



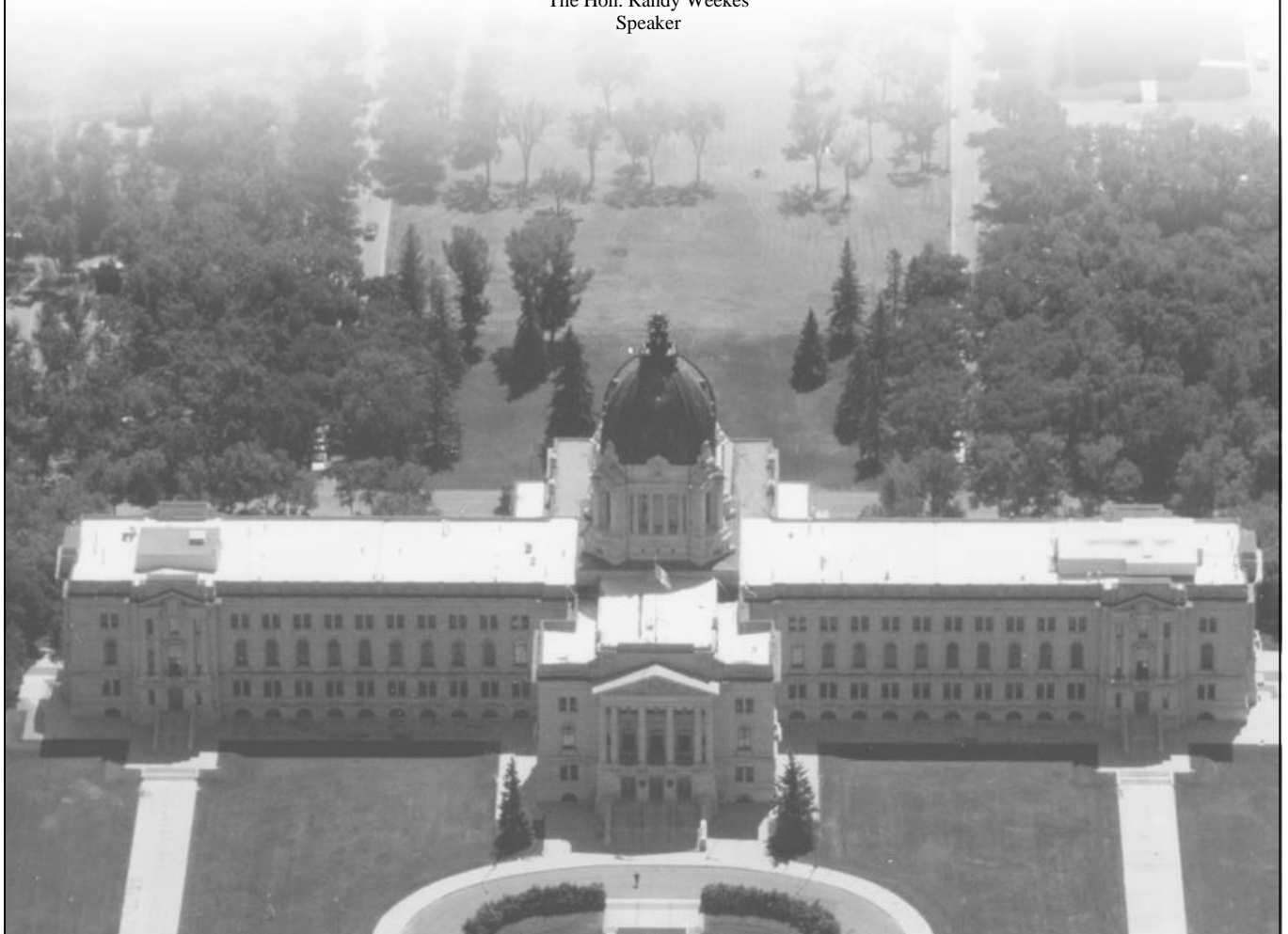
THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd 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 — Carla Beck

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)
Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)	Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)	McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)	McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)	Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)	Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)	Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Hargrave, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang
Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.
Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — I would like to introduce two more Pages that have joined us: Brylee Jeffries and Kaleela Sangwais-Thomson. Welcome.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce two individuals seated in the east gallery — two labour leaders, obviously no strangers to this Assembly — Lori Johb, president of SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour], and her strategic advisor, Nathaniel Cole. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former Labour minister, I would like to welcome these individuals to the legislature as well. I appreciate their commitment to the workforce in our province, and certainly glad that they're here to participate in the democratic process. And I want to ask that members on both sides of the House welcome them to their legislature today.

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 calling for recruitment and retention of pediatric specialists.

Saskatchewan's only pediatric gastroenterologist closed her practice last spring, and parents have had to leave the province for care. It took months for government to come up with a band-aid interim solution, and kids are still left without the care they need, on wait-lists, and without a pediatric GI [gastroenterologist] for several weeks of every month, Mr. Speaker. And it's not only GIs. Pediatric specialists in other fields as well are severely needed across our province so that our kids can get the care they need.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately recruit an

appropriate complement of pediatric GI specialists and adjunct services, and develop a plan to address the service gaps in pediatric specialty fields.

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

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise and present a petition to this Assembly calling for adequate funding for education. Those who've signed the petition today would like the Assembly to be aware that the funding included in the 2023-24 budget is wholly inadequate and will lead to continued cuts in the classroom, just as our schools have experienced for a decade.

The SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], who represent all 27 public and separate school divisions in a non-partisan way, have criticized this budget, stating that it further erodes education in our province. And teachers didn't have anything kind to say as well. They describe their response as being baffled by this government's disregard for students. STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] president Samantha Becotte says, "Government either doesn't understand the issues or doesn't think they are important."

It's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that these cuts come after years, a decade of cuts that school divisions describe as cutting the system down to the bone.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for our 27 public and separate school divisions to ensure that schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the needs of every student in Saskatchewan.

Today's petition is signed by residents of Martensville and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to prohibit conversion therapy:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: conversion therapy uses discredited and abusive practices which attempt to actively change sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* names sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination; the practice of conversion therapy or reparative therapy is seriously harmful to individuals and is opposed by the Canadian Psychological Association, the World Health Organization, and the American Psychiatric Association;

the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child indicates that children should not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to ban conversion therapy and prohibit transporting youth and adults outside of Saskatchewan for such purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents reside in Aberdeen and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to be on my feet today to present a petition to this Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments. Mr. Speaker, no two families are alike and some families take a little bit . . . a little more work. But, Mr. Speaker, we believe that here in Saskatchewan we should be working for families, not against them, and we should be working for more people to have families here in Saskatchewan, not against them.

Mr. Speaker, despite public health care being a right in Canada, there's no government financial support for fertility treatments in Saskatchewan, and IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive for people, with one cycle typically costing upwards of \$10,000. Mr. Speaker, investing in people determined to build and grow their families here in Saskatchewan makes economic sense, and no one should be prohibited from having a family because of their socio-economic status. Other provinces have created programs to financially assist people struggling to conceive.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today reside in North Battleford. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the government to implement universal access to birth control for all Saskatchewan people.

The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the country — that's ages 12 to 20 years old; that cost is one of the biggest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, especially among adolescents; that having consistent and affordable access to contraceptive options is essential for promoting bodily autonomy, for preventing unwanted pregnancy, and for saving money on sexual and reproductive health care; and that sexual

and reproductive health and rights are human rights.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraceptive available to all Saskatchewan people.

The signatories today reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Highway Safety Enhancements

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In July our province celebrated the completion of a \$50 million safety project, and today I'm delighted to share the successful conclusion of significant safety enhancements along Highway 16, a crucial transportation artery connecting us with the country.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the opening of the final set of passing lanes near Saltcoats, part of a broader effort that added 26 passing lanes and upgraded multiple intersections along Highway 16 between the provincial borders. These enhancements prioritize the safety of our loved ones and expedite the secure movement of our exports, which is essential for our province's growth.

Susan Ewart, president of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, expressed her enthusiasm for these improvements, recognizing their importance to her members. Mr. Speaker, truck drivers play a pivotal role in our province's economy, ensuring that there is food on our plates and clothes on our backs. Let's take a moment to thank these dedicated professionals for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, our government's commitment to infrastructure is evident through an investment exceeding \$12 billion in highways since 2008, resulting in substantial improvements across more than 19 400 kilometres of Saskatchewan's roadways. Mr. Speaker, this is one example of how this government is growing and protecting communities and families for a strong Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Job Numbers

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now it's another day that ends in Y, which means it's another day in this Assembly that the worst economic managers in the country struggle with basic math. Just last week the member from Lloydminster inadvertently made several statements about jobs in Saskatchewan.

First of all she said that in September, 13,700 jobs were created in Saskatchewan. Now of course she must have meant that

according to the StatsCan labour force survey, between September 2022 and September 2023, 13,700 jobs were created in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that is accurate. But unfortunately due to this government's worst-in-the-country job creation record, the number created is far less. Indeed, from September 2022 to September 2023 the number of people unemployed in Saskatchewan has risen by 18.6 per cent. The number of youth unemployed in Saskatchewan has risen by 23.4 per cent. The number of women unemployed has risen by 37.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Now it's divisive times here in Saskatchewan, so I would be pleased to review these numbers with the member opposite or with any members opposite, Mr. Speaker, because this truly matters to people. And this matters to Saskatchewan because, as the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, "it's the economy, stupid."

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Lloydminster Teacher Receives Award for Teaching Excellence

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 2023 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence were presented this fall to some very deserving and special teachers across the country. Lloydminster's grade 1 teacher, Paige Kindopp, was speechless after finding out she was one of those recipients.

Paige is a teacher in the Lloydminster Catholic School Division's Mother Teresa Early Childhood Learning Center. Whether she's in the classroom or out in the community, Paige is an amazing individual and always takes the opportunity to be kind. Paige creates unique ideas to motivate her students. She engaged her students in her Go Nuts for Doughnuts campaign, with Sobey's coming on board as the producers of the doughnuts — 263 pounds of icing, 60 pounds of chocolate fudge icing, 10 pounds of sprinkles — resulting in 5,476 individual doughnuts sold, bringing in \$11,000 given back to local non-profits.

Now in her eighth year of teaching, Paige cherishes every day in the classroom. She says, "The best part of my day is the kids, seeing their light bulbs go off, greeting them in the morning, having them greet me and ask how I'm doing. Their kindness and compassion amazes me."

I ask all members to help me congratulate Lloydminster's Paige Kindopp on this significant and valuable recognition and thank her for helping to inspire and engage our youngest learners.

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

Qu'Appelle House Provides Excellent Care for Seniors

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise today and recognize the work of the Qu'Appelle senior house in providing care and a welcoming atmosphere in my constituency.

Qu'Appelle senior house is affiliated with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, formerly known, and the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle. Qu'Appelle senior house provides care for 34 level 2 residents and has 21 suites dedicated to providing assisted living for independent residents. It follows the highest

standards and best practices of public health care and draws on the expertise available in the region.

Qu'Appelle House strives for a homelike atmosphere, taking pride in the strong ties between the board of directors, senior leadership, staff, and the residents and their families. The values of community, character, and compassion that animate the Diocese of Qu'Appelle also permeate their culture.

