Act*. It is a bit of a mouthful. Myself along with our Labour critic, the member for Regina Lakeview, have been reaching out to a number of different stakeholders to get their thoughts on this legislation since it was introduced. There I think are a number of questions around this bill in terms of who was consulted, because as we reached out to many folks we learned that it was the first they were hearing about this bill in many cases. So I think that those consultations are a question that we'll have.

For quite some time we have called to extend whistle-blower

protections to health employees. This was a conversation in this Assembly for quite some time, but notably I'll point out last fall, Mr. Speaker, the fall of 2019 where we spent a great deal of time talking about the lack of comfort level with health care workers and their ability to come forward when they see wrongdoing happening in their workplace. And this is something that, you know, we've had a number of concerns about. We've heard from so many different folks that there are a lot of issues in terms of the culture that exists; there's a culture of fear around coming forward.

And so if you check my, you know, private messages in Facebook, my Twitter messages, my emails, the phone calls that come in, countless individuals who work in the health care sector have come forward that, you know, know I'm the Health critic and say, I want you to do something about this. I want you to fix this. I want you to bring up my issue but, by the way, please don't say my name because I'm really afraid of reprisal in my job. I'm really afraid of what's going to happen. You know, even if I don't get fired I think they're going to cut my hours or, you know, I don't want to be known as the leak in this situation because I'm concerned about what that's going to mean for my relationships with my employer.

We certainly want people to be able to speak out when there's wrongdoing happening within all of our public sector. And I think that this is something where I know many of my colleagues have given some examples of where people have spoken out and then there have been punitive measures as a result. We talked about the hush memo and physicians last year. And I also brought forward a private member's bill about a year ago now, Mr. Speaker, that would have brought employees of the SHA into existing public interest disclosure legislation.

So it is something we have been calling for for some time, along with folks in the sector. We do continue to hear these calls. We see this legislation as a step in the right direction. And I think there are a number of questions that are associated with this that my colleague and I have been hearing from stakeholders as we have engaged with them. We'll definitely be bringing forward those questions to committee.

And some of those concerns are about whether this legislation will be utilized. Because if there hasn't been this consultation with stakeholders already, it's a question of whether there will be uptake. So I think a public awareness campaign that there has been a change and, you know, maybe definitions of wrongdoing, what the employees can come out and bring forward, I think, will be important as well.

So some of these concerns include . . . We've heard from some stakeholders about broadening the definition of wrongdoing that's being presented in the bill to bring it in line with . . . The example that was provided was the Alberta legislation that exists in this area. We have questions about why it needs to be an entirely new piece of legislation, why it can't be an amendment to *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*. So why is it stand-alone?

Who will be protected? So I know there's a definition of "employee" presented in the bill, but it does raise a lot of questions about which employees will be included, whether that includes affiliates. There are a lot of folks that work in the whole health care team, and many of these individuals, there's concern

that they might not fall into this Act. So you know, is there a place for those individuals? And I think we'll provide some of those specific examples when we come forward and have a chance to chat about this in committee.

So many questions here, Mr. Speaker. Certainly seems like a step in the right direction. With that, we will allow this to move forward on to its next steps.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 20 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

### Bill No. 21

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 21 — *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join on Bill No. 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act*. Before I get into some of the changes the government . . . The Act first came into, from my understanding looking at some of the comments and the material, the Act came into legislation 2004, 2005 and now they're making some changes, some amendments to it in light of what's going on.

I think sometimes, you know, we all want to be safe in our communities, in our neighbourhoods. We want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we are safe. And our families, our grandkids, our kids, I think all of us want to have safe communities. But sometimes, Mr. Speaker, you have to ask yourself, the government of the day. And for many years I hear the members on the opposite say, we've been in government for a long time and we'll continue. And that's fine as they say that.

But when you say that you're going to be government and you've been there for a long time, you have to remember that if you've been there a long time as government, you must have made the changes or the commitment to help communities be safer, and you should have done that. And I guess if you haven't done that, you're going to have problems in our communities, and you're going to have . . . And there's reasons why. And I want to get into a little bit of that, about what some of the conditions are and maybe some of the reasons.

I don't have all the answers but I can say, hearing from people, seeing what's going on in some of our communities, talk about crime. And I don't know when the Minister of Corrections and Policing refers to why the changes they want to make. And there's some powers in there will be given to, I guess to a judge to make different orders to make sure . . . safety orders. And they can order certain things to be done through the law, legislation as I look at it.

[15:15]

But I want to talk a little bit about the reasons why. Why we have to have legislation like this, why we have to do the type of legislation amendments is because our communities are having issues, obviously. We want our communities . . . It shouldn't matter where you come from, what area — rural, North, First Nations, Métis community. It shouldn't matter. You should have the same resources.

And children, children shouldn't have to be left living in poverty. They shouldn't have to worry about where their next meal is going to come from. No child should in this good province. We talk about we're a have province and all the wealth we have, and yet you look at the alarming numbers.

Unfortunately Saskatchewan leads so many of the negative things. You know, in corrections, when you look at our Indigenous people, our correction rate, why is it? And I will get into some of that. There's going to be time over the next while. We're going to give some facts and some numbers about some of the stats and why. Why is one group, has less population or has a certain amount of population but is higher on many other areas? Why is that? Maybe that's because a certain government hasn't paid attention to those files and haven't walked the walk. Instead all they've done is talk and want to take photo ops.

And I want to get back to, you know, this bill and why they're making changes and why they're trying to protect neighbourhoods. And what are some of the root causes of that? Poverty is amazing, when you have nothing and you're struggling and your kids . . . and you're trying to make ends meet. And poverty is not just affecting people on social assistance. There's many families working minimum wage jobs. It's sad.

Some of the struggles that I see, people saying they just can't pay the rent. They can't pay the bills. They're trying. They work hard. Some of them work three, four jobs. You hear people doing that. They're working part-time jobs to try to make ends meet, to do their part, to be good role models. And sometimes, you know what? There's the root causes of it. Maybe, you know, young people feel like . . . Really government and this big building here, it's all great but maybe they don't feel like they're a part of the so-called province. So they get creative and they do things that are not good. And we need role models.

So when I look at some of the root causes, I know some of my colleagues have talked to this bill and they've talked about that. If we're serious about it, and if a government's ever going to be serious to make changes, there's changes to be done. But you have to make sure programs meet the needs of the communities so that our young people can be taken care of, so our communities can be taken care of. Too many of our young people are getting left behind by this government.

And we talk about we want to improve safety, and I get that. And we want to make sure communities are safer, that your neighbourhood is safer. I get that. People want that. They expect that. But you have to be willing to deal with the problems. You have to have a talk. You have to consult with people. You have to consult with our municipal leaders, our First Nation, our Métis leaders.

So much happens in our province that so many people are left behind. And it's sad that our government, you know, were having to come up with legislation and amending it and fixing things. And you go back to the root causes of it, and that's where I'm, you know, just going to reflect a little bit on it. I don't want to take a lot of time on this bill, but I just want to be very clear why we're having the conditions.

You know, and then I know one of my colleagues talked a little bit about . . . We've seen when the federal money came back in. What is the word? It's called the CERB [Canada emergency response benefit]. We refer to Canadian emergency response payments. And comments were made, and I've seen some of the comments a few of my colleagues on this side of the House, you know, have talked about and read through. And they talk about that, like, crime had changed because if there was more money for . . . So if that's the case, like I don't know for sure, but I've seen, looking at some of the comments. So when people have more, does it make a difference?

So you know, if you can survive, maybe, you know, people don't have to get into crime and the addictions and the mental health. And it all plays into what's going on in a society. If you're doing great with mental health and addictions, if you're making sure the most vulnerable are taken care of, let's hope that your communities are safer. Let's hope that your neighbourhood is safer, because people aren't being taken care of. And you have government and agencies. I give credit to many agencies, organizations out there, community-based, doing great work trying to make sure that people are taken care of so we have less crime in our communities and we have safer communities. That's so important and they get left behind so many times.

I think back home how many good organizations are doing good work and sometimes with very little funding from the province. They want to be the partner. They ask. And that's sometimes with addictions, mental health. So having said that, this is exactly a bill that talks about safety and it talks about community, so protecting them and making them safer. Well here's some things the government could do, and we could work together in making them safer.