[13:45]

This summer I had the privilege to visit the Qu'Appelle senior house and spend time with some of Saskatchewan's finest citizens. It was good to return after so much time away due to the COVID-19 pandemic and numerous lockdowns. I had some amazing chats and shared laughs with the amazing residents and staff.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing the Qu'Appelle senior house for their excellent service to senior adults in Qu'Appelle. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Carrot River Facility Innovates with Biochar Production

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An exciting new endeavour in Carrot River is taking place. BioLesna Carbon Technologies is leading the way with solutions dealing with residual products from the Edgewood Forest Product saw mill facility. BioLesna produces biochar from the bark and sawdust made from the saw mill. Biochar is a product used for capturing and sequestering carbon when treated appropriately. The product is dried within the plant using gases extracted internally from the process and a pyrolysis state is created with the carbonizing chamber. To achieve this, the product is heated to high temperatures and exposed to low oxygen, leaving only the product's original carbon state.

Mr. Speaker, while there are many applications for biochar, the primary focus will be on the soil enhancement side. Biochar is an exceptional replacement in potting soils and it may be used for reclamation in the forestry sector and for cleaning contamination spills as an outstanding absorbing product. BioLesna is planning for future expansion which will include capturing the steam the process generates and scrubbing the gases to capture essential hydrocarbons pulled off during the process.

The plant is designed to run continuously and will be fully operational by the end of this year, employing 14 full-time employees. I ask all members to join me in wishing BioLesna Carbon Technologies all the best in their operation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

University of Saskatchewan Holds White Coat Ceremony for Pharmacy Students

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday at the University of Saskatchewan, 86 students were able to take

another step forward in their respective careers. It was my honour and privilege to take part in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition's White Coat Ceremony that recognizes each first-year student. Mr. Speaker, the theatre was full to capacity with 400 family and friends in attendance to watch as each student received their white coat and name tag.

Mr. Speaker, these future pharmacists will graduate in 2027 and they'll join their colleagues in pharmacies across our province, providing high-quality care for their patients. When it comes to maintaining a healthy life, all of us look to pharmacists for information and advice on medications. Mr. Speaker, pharmacists are important front-line professionals that we all rely on.

Since 2007 the number of pharmacists practising in Saskatchewan has increased by 103 per cent. Our government continues to make investments to incentivize these individuals to stay and provide these very important services to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, our government announced earlier this summer that we're expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists, allowing them to utilize more of their knowledge and skills to the benefit of their patients. The people of our province are fortunate to have such dedicated pharmacy professionals to rely on.

Congratulations again to these 86 first-year pharmacy students on receiving their white coats, and who will be working to help Saskatchewan patients upon their graduation in just a very few short years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Supreme Court Ruling on Bill C-69

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some great news to report to this Chamber. Well some of us think it's great news. The federal government's Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines Act, has been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh, bolstered by the members opposite, do not support our world-class resource sector and have tried every route to shut it down. The NDP [New Democratic Party] at their convention this past weekend even had a resolution to end fossil fuel production. Our energy, mining, and forestry sectors are world class in environmental, labour, and social standards, and this government supports the great work they do every day.

Federal government overreach is nothing new, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the carbon tax, nitrogen fertilizer emissions, electrical generation, or who knows what the Trudeau-Singh coalition will dream up next.

These victories must be celebrated. In these times of global uncertainty, Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and Hamas's attack on Israel, we must be able to provide our allies with more food, fuel, and fertilizer. As a nation we must be the global supplier of these critical products from a strong, safe, and welcoming Saskatchewan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Education Policy

Ms. Beck: — Last week we first saw the bill that this tired and out-of-touch government recalled us here to pass. Mr. Speaker, not only does that bill use the notwithstanding clause from the Canadian Constitution, that bill also overrides *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* and it makes it nearly impossible for people to sue. Again that Premier is using not one but two notwithstanding clauses plus an immunity clause to sow division in this province.

Why is that Premier more interested in protecting himself than protecting vulnerable kids who will be subject, as the judge said, to irreparable harm?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we're here today essentially because the government had put in a policy that was essentially there to preserve the status quo of what largely was happening by policy or by practice in most of the school divisions, most of the classrooms, if not all, across the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there are many classrooms across the province that had this policy in place.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't until one school division actually changed their policy explicitly to not inform the parents when it comes to a pronoun change, a name change, or a gender-identity classification change. That's when the government moved forward with respect to this policy, Mr. Speaker. This policy then was taken to court, which ultimately brings us today where we are passing legislation and ultimately, yes, putting in the notwithstanding clause to protect parental rights, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's this government that will support parents' involvement in their classroom, in their child's education. We don't know why the NDP want to keep parents in the dark.

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

Management of Health Care System

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems the Premier has some new speaking notes. So I'm not sure if it's status quo or emergency, but what is clear, what is very clear is that this tired and out-of-touch government have completely lost sight of what matters to Saskatchewan families. They've called the first emergency sitting in decades. Meanwhile people in this province today can't get the health care that they need.

Let's look at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. Forty-one patients, 41 patients were admitted to the ER [emergency room] but they didn't have a bed to go to. This, Mr. Speaker, is what that Premier should be focused on instead of sowing division in our province.

So here's the question: where's the urgent action for people in this province who can't get health care today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we've added 64 acute care, complex-needs care beds in our hospitals across the province. Mr. Speaker, coming out of the pandemic, made a commitment to increase our ICU [intensive care unit] or our emergency care beds from 79 to 110 in the province. I would say that's urgent action that didn't require legislation, didn't require us coming back to the House to pass that.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to a policy that, as I said, has largely been in place by practice or by policy in many, many school divisions and many, many classrooms across the province, I would point the members opposite to a quote from the executive director of South East Cornerstone School Division where he said, and I quote, "We have always had a default position in this school division that parents should be involved regardless of the age in these discussions."

Mr. Speaker, you go off to the North East School Division where the executive director of education there said, I quote, "Our administrative policy to consult with parents regarding family life and human sexuality is in line with the minister's request."

Mr. Speaker, again the policy was brought forward to preserve what was already happening largely across the education sector, across school divisions, and in our classrooms for years into the past.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, nothing in those talking points is going to fix the fact that 41 people today have been admitted to the ER but there's no bed for them to go to.

Let's be clear. The ER is overwhelmed because there aren't enough doctors and there aren't enough nurses, and there isn't enough capacity to look after the patients in this province who need care. And that's all because this tired and out-of-touch government has failed so much that they've run our health care system into the ground.

And, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately again it's Saskatchewan people, those who need health care, who are paying the price for that Premier's failures. So I want to ask him this, Mr. Speaker: does he think, does he think that it's acceptable for 41 patients to not have a bed to go to because of his failures?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, what that health care system would look like with 1,000 less doctors and 5,000 less nurses, which was exactly the case here in the province under the members opposite?

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, as I said, when it comes to our intensive care unit, our emergency rooms, an increase from 79 beds up to 110 beds in the province; 64 acute beds added — more when the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital redesign and rebuild comes online.

The fact of the matter is this: we have a health care system in this province, Mr. Speaker, that has one of the most ambitious in

Canada health human resource plans in place, bringing people into our health care complexes across the province, offering services to Saskatchewan people. And we have a health care system here in the province, Mr. Speaker, which has the full support of this Government of Saskatchewan with a 6.7 per cent increase just last year.

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

Ms. Mowat: — It's really disappointing to see over and over again fearmongering and hyperbole coming out of that Premier's mouth. And it is cold comfort for those who are waiting in the emergency room without a bed in the hospital right now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the problems facing our emergency departments aren't limited to RUH [Royal University Hospital]. In Saskatoon's other emergency rooms, too many people have to wait before they can get a bed. At the Saskatoon City Hospital this morning, there were eight people waiting for beds. At St. Paul's there were 29 people waiting for beds. And all across our hospitals in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, the total number was 79 people waiting for beds.

How is this acceptable to the Health minister? How about an emergency session on our emergency departments, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has detailed some of the actions that have been taken already and will be taken in the future to continue to help build capacity, Mr. Speaker, in our hospitals across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I can also inform the House that the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] is taking a number of steps to improve operations and improve patient flow to make sure that we have capacity for these patients that are coming into our emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker. For example staffing a cardiac short-stay to care for five patients, and three patients in the post-anaesthetic care unit at RUH; operating some additional flex beds at RUH as well to care for patients waiting for an in-patient bed; utilizing some surge beds at St. Paul's Hospital as well; and working to do what we can to help build that capacity, improve patient flow so there's room there in the hospitals for patients when they need it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — But you don't have capacity in the hospitals, Mr. Speaker. They've messed this up.

These numbers are from the government's own dashboard, and they show just how badly the Sask Party is mismanaging our health care system. At RUH there are 410 beds for patients. Earlier this morning there were 451 patients admitted. That means that the hospital was 41 people over capacity, with nowhere for patients to go.

Instead of sowing division and doing what a judge described as "irreparable harm" to our young people, why doesn't the Sask

Party focus on fixing the crisis in our hospitals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To begin with I want to express my thanks, my gratitude to the health care teams right across this province — in Saskatoon, in Regina, in our rural and remote communities as well — who are working very hard to provide this health care to people right across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other steps that we are taking in addition to what's been detailed already, and more work continues to be done. Speaking with the SHA on a regular basis, as well as the leadership within the Ministry of Health as well to find additional options that we can have and implement to help reduce these waiting times, to make sure there's capacity in our hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, we're utilizing regional centres when possible to have patients moving out of our major tertiary centres when we can. Utilizing just-in-time transfers, Mr. Speaker, scheduling the transition of stable patients at a time when the receiving hospitals have the ability to take that capacity. Building new urgent care centres here in Regina and also in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, so that we have other avenues as well for people to be able to access care in our major centres.

[14:00]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, those health care workers are crying out for support, and your government is letting them down. This tired and out-of-touch government has completely lost focus on the things that matter most. The last Health minister talked a good game about addressing alternate-level-of-care patients but hasn't delivered any results. These are patients in one part of the hospital who need to move to another type of bed, like seniors waiting for long-term care. In RUH alone there were 88 of these ALC [alternative level of care] patients this morning waiting for beds and to get the right level of care.

Why isn't the minister doing more to get these patients into the beds they need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said previously, work is being done to increase and improve that flow of ALC patients in our hospitals to make sure that we can find a bed for them as quickly as we can, Mr. Speaker, and thereby increasing capacity in these hospitals to take in new patients.

Mr. Speaker, there has been work done to reduce the number of ALC patients in hospitals, improving workflows throughout the health care system, developing standards of care for treating and providing community resources to non-critical patients other than just calling EMS [emergency medical services].

And, Mr. Speaker, we are very grateful to our EMS providers, paramedics as well as STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service], for all the excellent work that they do helping provide

this care to people across this province and also supporting our hospitals right across Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Eastview

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the failures in hospital care aren't just limited to Saskatoon. The impacts are felt all across rural Saskatchewan as well. In Canora local people had their ER shut down because of short-staffing on September 29th. They were redirected to places like Kamsack and Yorkton, which have had no shortage of their own closures under this government.