So I don't know if I have much more to say on this bill, Mr. Speaker. I know the critic will have more to say. I know my colleagues will have more to say. So at this point government needs to, you know, get some work done and get some things done and dealt with, and maybe we would have safer communities and neighbourhoods. And that's all that people want. They just want a good living. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 26

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 26 — *The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter in, albeit briefly, this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 26, *The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021*. Certainly at first blush this seems to be a positive step. I know there's lots to assess in this legislation to make sure that this government has gotten this right and that in fact they've built this in a consultative way that ensures this legislation can be as effective as it can be in ensuring some independent oversight for police in the province.

Certainly these are calls that we've made, Mr. Speaker. These are calls that have been made by many within the community including many marginalized, vulnerable, and racialized individuals within the province, Mr. Speaker. Certainly these are calls that our Justice critic has made. So at first blush this looks like a positive step. But again, like I say, it's going to be critical that we get this right.

As I understand, these changes implement a civilian-led team to investigate serious incidents involving police officers. This is something that we support. It nods or suggests that it's going to ensure Indigenous representation, appointments of First Nations and Métis liaisons. Mr. Speaker, this is very important that these roles are meaningful, impactful, that they have agency within this process. So that'll be something we'll be following up on.

I understand that this will be operational in fall of 2021, or is the plan of government. We'll be following up on some of those timelines. And importantly resources certainly for this body to do its work in an effective way and to ensure integrity is certainly . . . Resources, adequate resources are going to be required, so we'll be following up to ensure that that's the case as well.

I would note that the bill cites the term "provincial police service," and certainly we have questions as to what the government's intimating there or what their plans might be, Mr. Speaker, because we don't have a provincial police service in Saskatchewan. And it would be interesting to hear from government, to hear if they have some plans on this front. Certainly you know, I know we always need to work with and push the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] to, you know, make sure that they're serving our entire province in the ways that we need. And that's an ongoing relationship and it's a constructive one and it's one where we need to be identifying challenges in service gaps or also in challenges at times around performance.

But certainly we've been well served on many fronts by having the RCMP depot housed here in Saskatchewan. And we have a

real opportunity as well when it comes to some of the improvements that need to be brought around policing to ensure that that's occurring right here with leadership here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

It was identified by a former federal cabinet minister that put a spotlight on the fact that we not only have the RCMP training depot here in Saskatchewan, but we also have the First Nations University of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And it seems that there's an opportunity when we talk about doing better on important fronts, especially in that relationship with Indigenous peoples, and the type of training and support and learning that needs to occur. It seems that there's a tremendous opportunity there.

But with respect to a move towards independent oversight of police and police incidents, this is something we've called for, something we're supportive of, something that racialized communities and people have been calling for, and it's an important step. As I've said, our critic, our Justice critic who's been calling for these changes, will be engaged with stakeholders as we speak. So if anyone, if there's stakeholders out there that, you know, have concerns or questions or have thoughts on how to improve this legislation and make sure that it's as effective as it can be, please reach out to us at this time through our Justice critic, who will be bringing that forward through this process.

I also want to recognize that we have a lot of really strong police leaders in this province. And I won't go on and on, on that front, but I think I just want to give a shout-out to Regina Police Chief Evan Bray, who provides such strong leadership in our community with respect to policing and with respect to the many other root causes of crime in that more holistic view of the challenges that people face. His leadership and his voice is incredibly important, as it was with former chief Weighill and many other leaders across Saskatchewan that are providing that kind of leadership. I think of Casey Ward with the Regina Police Association, the president who is just a humble, strong voice and a constructive voice within policing. So these are good folks.

And I think of folks, you know, that built their careers and that have retired, like Jim Pratt or Tracey Dunnigan here in Regina, just incredibly respected and important leaders in policing, Mr. Speaker. So just giving a positive word to a few folks of the many in this important profession.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 26, *The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021*. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 27

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 27 — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again this afternoon, this time to enter into debate, second reading debate, on Bill No. 27, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this Act I think is self-evident in the name. It proposes to make some changes to how summary offences in the province are dealt with, summary offences being those less serious offences tried by court. Judgment or punishment is determined by a lower court, a magistrate, a municipal court. Charges are laid by a police officer and punishment is not usually severe — a fine or community service.