What does this tired and out-of-touch government have to say to people in Canora who are forced to go without ER services because this government isn't focused on the things that matter?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This gives me the opportunity again to talk about our four-point action plan for health care to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers. And we're having some very good success.

We do still have some challenges, Mr. Speaker, but we are having success across this province, in communities like Biggar, like Canora. We've hired two RNs [registered nurse] in Canora and additional emergency medical services staff helping to stabilize resources there. Kamsack, three RNs, one licensed practical nurse in that community. Work being done in places like Lanigan, for example, Mr. Speaker, where in the media today they're reporting that the emergency services at Lanigan Hospital will be available seven days a week starting on October 22nd. The mayor of Lanigan says, and I quote, "It is really good news for Lanigan and our residents, and we're really happy to hear how things are going."

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

Mr. Love: — Well we've now got a trend of rookie ministers being sat down by their colleagues over there. Mr. Speaker, the list of ERs shut down under this government's watch is long, and it's growing. At the Galloway Health Centre the ER was closed overnight on three different days in October because there weren't enough staff. That means that patients have to hold off until the morning if they're planning on getting sick or injured. It's just ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. Or maybe they have to make the trip to other centres like Estevan, Arcola, or Redvers for care. It's just not acceptable.

When will we see this government act with the urgency required on rural health care that they're applying to the notwithstanding clause?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my friend for the question. I appreciate the opportunity to continue to highlight the work that's being done under our health human resources action plan.

Health human resources continues to be a priority for our government, Mr. Speaker. We have a four-point plan that is recruiting, training, incentivizing, and retaining more than 1,000 health care workers over the next few years, and that's supported by more than a million dollars of government-wide investment. Those investments include \$1.8 million for the rural physician incentive program to support physician recruitment and retention, recently expanded to \$200,000 for a five-year return of service; \$1.3 million to hire up to 12 physician assistants in Saskatchewan's health system for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — I'm glad to hear that minister read familiar lines, but here's a news flash to that new minister: the next centre looking at closure under this tired and out-of-touch government's watch is the Biggar & District Health Centre — on-again, off-again coverage on four different days throughout October. A community that's known well the impacts of closures because it's been going on there for years, Mr. Speaker, years of closures under this government.

This government should be laser focused on fixing the staffing crisis in health care, but they've been distracted by the member from Sask Rivers. Instead of working on solutions, they're sowing divisions.

They have a plan for pronouns. When will we see a plan to keep the ER open in Biggar?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps my friend wasn't listening when I just referenced the plan that we've implemented some time ago. The first pillar of that plan, Mr. Speaker, is to recruit, and that is to address the shortages that we know exist in the system.

The recruitment has included 430 job offers made to Filipino health care workers, including RNs, continuing care assistants, and medical lab assistants, Mr. Speaker. Nineteen CCAs [continuing care assistant] and two medical laboratory assistants have arrived and are working in communities in Saskatchewan. We also have 411 RNs with conditional offers that are now moving through the pathway which includes language and bridging education, and licensing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Negotiations with Teachers' Union and Support for Education

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation announced today that they've reached an impasse with this government. In Moose Jaw on Saturday, teachers held the first of four rallies calling on the government to provide adequate funding and support for publicly funded schools. Unfortunately the minister, who should be working with them to fund our schools, is here sowing division.

When will the minister stop playing the worst kind of politics, do his job, and negotiate a fair deal for teachers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me set the record straight. It was the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation that walked away from the table last Friday. Mr. Speaker, personally myself I've said to Ms. Becotte with the STF that we will bargain any day of the week. Because, Mr. Speaker, we want a deal to get done. We want a deal to get done for our teachers. And we would encourage teachers to encourage their bargaining teams to direct their union leadership to come back to the table and let's try and work on a deal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, maybe that minister will have more insight when parents and teachers rally in front of his office on November 4th.

Mr. Speaker, the minister had a hard time keeping his numbers straight last week. He wasn't clear if he had received tens of thousands of emails; maybe it was thousands of emails; maybe it was a few hundred; or maybe it was just seven. But teachers know the numbers they're facing when it comes to dollars and cents. They want a deal that keeps up with the cost of living. When will the minister get to the table and negotiate a fair deal with teachers that keeps up with the cost of living?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of that member opposite and for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and all teachers all across the province, Mr. Speaker, you know, our government is at the table. We are at the table. We're at the table ready to make a deal happen.

When it comes to investing in education, Mr. Speaker, let me provide some numbers to that member opposite. Our \$40 million investment to address increases in enrolment and classroom size and complexity — \$20 million dedicated directly for that classroom complexity — it's resulted in 266 additional positions across all 27 school divisions.

When you talk about classroom supports to help students in all of our schools across the province, Mr. Speaker, that's real investment by this government that's improving life for our students and teachers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — I suggest that minister check his numbers again before he stands up. Any way you slice it, the Sask Party government is failing to invest in education. That minister's own numbers, his own numbers show that there are fewer teachers and fewer supports last year even though there were more than 3,800 students added in Saskatchewan — more kids, fewer supports.

These cuts are hurting students and they're hurting teachers, and

they're a key reason why teachers are bargaining for better supports for the students that they serve in this province so well each and every day.

Why won't the minister stop with the cuts, negotiate a deal that supports students and teachers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, as I've now indicated a couple times for that member opposite, government is at the table. We're ready to make a deal happen. We're ready to bargain in good faith, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, again let me remind the member opposite. The \$20 million investment we made in classroom composition and complexity, Mr. Speaker, that's resulted in 266 positions across 27 school divisions, including 119 teachers specifically in that envelope.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to investing in education, this year's budget, over \$2.1 billion. And again I will stand behind this government's record on education investment any day of the week. I think about infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, \$2.4 billion invested in education infrastructure since 2007. That's completely opposite to the record of those members opposite.

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

Mr. Love: — I promise that minister I'll be here every day of the week to fight back against that government's record of cuts. I'll be here for it.

Mr. Speaker, we're in a cost-of-living crisis. People are choosing between keeping the lights on and putting food on the table, yet this summer, this government chose to spend tax dollars putting up billboards across this province misrepresenting how well teachers are paid in Saskatchewan. He's taking taxpayer dollars from teachers in order to run a propaganda campaign against them all across the province. Why is the minister choosing to play dirty politics at every turn instead of making sure that teachers can afford to live in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. We're not going to bargain a deal on the floor of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

But the government-trustee bargaining committee, Mr. Speaker, we have put forward what we believe is a fair deal for teachers — a 7 per cent increase over three years. Mr. Speaker, what we communicated to the public this year is that teachers in this province are compensated comparably to teachers across Western Canada. Nearly 70 per cent of teachers are compensated at that \$92,000-a-year mark or higher than that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again when it comes to the record of this government on education, I will stand by what we've invested in education. Three weeks ago or so, the Premier and I, we were at a school opening in the Leader of the Opposition's constituency, Mr. Speaker, a \$44 million project. The NDP's record — they

closed her hometown school. Thank you.

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

Suicide Prevention and Provision of Mental Health and Addictions Services

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, last week we were joined by Sarah Mackenzie. Her child, Bee, died by suicide. Sarah did her best to keep Bee alive but the supports that Bee needed in the school system and the health care system just weren't there. More urgent action is needed from this government. What is the plan to address the issue of youth suicide in this province? And what specific measures is this government going to put in place to protect the lives of gender-diverse kids like Bee who are already at an increased risk of suicide?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And let me begin by expressing my condolences to the family. Every loss of life due to a suicide is a tragedy.

Our government is making investments in this area, Mr. Speaker. As I had referenced earlier, we have a plan in place. There's more than \$518 million for mental health and addictions services in place in this year's budget alone, Mr. Speaker. That includes work that's being done in the mental health capacity building in schools, which we expanded in this year's budget to a total of 10 schools across the province, including communities like Balgonie, La Ronge, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Sandy Bay, Weyburn, and Yorkton, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Our new action plan for mental health and addictions that I also referenced earlier will be expanding that initiative to five additional schools in the next budget year with the goal of expanding to at least one school in all school divisions over the next five years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, we know where this government stands. They've cut school counsellors, and their new mental health and addictions plan is a pittance of the former plan that existed 10 years ago. I don't know if the minister has had a chance to look at it, but 76 pages, Mr. Speaker, as compared to the plan they put out recently without a notion of the previous recommendations that were put in that. Shame, Mr. Speaker.

Sarah came to the legislature because she doesn't want another child to die by suicide. She wants concrete actions from this government. She outlined all of the steps that could happen.

What is the plan to make sure that another gender-diverse kid does not die by suicide under their watch, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the plans that I've previously referenced, our government has also introduced the Pillars for Life plan, which addresses this issue directly, Mr. Speaker. The new mental health and addictions action plan, as I said, does expand mental health capacity building in schools for our children and youth. It also moves to a recovery-oriented system with care for addictions, which are often tied to mental health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

NOTICE OF CLOSURE

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, I give notice pursuant to rule 68(1) that at the next sitting of the Assembly when the order of the day is called for resuming consideration of the government motion for the sessional order revision, I will move that consideration of the said motion be not further postponed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Extension of Sitting Hours

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise again and enter into the debate on this government motion in furthering the comments that I had made last Thursday, which I had the opportunity to lay out most of our case in terms of the concerns that we have about the rule changes that government is presenting.

Once again I want to reiterate to members opposite how truly unprecedented the route is that they've taken to pass this bill. I think it sets a very dangerous precedent for future deliberations on legislation, Mr. Speaker. Not only did they call a special sitting — as we had talked about last week, very rarely have special sittings ever been called in this House; typically it's done during wartime or in instances of economic crisis; we had the one during COVID by consent of both sides — but they're also doing it through changing the rules, Mr. Speaker.

As I had said last week, the rules don't actually need to be changed in any way for the government to push through the bill that they're so desperate to get through as quickly as possible. But in changing the rules as they've presented them, Mr. Speaker, it's going to allow for a significantly less amount of time for public scrutiny on this legislation, for stakeholder, expert, and citizen feedback, Mr. Speaker, something that at least we believe on this side of the House is very important to democracy and the functioning of our government. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if members opposite truly understand what this will

mean and what this will mean for potentially how this building operates in the future. Like I said last week, it's not just the bill that we don't agree with, but this process is something we very much don't agree with as well.

And perhaps you may disagree with us on whether or not the bill is appropriate, but surely, surely, Mr. Speaker, we should all be in agreement that this process, this process that this government has chosen to ram through this legislation is improper and, I would argue, undemocratic, Mr. Speaker.

They've still given us no explanation why this bill is needed to be passed as quickly as they've deemed it necessary to pass. Mr. Speaker, there is no reason why, like I said last week, this bill couldn't have been introduced in the fall sitting for passage in the following spring, Mr. Speaker, like nearly all other pieces of legislation follow. We believe that's a very important process that we have established in this legislature. It allows ample time for feedback, for consultation, and for perhaps changes to legislation.

They have not given a logical explanation as to why this bill needed to be introduced during a special sitting and why it needs to be passed within the course of a few days, Mr. Speaker. Except, like I said, except, unless their goal is to have as few public eyes on this piece of legislation as possible, or there's some sort of partisan political gain to be made here by having this legislation pass as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, these institutions should matter. They're important. Democracy matters. Citizen input matters, Mr. Speaker. These processes should matter. They matter to us, and I would have hoped that it mattered to members opposite as well. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why we don't support these rule changes.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet as Deputy House Leader to pick up where my much more able colleague left off. I live in the shadow of her, there's no doubt, as Deputy House Leader. We all do, Mr. Speaker. I'm just teasing her but she has been a tremendous leader of this team as we navigate these new waters thrust on us by this Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

She's been very cool-headed and of course very laser focused in her comments, and I will try to be the same, Mr. Speaker, as I speak to this motion, this unprecedented motion where we see the Sask Party government not only intent on ramming through a piece of legislation that would violate, most likely, the rights of children in Saskatchewan, but one that contains the notwithstanding clause, on the heels of a decision from the Court of King's Bench asking, compelling that this policy be put on pause so that more time could be taken to look at it because it quite possibly violates Charter rights and if pursued, could cause irreparable harm to young people in this province.

So on that note, while it's a pleasure to be part of this team, I take no pleasure at all speaking to this motion, Mr. Speaker, debating a motion that to that end would turn the rules of this legislature on their head, so to speak. Rules that would require us to sit for seven compacted days between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. without breaks

to eat a meal, to take a call from a constituent, to check in with a stakeholder — the things that we would often have time to do when assessing a new piece of legislation, particularly one as impactful as this new bill, Mr. Speaker.

Abbreviated days, Mr. Speaker, many of which this government is hoping will not provide for statements by members, will not provide time for question period, for ministerial statements, no introduction of new bills. And I bet you, Mr. Speaker, that not a single one of them on that side will actually speak to this bill. Interesting, Mr. Speaker.

This is a motion that proposes to change the rules so that notwithstanding — this is subsection (4) of this motion — notwithstanding rule 61 there will be no leave granted to move new motions. Notwithstanding the rules of this legislature, the government is not required to give any notice for further readings of its bill. Notwithstanding the rules of this legislature, the government does not have to give leave for second reading. Notwithstanding. Notwithstanding. Notwithstanding. And this is to ram through a piece of legislation that contains the notwithstanding clause, Mr. Speaker.

What is the message here? The message is pretty clear, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding the Charter, notwithstanding the rules of this legislature, this government is going to do whatever the heck it wants. That's the message, Mr. Speaker. This government is going to do whatever it takes to address the political erosion of support for the Sask Party. That's what this is about, Mr. Speaker.

And I have to give them some credit. I have to give them some credit, Mr. Speaker. Despite being an old, tired, out-of-touch government, they still have that element of surprise. I have to give them credit for that, Mr. Speaker. They have the capacity to surprise. Because I never thought, I never imagined that I would have to stand here and speak to a piece of legislation drafted in a hurry — you can tell it's been drafted in a hurry, Mr. Speaker, but I'll talk about that when I get a chance to give substantive comments about this piece of legislation — introduced in the legislature, a piece of legislation that a judge has said, whoa guys, whoa, hold on. We need to take some time. We need to look at this more carefully. We need to see how this will impact kids. And if we don't take that time, someone might get hurt. That's what the decision says: hold on; press pause; someone might get hurt.

I never thought I would be here in this situation in response to that ruling, speaking to a bill that this government is going to ram through anyways. Not only are we going to be in that situation shortly here, Mr. Speaker, we are now in a situation where we're debating a motion that suspends the usual proceedings of this House of democracy so they can do it the way they want, as quickly as they want. They can't even wait a week, Mr. Speaker. They can't point to a single parent that has called them up and said, "I'm angry. My child changed their name, changed their pronoun, and the school went along with it. And they didn't talk to me. They didn't consult me. I wasn't involved." They can't point to a single parent in that situation, Mr. Speaker.

But we're calling an emergency sitting to debate this legislation, after a judge has said, whoa, press pause; someone could get hurt. And we're debating a motion to change the procedural rules in this House so they can do it? This is madness, Mr. Speaker. This

is absolute madness. And it's no wonder that there are a few of them on that side that can't even look us in the eyes. And I know which ones they are. I know which ones they are who are struggling with this. And I wish they would stand up and say something to their colleagues.

I wish that the two former ministers of Justice, practising lawyers, pillars of the legal community — men I don't agree with but who I respect — would stand up and say to the Premier, we're not okay with you taking a page out of Donald Trump's handbook and talking about judicial overreach. We're not okay with that. We're not okay with you vilifying not just this individual judge who approached this issue with extreme caution and cool-headedness and stuck to the evidentiary record.

[14:30]

Not only are we not okay with that, we're not okay with the implication of that. And the implication of that is to cast question and doubt on the entire judicial institution which is one of the foundational tenets of our democracy.

I wish they would do that, Mr. Speaker. And there's still time. There's still time for them to do that, Mr. Speaker.

I will speak at length about what I think about this policy, Mr. Speaker, when the time comes. But this government, this government should know, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province can only be pushed so far. They can only be pushed so far. A lot of people out there, regardless of how they feel about this bill or pronouns or parental rights or parental inclusion, they are thinking to themselves, well boy this seems rather extreme; aren't they going a bit far?

If the basic human rights, and the ones that are being pled under this action are equality under the law; non-discrimination based on age or gender; and section 7, the right to be safe and secure, the right to be safe and secure . . . If those rights aren't sacred to this government, if those rights in their eyes should not be protected at all costs, respected at all costs, particularly when it comes to children and youth, no one's rights in the eyes of this government — I will submit — are safe, Mr. Speaker.

And it begs the question, not just for this opposition but for the people out there, for every citizen of this province. Working people who have a right to a say in the conditions of their work. Women who have a right to choose, Mr. Speaker. People of faith who have a right to follow their own conscience and their faith and their beliefs. The accused who have a right to the presumption of innocence in a fair trial, Mr. Speaker. The right of the elderly to have access to health care as they age. The voting public who have a right to participate in their democracy. Everyone and anyone in this province who, up until now, perhaps took those rights for granted, perhaps didn't give them any more thought than the air that they breathe. Well they're thinking, Mr. Speaker, who are they coming for next? Who are they coming for next?

It's not enough for this government to pass legislation that will cause harm, that may violate Charter rights. They are ramming them through by turning the rules of this House on their head. And it's shameful, Mr. Speaker. It's shameful.

And I know that my colleague, the House Leader, the member for Regina Douglas Park, touched on this. But it sure does bear reiterating, Mr. Speaker, all of the many things that this government has not called an emergency sitting to address, Mr. Speaker, at this time in this province, given the way that people are struggling right now.

They have not recalled the legislature, Mr. Speaker, to address a generational cost-of-living crisis. A generational cost-of-living crisis, Mr. Speaker. Everyone is feeling the squeeze. And for the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, for working people, for those who are in the very unfortunate position of being considered by their provincial government to be deserving of the lowest minimum wage in the country, they can't make ends meet. They can't pay their bills.

And I'm not talking about shaving off the fat, forgoing those extras, not eating out. I'm talking about they cannot pay their bills. They can't pay their grocery bills. They can't pay their utility bills. They can't pay their mortgage. And that's why we see that Saskatchewan has the highest rates of mortgage default in the country. That's why we see that the neighbourhoods, that in the most recent opportunity for the Saskatchewan public to give this government some feedback . . . and they did give their feedback. They did give their feedback. They elected Saskatchewan New Democrats when they were previously represented by the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. Those are working-class neighbourhoods where reliance on the food bank is some of the highest. That's the reality for people right now, Mr. Speaker.

It's heartbreaking to knock on doors and talk to people who are working multiple jobs. Seniors who have to go back to work — they have to work minimum-wage jobs sometimes because they're on fixed incomes and they can't make ends meet. Parents who don't have the time, enough time, with their kids. They're not able to watch them grow up in the way that they'd want to. It's heartbreaking, Mr. Speaker. And we don't see them getting any airtime, any lip service, any action from this government. And certainly they are not getting an emergency legislative session to enact legislation to address their plight. Certainly not, Mr. Speaker.

Instead we have a government that has piled on with 32 new taxes and fee hikes. Regressive taxes, Mr. Speaker. Taxes where no matter how much you have, you pay the same. That's a regressive tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Taxes on things like Rider games at a time when people were coming out of a pandemic and they just wanted to have some fun and get together in a community. We're going to put a tax on that, Mr. Speaker.

We haven't seen an emergency legislative sitting, a recall of the legislature to address the housing crisis, Mr. Speaker, the homelessness crisis, Mr. Speaker, the absolutely mind-boggling waste that is taking place at the Sask Housing Corporation with one in four units sitting empty in this city as homelessness skyrockets, Mr. Speaker. We haven't seen them recall the legislature to address that. It doesn't matter if this issue touches you directly. Everyone can see it. It is visible to everyone.

And people are concerned about it, Mr. Speaker. People are so concerned about it that this government recently made an announcement announcing a new approach to homelessness, Mr. Speaker. And I've looked at this new approach to homelessness,

Mr. Speaker: 150 supportive housing units over a few years between Regina and Saskatoon; 120 shelter spaces, 120 divided between Regina, Saskatoon, P.A. [Prince Albert], and Moose Jaw; and two complex-needs shelters where people can stay a maximum of 24 hours. A maximum of 24 hours, Mr. Speaker. This is not a new approach to homelessness.

And I have tried to find positive things to say about this announcement, Mr. Speaker. But not only does this not signal any new approach to homelessness, no addressing of the SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program that is a master class in what not to do when dealing with homelessness and poverty and housing, Mr. Speaker. It's a master class in what not to do. And everyone believes it, and everyone is saying it, louder and louder. But it doesn't matter. They will not divert from the course. They are continuing with the SIS program. Nothing in this announcement about the SIS program.

Nothing in this announcement about the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program that hasn't seen an increase in nearly a decade. Mr. Speaker, you have people living with permanent disabilities who cannot access work, through no fault of their own, living well below the poverty line under their watch, Mr. Speaker.

This is not a new approach to homelessness. It's not even an approach that will chip away at these issues. This is more of the same, and it's just not enough. It's just not enough. Look at the PIT [point-in-time] counts. Look at the PIT counts for Regina, for Saskatoon. I mean, this might work if these were the numbers just for Regina or just for Saskatoon. Maybe, maybe you'd have a fighting chance at starting to address the problem. No emergency session to address that, Mr. Speaker. We have a mental health, we have a poverty, we have an addiction crises that are interacting with this homelessness issue, Mr. Speaker. And we see no action on those fronts.

And then, Mr. Speaker, as part of this emergency legislative session, it's not enough again for this government to ram through this bill. They have to do it by subverting the rules of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

We're seeing no legislative session called on an emergency basis to deal with the one in four children who go hungry in our province. That is well above the national average, Mr. Speaker. That is well above the national average. And this is a government that continues to condemn those children to a second-class existence, Mr. Speaker. By their fifth birthday, they will not have a fighting chance. That's what the data shows us. That's the data that they know.