[15:30]

So certainly those are the types of offences that we are dealing with. Some folks might be familiar with traffic fines, similar. So what this does is propose some modernization to the Act and to bring some new measures in to modernize how those summary offences are dealt with. I think that that, Mr. Speaker, is welcome. I did hear the minister's second reading debate and note that he provided some detail with regard to the intent of these changes and, in some cases, the reasons for the changes.

So the first thing that I want to talk about is the establishment of a new online system for processing summary offences. This system allows summary offence tickets to be resolved outside of the court in a way that often is more simple and easier for defendants.

I do remember being a university student, a kid off the farm, and getting a rather alarming number of parking tickets at one point. And simply the part-time job didn't quite keep up to the number of tickets that I had, so I found myself in the very new situation of having to go down to that municipal court before a judge and ask to be able to pay my fines through fine options.

So it was a life experience, Mr. Speaker, that . . . you know, it taught me some things. I have to admit to being very nervous going in, but also, you know, got to do some very worthwhile and eye-opening work at the Regina Food Bank and with John Howard Society, so a very worthwhile program. Certainly lots of folks who would struggle financially to pay fines, it allows them that option.

We're glad to see the program because there was some concern at one point that we might see that program done away with, so to see it here and see it strengthened is, I think, welcome. You know, some folks might be without the opportunity to go down to that municipal courthouse, but I think having an online option is something that's welcome. In fact I think that particular courthouse is going to be turned into a community centre fairly soon, which is another welcome development.

Some of the other changes that are set forth in this bill, it allows for an early resolution discussion, one of the measures to reduce pressure, I think, on the court system. Another allows, in the case of summary ticket matters, that they might conduct that trial online, so a number of online measures here. They both, I think, do add a measure of simplicity perhaps for those who can access the online provisions, but also they have the impact of reducing pressure on the court system and that's something that I think is

very, very important.

I was listening to the radio recently and heard that because of COVID backlog in part, that trial by jury in the province have been pushed back. And some of those who had elected to be tried by jury now have the option to . . . asking to be tried by a judge alone. So I think, you know, certainly those measures specifically and most recently are COVID measures, but unfortunately this is a court system that we've seen with large backlogs and struggling with those timelines for some time. And I know the critic has had opportunity on several occasions to address that in this Assembly, and I'm sure that she will bring those comments into her response to this bill and then into committee.

So I think I have probably canvassed this to the extent that I'm going to. I know, as I said, that the critic will continue to have some questions and some comments that she would like to get on the record. I think I've said my piece, Mr. Speaker, and with that I am prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 27.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 28

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. L. Ross that **Bill No. 28 — *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter in, I guess again in my time as an MLA, with respect to Bill No. 28. It wasn't numbered that before, but it was called the active families benefit before as well, Mr. Speaker; this time *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*. It's a bit like Groundhog Day around here, Mr. Speaker, with I guess this tired, old government. Because of course, Mr. Speaker, this is something they brought forward with lots of fanfare a number of years ago, Mr. Speaker, only to cut in 2016, sort of the MO [modus operandi] of this old majority that we see here in Saskatchewan. Maybe they, you know, have trouble keeping their promises, Mr. Speaker, and you know, are bringing it forward once again here, Mr. Speaker.

You know certainly we're supportive of measures that are going to support families and children to engage in sport and culture and arts and music within Saskatchewan, and this program being brought back provides a bit of support for some within Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the threshold of \$60,000 of household income is low, Mr. Speaker. Certainly with the cost of living, especially under this government, Mr. Speaker, many families and certainly those in that bracket are facing a lot of hardship, Mr. Speaker.

But we're supportive of measures that are going to support young people to be involved in positive, healthy recreation. As I say, we need to recognize, of course, and act on affordability, which has become a real challenge for so many in Saskatchewan under this

Sask Party, who has had so little regard for the importance of keeping life affordable and its connect to quality of life, Mr. Speaker. And certainly the Sask Party government has directly eroded the quality of life for so many Saskatchewan people on this front, burdening them with incredible financial hardship, Mr. Speaker. So you know, certainly this is one measure, Mr. Speaker. There's others that are needed.

And when we talk about affordability, you know, we really need to make sure we have a government that's active in addressing things like child care in Saskatchewan. They have the opportunity right now to build a universal child care system in Saskatchewan that's accessible, that's affordable, with significant federal dollars, Mr. Speaker. And what we've seen so far from this government's actually been rather appalling, Mr. Speaker. For anyone who hasn't been observing the Sask Party over the last number of years — for those that have, it's rather predictable — their response, Mr. Speaker, is that they sort of dismiss things like child care as a pressure and a challenge and a cost that families struggle with.

Of course they stick Saskatchewan people with the lowest minimum wage in this country, all while they're facing so many other expenses as well. So to make sure that we have active young families, that children have opportunities to pursue recreation, which is so important for them, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that we're addressing affordability.

We also need to make sure we recognize that this is a, you know, a narrow window of folks who can be supported. And I think, you know, there should always be broader efforts and stronger support for more universal, affordable recreation within our communities. And there's so many people that are committed to delivering that kind of sport and culture and rec and music opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

I think of someone that we've just lost as a community and a province who epitomizes this, Mr. Speaker, being Warren Montgomery. And rest his soul. But he's left a family in mourning, Mr. Speaker, and he's left legions of young people who he's affected in such positive ways as a coach, as well as peers throughout the sporting community. His impact on young people through the North Central Lakers along with folks like Brandon Brooks, and so many others throughout the football community, has been immense.

And I watch as the memories and the mourning rolls in, paying respect and with tribute to someone like Warren Montgomery. He's being remembered certainly as a great father and partner, an incredible community member, a wonderful entrepreneur and a chef, but an incredible volunteer to sport that has had such a real impact on so many. And it's programs like the North Central Lakers that break down the barriers to sport and ensure it's more accessible for all, making sure that there's not cost impediments for things like registration and equipment, that are game changers in the lives of young people.

I think of folks like Gloria Patrick and her team of folks that are involved through the Sport Venture library, assisting in running leagues that are no cost for both the registration and equipment, for hockey and for football and for soccer and for basketball. They're entering now into the arts as well — these are really important programs. A program that I know very well on this

front is the Outdoor Hockey League supported through the Sport Venture library, a league that I'm so proud to be involved with for many years, I think a coach for over 20 years at . . . this would have been my 20th year, Mr. Speaker, and delivered by volunteers. And that removes those barriers to sport, those cost barriers that are so significant, and builds community, Mr. Speaker. And I thank all those coaches and volunteers that are involved in those leagues.

I think of folks like David Chapados and Shane Reoch who are involved with, I think it's the skateboard coalition. I'm not providing the proper term, probably, for their name. But they're making skateboarding more accessible for young people in Regina, through this pandemic actually going and building a new indoor skate park here in Regina over at Evraz Place, reducing those barriers and making that sport accessible to so many.

I think of those involved in the northwest sports association, Mr. Speaker, and the west zone association, and community associations right across our province. But I know well the folks out at the Rosemont Mount Royal Community Association, and these are folks that make programming, meaningful programming — sport, culture, recreation — accessible to so many within our province.

So you know, we saw the government, like I say, bring forth this measure a number of years ago, a lot of fanfare. Then they canned it, Mr. Speaker. They bring it back here and, you know, that's good. I'm glad to see it here today because it provides a bit of support for some families that can utilize it. That being said, the support is very nominal and very narrow in who is supported, and I really do think we need to do a better job of supporting those leagues and organizations that make recreation available to all in a more universal way. I mentioned many — I think of folks like KidSport as well — so many throughout this province that play an important role on this front.

And just in closing, I just want to say thank you to every music teacher and folks that are involved in teaching dance and cultural organizations and in sport, Mr. Speaker, for their selfless and tireless efforts as volunteers in enriching the lives of so many. As I've said, Mr. Speaker, for so many young people these are game-changing experiences and we need to do all we can to make them more accessible to all. With that being said, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 28, the active families benefit, 2021.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 30

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 30 — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise again this afternoon, and this time I rise to enter into second reading debate on the Saskatchewan technology start-up amendment Act of 2021.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, I have been noting, when I can, the areas of agreement within these second reading debates between members on this side and members on the other side. And certainly the need to invest in tech and attract the young people and their businesses, and to keep them here in this province to grow their businesses, but also grow their families and contribute to the vibrancy of our communities, I think, is something that we can agree on, on both sides.