And this will cost so much, Mr. Speaker, not only in terms of the human toll, not only in terms of the families, the parents who, I can tell you, they struggle with parental inclusion when they can't even put food on the table, Mr. Speaker. But they will struggle, they will struggle to thrive, Mr. Speaker. They will struggle to do well in school, Mr. Speaker. They will struggle to find a good job. They will struggle to stay out of trouble, Mr. Speaker. That's what this government is condemning these children to, one in four children. There is no excuse for that in a province as wealthy as ours. There is no excuse for that, Mr. Speaker. And I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that that is an issue worthy of some emergency action. But we don't see this

government recalling the legislature on an emergency basis to address that.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, there is no end to emergent situations that are facing the people of Saskatchewan, urgent situations in need of action from this government. And unfortunately we're not seeing the action that we need.

Take the health care crisis for example, Mr. Speaker, questions that dominated our question period today around the closure of facilities, around people in ERs not able to access beds. This is now the new normal in Saskatchewan. We've fallen to the bottom of the list on so many of those litmus tests for how we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

And instead, we have before us a motion to amend the rules of this House so that this government can ram through a piece of legislation to address an issue where they can't actually identify a single person that has been affected by this and bring them forward and say, yes, this is an issue I've experienced; this is an issue in need of urgent action, Mr. Speaker.

The crisis in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. Just today, we have teachers at impasse with this government — teachers who went to the table in good faith, trying to negotiate a contract so they can support our kids in the classroom, so they can be available to parents, so they have the resources to include parents as much as they can. They've come to the table to try to bargain a fair contract. And just today they've said we're at an impasse, Mr. Speaker. But we don't see an emergency legislative session to address the crisis in our classrooms. We just see billboards that vilify teachers, that are inaccurate, Mr. Speaker, instead of getting to the table with teachers and coming to a fair contract that will support the students in our classrooms and support teachers who are dealing with more and more intensive needs, Mr. Speaker, more and more students who speak English as an additional language, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen in Saskatchewan — Saskatchewan, which used to lead the country in per-student funding; we used to lead the country in per-student funding — we're now ninth, Mr. Speaker. But that's not all. Saskatchewan, with this last budget, experienced the largest decline in per-student funding of all provinces. It's just another example of a last-place trophy that Saskatchewan has earned under the Sask Party government which undermines the institutions that have historically brought so much pride to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

A 7.7 per cent reduction in per-student funding. It is wild, Mr. Speaker, to hear the members opposite find their feet and celebrate increased enrolments in our schools, Mr. Speaker. Yes, our schools' enrolment is up 5.3 per cent, and instead of providing the resources that teachers and staff need to support those students, they respond by reducing that per-student funding by 7.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

But we don't see an emergency sitting to address that. We don't see a motion to address the rules so that we can urgently support teachers in the classroom so that our students get a good start in life. We don't see that, Mr. Speaker.

I'll submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that we're seeing something of a new face to this Sask Party government. I think there were probably signs of it before, Mr. Speaker, but we are seeing with increasing blatancy and brazenness steps that really undermine the very foundation of our democracy. And I don't say that lightly, Mr. Speaker. Because what we're seeing here with these rules, with this bill, with the tenor that this government is taking, something that is unprecedented in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't know if it's a lesson in groupthink or if it's just survive at all costs. I don't know what's going on over there, Mr. Speaker, but it's very distressing to see that none of the members opposite will stand up to this, will say boo, Mr. Speaker.

And as someone again, Mr. Speaker, as someone who practised law before I became a legislator, and as someone who believes very strongly in the checks and balances that courts can put on government, there's a reason I never worked for government, Mr. Speaker, when I was a lawyer. I always did defence or constitutional law because I felt very strongly that courts provide a powerful check on governments. Because we live in a democracy. And yes, you have the majority and yes, more people voted for you than us. But the reason we have three branches of government, the reason we have a separation of power, the reason we have constitutional limits is so that you can't just do whatever you want. But this is a government that thinks it can do whatever it wants.

There are three aspects to a functioning democracy, Mr. Speaker. And I kind of feel kind of compelled to support my statement that this is a government that is undermining our democracy. So much so, that I'm going to go through the three levels of that government and talk about the ways in which this government is actively taking steps to undermine all three.

We see a concerning pattern of behaviour from this government, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to start with the judicial branch, because as the member for Regina Douglas Park mentioned yesterday . . .

An Hon. Member: — Last week.

Ms. Conway: — Last week . . . oh gosh . . . Last week on Thursday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's tweet where he talked about judicial overreach, that is a direct replication of Trump-style tactics. We've seen it before from Donald Trump in the States, the exact-same words, "judicial overreach," Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to submit that that is a dangerous precedent to be set by this Premier. That is a dangerous precedent.

It's not just about undermining the result in this specific ruling. Mr. Speaker, it's not just an attack of this specific member of the judiciary. It is a comment that casts doubt and undermines the judicial institution, which we know is the only and a powerful check on government action, Mr. Speaker.

The will of the majority, that's . . . Many people think that democracy, it's just whoever the most people voted for, then they get to do what they want. That's actually not what our democracy is. We actually don't have the will of the majority always. We don't allow the majority to pursue its ends at all costs, no matter what, Mr. Speaker. And that is our strength, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is our strength.

We have a separation of powers and we have constitutional limits like the Charter, like the Constitution, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They limit the powers of the government. They limit what you can do, for good reason: when it would violate rights, for example; when it's something — and the Premier seems to know a lot about this — that is actually within the jurisdiction of another level of government. The strength of our democracy is that a government can't just do whatever it wants, even if it has a majority.

But this is a government content to use its majority to ram through a piece of legislation that again a judge has said, please press pause because someone's going to get hurt. And not only are they doing that, they are turning the rules of this legislature on its head to do it.

The executive branch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the branch that directs and oversees the day-to-day business of government, the civil service, we as an opposition have already shone a light, I'm going to submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on some of the concerning ways that this government has attacked and eroded aspects of the executive branch: the hush memos, the partisan appointments, a culture of fear that has developed under this government.

This government has a concerning pattern of behaviour of taking institutions that should be third party, that should be neutral, just getting in there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yes, we have a skilled and hard-working civil service that is plugging away in the best interests of Saskatchewan people; there is no question. But we also see that the upper echelons of our civil service is increasingly a welcoming place to former candidates of the Sask Party, former political staffers. I'm getting some quizzical looks. Raynelle Wilson. They just created a position out of thin air for Raynelle Wilson in the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Mr. Speaker. No prior health administration experience that I'm aware of, just a . . . This was before she moved over to being a Deputy Premier of course.

And I think this was around the time that Scott Livingstone wrote his resignation letter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a resignation letter that the Privacy Commissioner has said should be released to the public. A resignation letter requested through the freedom of information process by the media — also a very important institution in a democracy — but again this Sask Party government will not comply with the ruling of the Privacy Commissioner, an independent officer of the legislative branch of government.

I feel like I'm really going back to basics here, Mr. Speaker, but I feel like this crew could use a lesson in basic civics. The independent officer of this Legislative Assembly said that the public interest outweighs any privacy interest in that resignation letter and that the public should have eyes on that letter. They should know why the man that ushered us through one of the most difficult periods in Saskatchewan's health-related history stepped down. But they won't release it. And it's part of an undemocratic pattern of behaviour that we see time and time again from this Sask Party government.

And this motion brings us back, Mr. Speaker, to that legislative branch. I took this from the internet. The legislative arm consists of the Speaker, yourself, who is the Assembly's presiding officer, and the elected members who are served by the Clerk, the officers of the Legislative Assembly, and the employees of the legislative

service.

[15:00]

Here again, Mr. Speaker, we see the rules of this Legislative Assembly — where we have years of tradition, where we have certain procedures that we have all agreed for years, serve the democratic ends of this House, serve the need for scrutiny and accountability and transparency — suddenly those rules are being thrown out the window, Mr. Speaker. Again it's not enough for them to ram through this piece of legislation after a judge has said please press pause; we need to look at this more closely. Someone is going to get hurt. It's not enough for them to do that. They have to throw the rules of this legislature out the window as well, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, I know that my colleague . . . Actually, speaking of the independent officers of this Legislative Assembly, the Privacy Commissioner is one, Mr. Speaker. The Privacy Commissioner, who said the Sask Party government should release the resignation letter of Scott Livingstone. They should lift the veil on why this happened so the public can know. They've refused to do that. Unfortunately our freedom of information system has not been updated by these guys, so we can't compel them to do that.

But the other independent officer of this Legislative Assembly, and someone who does good work in service of children and youth across this province, is the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth.

The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth did a review of the Ministry of Education's pronoun policy. Now this was before the drafting of this bill, which we only received on Thursday. So this doesn't address the bill itself but it does address the policy, which was the policy that served as the model for this legislation, Mr. Speaker. And I want to read a few passages from that report.

The advocate begins by acknowledging that she:

respects that it is the prerogative of the Minister of Education to develop and implement policies in relation to educational services. However considering that recognition of gender identity is a human rights issue with significant impact on young people, it is notable that children and youth — and specifically transgender and gender-diverse children and youth — were not consulted, despite being the rights holders directly impacted. Nor was there consultation with school boards, entities representing teachers and other school staff, experts on gender diversity, or the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to the advocate's knowledge.

This is page 5 of the advocate's report, Mr. Speaker. So right there, we are to understand that in drafting this pronoun policy, not only did they not consult with the institutions that would have to oversee this policy — teachers, school boards. You'd think that might be valuable feedback, think that might be a good relationship to nurture if you're about to bring in a policy such as this.

Not only did they not, to her knowledge, consult with the

Saskatchewan Human Rights Commissioner, they didn't consult with any of the impacted rights holders. I wonder if that sounds familiar to the member from Saskatoon Centre, that failure to consult with rights holders. It's a concerning pattern of behaviour from this government.

Similarly we saw in the decision of Justice Megaw when he was going through the evidentiary record in terms of what kind of consultation and feedback led to this policy. The affidavit of Dr. Michael Walter, the assistant deputy minister with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education indicated that between June 2023 — this is paragraph 3 of his affidavit — indicated that between June and August 2023, the Minister of Education received 18 pieces of correspondence regarding the changes in New Brunswick's sexual orientation and gender identity policy. Each of these 18 letters expressed the constituent's support for the revisions, and indicated they were "in favour of creating a policy similar." Of the 18 letters received, seven writers identified themselves as parents of school-aged children.

So that is to our knowledge, the consultation and the feedback that they received in leading to this legislation that will fundamentally alter the way that this issue is dealt with in classrooms; legislation that they are ramming through in seven days; legislation that they are enacting, and they're doing it by suspending the rules of this House in the process, Mr. Speaker.

Sure we've heard the Education minister refer to tens of thousands of parents. But I hope that we've done a good job of breaking down why that number is highly suspect, Mr. Speaker. And that is why we see him when he takes his feet, every time he takes his feet, every time he scrums with media, it's a different story. Is it hundreds? Is it thousands? Is it tens of thousands? This is a policy in search of a problem. That's what it is, Mr. Speaker. And it is a distraction from beginning to end.

The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth goes on at the bottom of page 5 to point out that "since the release of the policy in Saskatchewan, the decision to require parental consent for the use of the preferred names and pronouns of children at school has been widely debated in the public discourse."