This is an extension of an initiative that was first brought in, I believe, in 2018. This proposes to extend those tech start-ups and expands in some cases. It increases the amount that . . . doubles the amount in one case. It was mentioned, the intensive capital needed for, in particular, for agribusiness start-ups. And that was provided by the minister as one of the reasons for that increase.

So succinctly what this bill does, it extends the existing incentive to 2026, so an additional five years. And that incentive provides a 45-per-cent tax rebate for eligible start-ups on eligible shares. The bill itself is retroactive to March 31st, 2021, and it changes the required holding period on applicable investments from two to three years, so an extension there as well.

I think we probably all have examples of people in our communities who are employed by, going to school for, excited about the possibilities of the tech economy. I think something that is very important that we look at, at diversification. We look at those industries that not only, as I said, bring businesses to our province or entice people to stay in the province, but also particularly those knowledge sector jobs that really do attract young people. And I think, as I've already said as well, but the vibrancy that they bring.

You know, there seems to be some success with this program, and I think that's important because we've seen other places where this government has seemed to . . . has been too willing to quash some of those sectors that really do bring or retain young people and vibrancy. I think particularly of the solar industry. The film industry is something that really hit my constituency, Regina Lakeview, very hard. And still, in case people in this Assembly think that folks have forgotten, it's something that I hear every time I'm on the doorstep from small business owners, caterers, right through to grandparents who miss their grandchildren who are now living in Manitoba and, you know, vibrant artists who are struggling to make a living here at home when we really should have and could have a thriving film industry.

So, you know, there are places that this government chooses to lend their favour and places that they don't, Mr. Speaker. And I can't say that I always understand how those decisions are made.

But to the bill at hand, I think that largely there's consensus that this is good news to expand the tech industry. There's a number of smaller changes that are proposed in the legislation, and I think that that's something that the critic will want to look a little more



closely at.

I think that, you know, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, we all probably have a tale of someone who's employed by the tech industry. I know that there are families who have agri-tech businesses — maybe people wouldn't expect this to be the case — but living in Regina Lakeview. So these are businesses that are all over our province.

But the story that I wanted to talk about or just put on the record is one of a neighbour of ours, because it isn't always the people that you think who might be employed in the sector. There's a wide host of people from different backgrounds who find employment, find a reason to stay in the province and to build their lives here because of the tech industry.

I had a neighbour when we moved into our house, the first house after we were married. There was a little five-year-old next door, and she was a fantastic, continues to be a fantastic flute player. Her name's Emma. And Emma, you could often hear the flute coming out of her room, and it was really beautiful when you'd have the windows open. And of course, as is the case when you live side by side . . . And I don't know if you know, the houses in Cathedral, Mr. Speaker, are about this far apart — my hands are about two feet apart. So you get to know your neighbours quite well. And it's one of the reasons that we love the neighbourhood.

But anyway, little Emma grew up, played in the youth orchestra, and went on to school to further her music career. And I had the opportunity to bump into her a number of years ago at the Cathedral Village Arts Festival. And at that point she was still playing music, but she was playing musical score for software in the province, which I thought was fantastic. And I thought that's exactly . . . You know, it's a bit unexpected, but there's room for artists within that sector as well.

You know, software companies are doing well in this province, and there are a number of examples of that. But again I just wanted to put that story on the record because sometimes we have a narrow view of who is impacted or who is included. And it's often much broader than we think, of course. And then there's all of the spinoff jobs and opportunities that come with that.

So, Mr. Speaker, count us solidly in the pro-tech-start-up camp on this side of the Assembly. As I said, the critic will have some questions when we do get to committee with this bill, and perhaps some of my colleagues will put further comments on the record. That's the conclusion of my comments. And with that, we'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 30.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried

### Bill No. 31

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 31 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a

second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pleasure to enter into discussions this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 31, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2021*, and to enter in briefly with respect to such an important sector in Saskatchewan, both the innovation and the research sector, but the ag tech sector that is really emerging in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And, certainly, this is a sector we can all be proud of and one that we can tell many stories that celebrate the success of so many local ag tech ventures, Mr. Speaker.