And then she goes on, Mr. Speaker, to review her intent behind doing this assessment, which is to independently assess — again we have that phrase, "independently assess" — as an officer of this Legislative Assembly whether the policy and the process through which it was developed respects and/or negatively impacts the rights of children and youth and to make recommendations for improvement where required.

Mr. Speaker, the Advocate for Children and Youth ultimately determines that this policy does just that. That the implied refusal — which, you know, now that we see this legislation, it's clear that this is the case — the "implied refusal to use the preferred first name and pronouns of a student age 16 in the absence of parental/guardian consent, without a determination of the student's capacity to consent for themselves, is a violation of their rights to gender identity and expression, contrary to law, and/or is improperly discriminatory."

And she makes two recommendations. Mr. Speaker, she makes two recommendations. And I think what was perhaps most powerful about reading this assessment of the policy, Mr.

Speaker, was what the advocate brought forward in terms of Saskatchewan-specific information and data. A lot has been said in the public discourse about the increased risk to youth in terms of their mental health and their overall well-being, the duress, as the Children's Advocate puts it, from not having one's gender identity and expression respected. It can lead to individuals experiencing adverse mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and suicidality.

But, Mr. Speaker, what was most striking to me reading this is the extent to which those numbers, which are very concerning across the board and across the country, are worst of all in the Prairie provinces and possibly here in Saskatchewan. Suicide is, as we know, the leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24 years. And we have a mental health and suicide crisis here in Saskatchewan. It is something that the member from Cumberland has been fighting for his entire tenure with honour and with dignity, and often his pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a crisis in Saskatchewan. We know from the mother, Sarah Mackenzie, who visited us last week that the stakes are real and the stakes are high. She lost her gender-nonconforming child to suicide, Mr. Speaker. The stakes are real and the stakes are high.

And if I read on in the advocate's report, this is a quote:

Saskatchewan often finds itself at the top of the list in this regard. Transgender and gender-diverse youth, however, are at even higher risk than the general population, being over seven times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers who identify with their assigned gender. A previous suicide attempt is one of the biggest risk factors.

Almost two-thirds of transgender and/or nonbinary youth surveyed across Canada reported having self-harmed — 64 per cent — and/or seriously considered suicide — 64 per cent — within the past year. In the Prairie provinces, i.e. Saskatchewan and Manitoba, 94 per cent of the transgender and nonbinary youth surveyed reported experiencing an emotional or mental health concern lasting at least 12 months.

The Prairie provinces had the highest rate of youth in Canada who changed schools or started homeschooling due to the lack of support for their gender at school. Data specific to Saskatchewan shows that, among all students in grades 7 to 12, 2SLGBTQ+ students felt the least supported and most isolated across the domains of family, friends, community, and school.

So, Mr. Speaker, putting all of this theatre aside — I'm just going to call it theatre because that's what it is — the stakes are real and the stakes are high. And I can tell you that what the Government of Saskatchewan is doing right now is already prompting conversations.

I spoke to the staff of the John Howard Society, who run Lulu's Lodge, Saskatchewan's only transitional house for LGBTQ2S+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, and two-spirit, plus] youth, many of whom go there because they are rejected by their own families. And they told me, already just because of the debate in households prompted by this legislation

they have youth reaching out to them saying, “I’m going to need a place to stay. It was on the news” — and this is verbatim what she told me — “It was on the news. It prompted a debate. My family called it slander and now they’ve told me that I need to find another place to live.”

It’s already happening and it’s going to keep happening. Do they even care, Mr. Speaker? The stakes are real and the stakes are high. And when the Minister of Education stands up and talks about how there’s ample mental health supports in classrooms, my God, Mr. Speaker, for anyone who has a child in the education system, for anyone who has a spouse or a family member or a friend working in that system, well they fell out of their chair, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

And again I’m going to quote from the advocate’s report where she touches on that question of, do we have mental health supports in place? She gives the government credit: “As indicated earlier, it is positive that the provincial policy . . .” This is page 23 under accessibility of professional supports:

As indicated earlier, it’s positive that the provincial policy requires the provision of support to students to have what a student may perceive to be a difficult conversation with their parent/guardian and/or to navigate a family dynamic that may not be supportive of their gender identity.

It is also positive that the policy explicitly states that this will not occur until the student is ready to do so. However the advocate is concerned that there are not sufficient professional supports available in schools to meet this additional demand.

The policy does not define what supports will be engaged. Rather the sample administrative procedure appended to the policy encourages school divisions to determine the composition of the support team . . .

Concerning pattern from this government. When things get hard, oh, it’s up to the school divisions to sort that out. Budget cuts? Oh, it’s the school divisions that are making those decisions, Mr. Speaker.

I’ll continue with my quote:

. . . based on the student’s individual needs and situations. While flexibility is needed as different students may have trusting relationships with different adults in a school, it is critical that whoever is supporting a young person be adequately trained and competent in navigating the complex issues that can often arise in these situations, as well as has sufficient time available to do so in a meaningful way.

The STF has been vocal about concerns with the increasing demands on teachers related to increasing class size and complexity.

And Mr. Speaker, I’m just going to reiterate that this is important because this is the legislation that they are seeking to ram through and doing it through amending the rules that we’re currently debating.

I’ll go back to the report:

The STF is concerned about class size and complexity. These circumstances raise questions as to whether teachers will be available to offer this support. Specifically in response to the release of this policy, the STF reported that the current staffing ratios in Saskatchewan average one counsellor to every 3,000 students, stating, “We don’t have supports for students who are already struggling, and now we’re going to have additional struggles in our school for some very vulnerable students.”

The advocate goes on:

This statement reaffirms the lack of sufficient counsellors and elders in schools as described by children and youth in the advocate’s 2022 report entitled *Desperately Waiting*. In 2022 the Government of Saskatchewan accepted our recommendation to the education and health sectors to jointly increase the presence of mental health supports in schools, however has updated our office that it will not begin working on implementation of this recommendation until 2026.

How about we call an emergency legislative sitting and amend the rules to address the lack of mental health supports in schools and to put into action the recommendation of the independent Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth who has called on this government to put more mental health supports in schools? Why don’t we do that, Mr. Speaker?

And the fact that we’re not, the fact that we’re not, I submit, speaks volumes and tells you everything you need to know about this government and their priorities.

So, Mr. Speaker, it kind of brings us back to, why? Why are they doing this? Why are they doing this, Mr. Speaker? Why are they ramming through a piece of legislation after a judge has said, hold on, we’re going to look at this more closely; to sit tight, and if you don’t press pause, I’m worried that someone is going to get hurt.

Why are they ramming through this piece of legislation after a judge has said that? And why are they amending the rules of this Legislative Assembly so they could do it more quickly with less scrutiny, with less accountability, with less transparency? Why, Mr. Speaker? What is their agenda?

No one has come forward. They can’t point to a single person that has come forward and said, “I’m mad, I’m mad as hell. My kid’s pronoun was changed. Their name was changed. I was left out of the discussion. I demand that you enact legislation so that this doesn’t happen to anyone else.”

No one has come forward. They can’t point to a single person, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health has said, no one’s contacted my office. The Premier on the radio: I can’t point to this specifically happening, but I know it’s really important and super urgent, and we definitely need to recall the legislature because it’s definitely an issue. Gut feeling, I guess.

Why? Why are they moving this motion, Mr. Speaker? Why? They are not concerned with governing. They are not concerned

with addressing the real challenges and issues of people out there. They are not concerned with making life easier, better, more equitable, less of a grind, Mr. Speaker. They are concerned about the erosion of support for their party from the far right. That is why they're moving this motion. That is why there's so much urgency. That is why they have to get us to come back here and sit between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. without even a break to have dinner. And sorry to harp on that. I like having dinner with my kids, Mr. Speaker. I will work hard but I really like to just get a break and go have dinner with my kids. But it's okay, it's okay. I guess this is so important that we can't even take a break to have dinner with our kids. Okay.

We can't have question period for three of the days. We can't move motions. I guess it's so important, Mr. Speaker. But again it begs the question, why? Why is this so important? Because they want to shore up the erosion of support for their party, exemplified by the historically low support they received in the Lumsden-Morse by-election in their cradle of support, Lumsden-Morse. That is what it is all about. They know that in a two-party system they have to avoid a split of the right, whatever the cost, whatever they need to do.

It doesn't matter if it means trampling on kids' rights. It doesn't mean if it means vilifying the judiciary. It doesn't mean if it requires them to change the rules of this House of democracy. They don't care, Mr. Speaker. They don't care. They will do whatever they need to do, whatever it takes.

So I will not be supporting this motion. I will not rubber-stamp this government's heavy-handed tactics, Mr. Speaker, to recall the legislature, to turn the rules of this sacred House on its head, ram through a piece of legislation in four days, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time not being able to point to a single example of why this is an emergency. Absolutely not. So with that, I will conclude my comments and I will not be supporting the government's motion.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take to my feet here today. I think it's been described very clearly by the member from Elphinstone-Centre and our House Leader, the member for Douglas Park, what a farce this is, Mr. Speaker. And we have a government that have really lost the plot, a tired and out-of-touch bunch that have lost the plot and that aren't pursuing ideological things though that are without impact, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess that's what, you know, is most concerning here, Mr. Speaker. If they were just pursuing, you know, their own political interests here and their ideology and its regressive set of politics, Mr. Speaker, and it didn't hurt anyone or impact anyone, well then, you know, people could simply size them up for what they are and weigh in democratically and accordingly in elections. Just like they did in the by-elections this summer that elected three new members to this Assembly — two incredibly fine members seated beside me, the new member for Walsh Acres, the new member for Coronation Park, Mr. Speaker.

And in those cases, folks in those communities had sized up the Sask Party for what they are, Mr. Speaker, and for their failings. And I can assure you, the folks through those constituencies, they

won't respond well to the kind of political stunts we see with this so-called emergency session, Mr. Speaker. What they would say, I think, is that this is more of the same, and in fact, a further tack to the right, and a regressive approach that alienates many, many solid, common-sense, middle-of-the-road folks in this province who just expect the government to tend to the basics, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I had a chat with a friend two days ago, Mr. Speaker, and you know, he's not an avid supporter of the party I represent. And he was moving grain with his dad on the weekend, Mr. Speaker, the farm near Ogema, Saskatchewan. And his older father was sharing with him as they were driving and they had the radio on, and some of the news of the day came on. And my buddy shares with me that his dad, who he describes as a conservative in rural Saskatchewan, said that he's just so sick and tired of this sort of nonsense. So sick and tired of the way this Premier is acting, Mr. Speaker, and that if governments could just focus on the basics, to stay out of the lives of families and the lives of kids and focus on the basics.

And when you think about the basics, Mr. Speaker, we've got a whole lot that should be focused on right now. And if this Premier, who's been failing people on so many fronts, really wanted to have an emergency session, Mr. Speaker, with urgent action, there are so many fronts that we should and could be acting on, described very well by my colleagues who have spoken before.

We could be acting around the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. We could be acting to fix health care, Mr. Speaker. We could be working to fix our broken mental health and addictions services that leave far too many in this province in darkness and despair at a time where they need hope and help. We could be acting to support our education system, one that's been eroded and attacked by that Sask Party government time and time again. It should be no wonder of course then, Mr. Speaker, why we saw hundreds and hundreds of people roll into the streets of Moose Jaw this weekend to fight back against this government's disrespect and failures in education.

They could have stepped up of course and made sure that the Regina Lutheran Home, which is a wonderful home for 63 seniors, Mr. Speaker, they could have been focusing on that. But instead, we see them focusing on this as their so-called emergency. And now they're pushing forward rules, rules that are going to ram forward this political stunt, Mr. Speaker, this bill that simply isn't a priority to Saskatchewan people, and making a mockery of the democratic process, Mr. Speaker, bringing forward rules now that will allow the government with a big majority to spend a whole bunch of time and money and resources in this, the people's legislature, to push forward this bill without accountability, without the transparency, without the engagement that the people, that the public deserve, Mr. Speaker.

And we see a government choosing at every turn these days this divisive political approach, importing, you know, politics from elsewhere — south of the border, Donald Trump, Florida — Mr. Speaker, and imposing it on the common-sense, caring people of Saskatchewan.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, this isn't our style in Saskatchewan. We've always looked out for one another. Humanity matters. Human rights matter, Mr. Speaker. And the approach we see from government is a serious departure from the realities of Saskatchewan people, the realities that people see and know and the needs that need to be advanced, Mr. Speaker.

As has been identified, Mr. Speaker, we see a government that wants to vilify the courts. Though, then on another day, Mr. Speaker, if they like a decision, then they want to elevate and amplify that. It's a reckless course of action, you know, to attack the judiciary with the kind of political stunts that we see, the Trumpian approach of this current Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

This wasn't what Saskatchewan people voted for in the last election, I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker. You know, this isn't what was laid out as part of the agenda that people had a choice on. You know, this is a real departure from what I think people were expecting from this Sask Party government. But I'll leave that to voters, as we roll into another democratic process, that being the next provincial election, Mr. Speaker.

What's clear though, Mr. Speaker, is that this Premier got pretty hot and bothered when he saw the results in Lumsden-Morse. And on that front, I want to welcome the new member from Lumsden-Morse. I know he's here to serve honourably and represent the people of his riding, and I'm sure he'll do all he can to do justice to that. I'd urge him to listen in at this time, Mr. Speaker, where we see a real departure and change by the party that he's representing. And I would urge him to see through the political stunts of his current government, Mr. Speaker, and instead to urge them to focus on the things that matter to Saskatchewan people.

But what we saw of course coming out of that by-election, Mr. Speaker, was a premier who, you know, was off to the races, following his north star, Mr. Speaker, his north star, Mr. Speaker, the member for Sask Rivers, the leader of the Sask United Party, Mr. Speaker. And you know, basically since that election, you know, she's basically toyed with that Premier, Mr. Speaker, and directed, you know, the agenda. The real boss, Mr. Speaker, for the current Sask Party sits, Mr. Speaker, to the northernmost seat on this side there, Mr. Speaker. Independent, yes, Mr. Speaker, but the government's north star, Mr. Speaker.

And so now you see these quick, urgent actions, Mr. Speaker. I guess there's a few on that side, probably the Government House Leader, that thought they had to act quick in a more right wing, regressive way to make sure they wouldn't lose some of the vote that they've taken for granted, Mr. Speaker. But that comes at a cost, Mr. Speaker, and it comes at a cost to all those other issues that people deserve action on, including our classrooms.

So to the new member from Lumsden-Morse, as I was saying, I do welcome him to the Assembly. I know he'll do all he can to serve in an honourable way, Mr. Speaker. And I'd urge him to see through some of the stunts that he sees from this current government, and to know — this is his first experience with this Chamber — this is unprecedented stuff, you know.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, we were supposed to be in this Assembly having some accountability and transparency with the Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker, having sessions of accountability

on government spending and debt and programs and government performance — a pretty critical function to the people of Saskatchewan, to a democracy, and to this government. But no. Of course, you know, this minister, the Government House Leader, and this Premier, Mr. Speaker, they weren't having any of that. It was all political stunts for them, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd urge this government to recognize the error in their ways, this ham-fisted, heavy-handed approach with our democratic process where they want to steamroll the fair involvement of Saskatchewan people in legislation that's brought to this floor, Mr. Speaker. And all for, you know, so-called political gains. Although I don't think it's working out for these guys of the Sask Party, because I think folks are seeing them for what they are, Mr. Speaker. And I know I hear from many that say, I didn't vote for that. They say, you know, I thought this government was going to be different than they are, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, I think of members, even like the long-serving Justice minister over there, Mr. Speaker, who has recently called for them to step back on this piece of legislation. And I'll quote here, Mr. Speaker. I quote, "What I urge them to do is take a step back, look at the policy, decide what's best for children and what's best for families," he said, Mr. Speaker.

You know, that member has served in this Assembly for a long time, served as Justice minister, served as Labour minister, served as Crown Investments Corporation minister, and many other portfolios. I would urge the members opposite to have a listen to the words of that outgoing member — I understand he's not going to be running again, Mr. Speaker — and to heed that advice, Mr. Speaker.

We know that others of course have weighed in right across the piece, really, condemning the actions of this government. We certainly see that through education. We see that on many other fronts. We see that with the legal profession, Mr. Speaker, condemning the vilification of the judiciary, Mr. Speaker. And a government that thinks that they can just override, Mr. Speaker, both the Charter and the Constitution and then override as well now *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's just not on, Mr. Speaker, for the people of Saskatchewan on front after front.

Murray Mandryk, Mr. Speaker, was very clear laying out sort of the concerns and the hopes that exist in this province with his recent column, "Government ramming through pronoun bill in bad faith." And really, that's what we are talking about here right now with these rule changes.

You know, it's a process. It's a lack of transparency. It's a lack of due diligence. Certainly it's a government that's lost their way and lost the plot, Mr. Speaker. But even if for those that see merit in this legislation . . . And you know, Mr. Speaker, there's a way to go about these things. And pulling the fire alarm and coming in for an emergency session that's going to cost untold money — I don't know what the total tab's going to be to do this, Mr. Speaker, but it ain't going to be cheap — and to push this forward as some sort of emergency, Mr. Speaker, is just so disingenuous, Mr. Speaker. We know that if this government wanted to pursue these changes in this bill, of course they could have done so with a regular sitting and the rules that exist, Mr. Speaker.

But again, you know, Mr. Speaker, this isn't about serving the people of Saskatchewan or the public's interest with this government anymore, Mr. Speaker. We see this serious departure. It's now the political stunts and these regressive actions, Mr. Speaker. It's about games for the other side. Not acting on cost of living, Mr. Speaker. Not acting to fix health care. Not ensuring that our classrooms have the funding and support that kids need and deserve, Mr. Speaker. Not making sure that people can afford a high quality of life here in Saskatchewan. Not making sure that seniors have the care they deserve, Mr. Speaker. Not making sure that people have housing supports or mental health and addictions services, Mr. Speaker. Those are all things that we could and should be acting on, Mr. Speaker. But instead it's the pronoun stunts of this government, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, they've been exposed on this front, Mr. Speaker, through the bit of debate that's gone on already, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that, you know, suggested that they had heard from some people on this front, Mr. Speaker. But you can't keep these stories straight, Mr. Speaker. You know, the . . . oh I guess it was, what, the Minister of Health was asked . . . I'd say, I'd like to say a pretty straight shooter over there, Mr. Speaker. Earnest, straightforward. He said, Mr. Speaker, that he had heard from zero parents, zero kids, zero teachers, zero folks in the public, Mr. Speaker. Zero. That was the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker.

Now we heard from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. He said that he had heard from zero folks, zero parents that had gone through the circumstance that he described. A so-called solution in want of a problem, Mr. Speaker. Zero. Zero from the Premier.

And then we get the new Minister of Education taking to his feet in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and making ridiculous claims all over the map without any ability to go out and share the numbers, Mr. Speaker, or to validate those numbers. He gets up in here and one day he says, tens of thousands of parents. That's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. I saw the members opposite — they wanted to climb under their desks because they knew this was such a ridiculous entry from the new minister, Mr. Speaker. You know, just keep the facts straight up when you're entering into debate, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we can debate his failures and their failures on education. We can debate, Mr. Speaker, things like the per-pupil funding, Mr. Speaker, that's gone from number one in the country to pretty much last place, Mr. Speaker. We could debate the fact that during just the last year where student population has gone up 3,800 students, that the number of teachers in our classrooms has gone down 66. We could debate the fact that we go back to 2018 and that we're down almost 200 teachers in a system that has over 8,000 or 6,000 more students from that period of time, Mr. Speaker.

Or we could go back to a decade ago and look at the student numbers, Mr. Speaker, and recognize that we had 20,000 fewer students but the same number of teachers. This is the math that I would urge the new Education minister to focus on, Mr. Speaker. Not, you know, pulling whatever numbers pop into his mind into debate, Mr. Speaker. Tens of thousands, thousands . . . Who knows, Mr. Speaker?

But I think in this case the Health minister was a lot more straightforward when he said he had heard from zero, or the Premier who said that there are in fact zero cases that he's aware of that would be reflective of the situation that he's identifying. Which is why it's strange, Mr. Speaker, for this government to be changing rules to override the democratic process here, Mr. Speaker. Of course they're overriding, as has been expressed, concerns around human rights, Mr. Speaker, around the Charter, pulling the emergency alarm before . . . Even if you support this bill.

You know, as I think Howard Leeson, constitutional expert, has described, even if a government was intent on this front, the notwithstanding clause is not meant to be used in this way, Mr. Speaker. They haven't exhausted the judicial, the legal processes, Mr. Speaker. And they're certainly failing, you know, to address the things that matter most to kids.

Now up for debate in this is someone's identity, in a way, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's what's so awful about all of this is that, you know, government's going about making changes. Premier says he hasn't heard of a single situation that fits into this. But it's casting question and sort of gaslighting the identity of a minority of a minority in Saskatchewan. And I think that's what's so awful about this, Mr. Speaker.

We know already that we have inadequate mental health and addiction supports regardless of what that new Education minister thinks when he describes that we have "ample supports," Mr. Speaker, which is ridiculous. But the reality is that for those that are gender and sexually diverse, the LGBT2QS community, Mr. Speaker, many of these young people are facing a lot of challenges. Even when you look at the homelessness reality that young people face, 40 per cent of those young people that are homeless are of the LGBT2SQ community, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

And so you have a government, Mr. Speaker, and members of a government, leaders of a government in pretty safe, privileged positions, Mr. Speaker, who are willing to gaslight the identity of young people, Mr. Speaker, and have their identity being debated in the public and bashed by some, Mr. Speaker. I think they've, you know, had enough of that through our lives, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's on. I don't think it's cool, Mr. Speaker.

And you've got young people that are, you know, working through who they are, how they fit into the world and, very tragically, Mr. Speaker, if they fit into the world. And we see that tragic reality play out all too often, Mr. Speaker. It was like the example of Sarah Mackenzie coming to this legislature to give voice for Bee, and the supports that were not there as Bee faced a time of horrible darkness and despair, Mr. Speaker. And Bee is not alone, Mr. Speaker. There are many young people across Saskatchewan in that similar, vulnerable situation.