But we also need to make sure that they have legislation and the kind of support that supports this ecosystem to thrive, Mr. Speaker. Because certainly the potential is incredible in this province. So with respect to what's being brought forward here today, we'll certainly be engaging, our critic will be engaging, with stakeholders. I invite all stakeholders to offer their feedback with respect to the changes that are being brought about. Because we really need to get this right and make sure the supports are there for this sector to thrive, Mr. Speaker.

I know that this legislation, it suggests that it's going to provide more control for treasury board over the actual investments or the business of Innovation Saskatchewan. And, you know, I think that there's some red flags there that we'll want to ask some questions about. Certainly, we don't want cabinet or treasury board directing traffic on this front or placing investments or choosing how these are going to be placed. We really need a fair, transparent, and competitive process and with some, certainly, independence from cabinet, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen when this government, you know, chooses to directly engage in things like procurement. We've seen them get in a lot of mess, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen dollars wasted. We've seen scandal. We've seen corrupt deals. And we need to make sure that we ensure this vital sector the opportunity to thrive with a fair and transparent foundation, Mr. Speaker.

We also need to make sure that we're enabling things like connectivity in Saskatchewan, not just giving lip service to it, Mr. Speaker, but actually connecting Saskatchewan and utilizing SaskTel to do so. We have a government, Mr. Speaker, who talks a lot about this but certainly doesn't put their money where their mouth is to ensure that the dollars are there, the capital is there within SaskTel on this front.

We know folks like APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan], the agricultural producers of Saskatchewan, have recently done some real heavy lifting on this front, along with many organizations like SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], the rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker, as well as the urban municipalities.

But APAS has a new report out, Mr. Speaker. An important piece of that report, or a recommendation is to allow SaskTel to retain greater dividends, Mr. Speaker, to make sure they have the capital to make these investments. Because these are game-changing investments for rural Saskatchewan and northern

Saskatchewan and for First Nations communities and small towns and villages.

And they're critical to agriculture, as well, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about ag tech itself and the kind of innovation that we see here in Saskatchewan through this ecosystem driven by Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, it's really something. But we need to make sure that we can directly apply those technologies as well here in Saskatchewan. And when you look at the shift around things like precision agriculture, Mr. Speaker, connectivity is a critical aspect of that.

So as the official opposition, as Saskatchewan New Democrats, connecting Saskatchewan is something that we're committed to. And something we're going to continue to push this government to make happen, to leverage that incredibly strong Crown corporation to use its tools along with Saskatchewan people and communities and businesses to make that happen. And recognizing how important that is for rural communities, Mr. Speaker, and just the way of life and quality of life as well, certainly from a . . . It's important from a perspective of safety and security. It's important from a quality-of-life perspective. But it presents so many economic opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and allows us to utilize many of the technologies that are being born right here in Saskatchewan.

When we look at the innovation community in Saskatchewan, it's a remarkable one, Mr. Speaker. And you think of like what's going on out of the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina and what's happening on so many of these fronts when it comes to innovation and research. It's amazing. We have world-class research and researchers here in Saskatchewan. And then we do have that process around commercialization, that ecosystem that is important for us to support to make sure that this sector can thrive, Mr. Speaker.

So with respect to this bill, certainly its intentions are laudable and, we hope, effective. We do have questions around the kind of control that treasury board, that this cabinet is taking with this piece of legislation and whether that's appropriate, Mr. Speaker. But certainly the aims of this legislation are important, and of course we'd, you know, want to support that and take it, you know, take it even further, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I would invite any stakeholders that are involved in this space to connect directly with the official opposition, certainly with government, if they have concerns with respect to this legislation, if they see opportunities to improve this legislation. And that provides us the opportunity to make sure that we're as effective as we can be as an opposition as well.

At this point in time though, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 31, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2021*.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee later this day, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. The House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:00.]



# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement  
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor  
and Gaming Authority  
Minister Responsible for The Global  
Transportation Hub Authority

**Hon. Laura Ross**  
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

**Hon. Christine Tell**  
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

**Hon. Gordon Wyant**  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General