And all we should ever be doing as a legislature is doing what we can to make things a little bit more safe for them, to let them know that they belong, and to let them know we want them to live out their lives here in this province and to live up to their full potential, Mr. Speaker. But instead, political stunts, regressive political stunts by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, and I hear a member say "dangerous," and I think that's the concern.

Justice Megaw laid out that the actions of this government could cause irreparable harm. The Children's Advocate has spoken out.

Folks are identifying that we're talking about people's safety, about kids' safety, about human rights. And we have a government that wants to override that and bring forward rules that short-circuit the process, Mr. Speaker, and to just steamroll ahead. Well this leader and this official opposition and the people of Saskatchewan and organizations and professions and communities across Saskatchewan simply won't let that happen, Mr. Speaker.

Having parents involved in education is where it's at. Having families involved in education is critical to good learning and outcomes, Mr. Speaker. That's what all teachers and educators and communities desire, Mr. Speaker. You know what doesn't help parental involvement or involvement of families, Mr. Speaker, is a government that has slashed funding for education, spiking the class size that one teacher is responsible for, Mr. Speaker. I look to some of the members that served as a . . . You know, I'm looking at a former teacher across the way right now, Mr. Speaker. When class size goes like this for a teacher, it becomes increasingly difficult for that teacher to maintain the relationships that they so desire, Mr. Speaker, or all the top-down attacks on the professional autonomy of teachers that we've seen from the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. It's a serious attack on parental involvement, Mr. Speaker, and the involvement of family.

So was the abolishment . . .

The Speaker: — I'd just like to remind the member that you need to speak to the motion once in a while. You will have an opportunity to speak to the bill later, I'm sure, so please bring the motion into your debate.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as we're highlighting, there are so many areas this government could be acting on. Instead they're changing rules to short-circuit the process on this bill, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't rise to the challenges that people face or the realities that families face; doesn't address the challenges our students face by way of class size or cuts of this government or the elimination of community schools or the scrapping of SchoolPlus, Mr. Speaker, the complexity in those classrooms. Those are all the things we should address.

Instead we have a government now steamrolling the democratic process with rules, Mr. Speaker, in a so-called emergency session, when there are so many other things that could be acted upon, Mr. Speaker. It's not democratic. It's not fair to the people of Saskatchewan. It makes a mockery of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. It's not what the people of Saskatchewan voted for. And when you're bringing forward a bill, Mr. Speaker, people deserve to be involved. That's why we have rules. We have a democratic process, you know.

And I know the members opposite struggle with math, Mr. Speaker. We've seen it with their finances year after year after year. We've seen it with management of projects and those costs, Mr. Speaker. We certainly see it with the new Education minister, Mr. Speaker, whose numbers are just all over the place, Mr. Speaker.

But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, they have more members than we do currently, Mr. Speaker. That's a reflection of the democratic choices of people in the last election and that's what constitutes this legislature.

But to the members opposite who have been struggling with math, well often, Mr. Speaker, they should know that they have the ability to advance legislation. And if this is their priority, Mr. Speaker, they have — to use the Minister of Education's words — ample opportunity to advance that bill through the regular process. They don't need to buy the nonsense coming from the Government House Leader, Mr. Speaker, that they need to override and short-circuit the legislature and light their pants on fire and pull the fire alarm and show up here like there's some sort of emergency, and then to have no answers for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and certainly no performance and delivery on the things that actually matter to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. So with that being said, Mr. Speaker, the way these guys are operating is farcical, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to fight for Saskatchewan people; to make life more affordable; to build the best classrooms possible, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that mental health and addictions supports are there when students and young people and all people need them, Mr. Speaker, in communities across Saskatchewan.

And we're going to fight to make sure that we keep, yes, those seniors in the Regina Lutheran Home in that home, and those workers working, Mr. Speaker, but that we have care and support for seniors all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. On front after front there are so many issues that this opposition is ready to deliver on as the next government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that's the approach that we'll be taking.

And in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, you bet we'll do justice to the fight for justice and for kids and for human rights in this province, Mr. Speaker. We won't let that government steamroll that process or change the rules. Obviously I'm not going to be supporting the motion from government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a tough couple of acts to follow being on my feet here, speaking to the motion before the Assembly. And it is an extraordinary time, and I always get nervous being on my feet and having *Hansard* out there, knowing that what I say is going to be on the record and I'm eminently self-conscious of that. And I think we all are and we all should be today during this special sitting of the legislature. Because this truly is an extraordinary circumstance, Mr. Speaker.

And in preparing for this . . . Because it's a terrible thing that's going on right now, Mr. Speaker. But all of us have important jobs to do here, Mr. Speaker. And in speaking to these unfortunately historic endeavours that the government has undertaken, it's I think incumbent on all of us to model what we've seen from my colleagues here today: to be thoughtful, to be considerate, to be open to other perspectives, and to uphold that which is most important to us, whether it's these institutions, whether it's the judiciary, whether it's the values of this province.

And we like to throw that term around in the legislature, out in press conferences, you know, talking to stakeholders: “from many peoples, strength.” And, Mr. Speaker, that’s a statement. That’s an embrace of diversity and that’s in my mind an understanding of what makes us strong and what the future of Saskatchewan can look like and a call to do better than we have historically.

And so in looking, Mr. Speaker, at this extraordinary session, this historic emergency session, when I look at all of the priorities of people in this province I keep coming back to the question: what is the problem that the government is trying to solve? What’s the urgency? At its most fundamental level, Mr. Speaker, what is the problem?

It can’t be an external problem, Mr. Speaker, and we’ve seen that. When pressed, the Premier couldn’t cite a single example of a situation in which a parent has been excluded from an important conversation with their child around sexual orientation, gender identity. Not a single example. So it can’t be an external concern, Mr. Speaker, you know, because again they’re claiming that the mental health concerns are addressed. The minister said there are ample mental health supports.

So when we’re looking at the government motion, Mr. Speaker, to change the rules, to move the legislature in an atypical fashion to address this concern, I keep coming back to this question of what is the problem that they’re trying to solve. And again, it can’t be external so it has to be internal, Mr. Speaker.

So I wonder, and not just me. There’s a lot of people out there wondering. There’s a lot of people who don’t typically pay a great deal of attention to the ins and outs of process or debate in this legislature and they’re wondering, like what is going on? Because, Mr. Speaker, there’s lots of examples of things that people would like this government, like any government to take seriously.

We don’t need to go far. We don’t need, you know, stakeholder tours. We have people who come here frequently during legislative sittings to bring their concerns to this Assembly because that is the only avenue that they have. There are many examples and yet here we are with no external examples.

So people out there, you know, there’s a lot of chatter. They’re wondering, there has to be internal reasons for this, Mr. Speaker. You know, is it about the member from Sask Rivers, as has been well canvassed, our northern neighbour? Is it about keeping that big caucus together, Mr. Speaker? Is it about appeasement? Is it caucus management? I don’t know, Mr. Speaker. These are questions.

Or is it about beliefs? Is it about a belief that by changing the process of the legislature in order to push this frankly bizarre but certainly uncalled-for legislation forward? Is this about beliefs? Is it about believing whether or not queer people exist? Is it about wondering or perhaps believing that trans kids don’t exist and perhaps they’re just confused? You know, we see it out there, Mr. Speaker, and the rhetoric is wild. Social media is a strange place. I actually don’t spend that much time there, despite chuckles from members opposite. I like to say, you know, Twitter is for your enemies and journalists. So self-select in there, Mr. Speaker.

But it’s bizarre. You can’t say anything about education these days without being called a pedophile or a groomer. It’s heated and quite frankly, that’s very strange, Mr. Speaker.

So again I go back to this question of what is the problem they’re trying to solve. Is it about beliefs? Because if there isn’t a belief, if you don’t believe that queer people exist or that trans kids exist and maybe this is some sort of, you know, misguided ideology out there perpetuated by, you know, these darn radical lefty teachers, then maybe this would make sense. You cast a chill over those children who may be questioning their gender identity, Mr. Speaker. And again, we’re talking about a minority of a minority of a vulnerable minority.

[16:00]

And to that, you know, I guess I would say if that is the case, if you believe that perhaps being queer or trans is a choice — or maybe it’s the sin that you’re born with but you’re choosing to live with that sin — I’d say, have the courage of your convictions. Come to the people of the province. Don’t do this kind of hocus-pocus legislative jiggery-pokery. Have the courage of your convictions. Come out and say it the same way that children, the small minority of trans children in the province, are trying to be their authentic selves.

And it’s not just me, Mr. Speaker. These are conversations happening across the province when people look at this process, when people look at this government motion. These are conversations happening in places you would not assume that they’re happening. And there is a real swell of questioning out there happening, not just from, you know, those darn lefty, pinko teachers that I mentioned, that these government members are happy to stand up and applaud on one hand but, you know, condemn and try and shame publicly with public dollars on the other.

There’s things like the Canadian Bar Association, Mr. Speaker, who are concerned about not just the substantive issue but also about the way in which this government has gone about it. Because again, Mr. Speaker, people don’t understand the urgency. And you know, while I’m very grateful that I’m not House Leader, Mr. Speaker — I’m ill-suited to really any House role — I also have to look at this and think, like gosh. If I was a House Leader trying to get my government’s agenda passed in as expeditious and efficient a way possible, this ain’t it. So again, Mr. Speaker, like what is the problem that we’re trying to solve?

And again I think — you know, Occam’s razor; people keep coming back to it — it’s about keeping that caucus together. I don’t know if it’s about looking at some of those contested nominations and hoping that maybe members opposite don’t come sit on . . . maybe not this side opposite, but this northern-side opposite, Mr. Speaker. I guess it’s my left flank, but maybe it’s a horseshoe that reaches all the way around.

Mr. Speaker, the motion itself is, like I said, quite bizarre and ultimately damaging, not just to people in this province but also to our province’s reputation, Mr. Speaker, because there are a number of priorities out there. Top of mind for everybody is obviously the cost-of-living crisis.

We’ve got the second-slowest wage growth in the province. We

have parents in education paying hundreds and hundreds of dollars in taxes and fees, in lunchroom supervision fees. And we have an economy that's stuttering. We see this. We see a little blip, a little volatility in potash prices and, oh boy, things get a lot more anxious for people in Saskatchewan, for the economy as it's been managed under this Premier, Mr. Speaker.

And what was the government's response to all of that? They went out and they held closed-door meetings, produced a document. I believe — I wish I had it here with me so I could read from it, but like I said, I'm ill-suited to any House role — but I believe it was called *Drawing the Line* and was condemned, I believe, as the worst piece of political writing in the history of Canada at any level of government from a locally elected school board on up. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? In producing that document, in doing these closed-door consultations around the province, they at least had some meetings, Mr. Speaker. They had some consultations. Even if the outcome was called insane and completely un-credible by economists, heck, they met with a couple people, I assume.

And today, in introducing this mess, this motion, and in pushing forward this priority for the government, we don't see any consultation. We don't see anything in regards to engaging with the sector. Again we've got the, I don't know, binders full of parents that the new Education minister is referencing, the tens of thousands of, maybe sevens of emails, which again were . . . Tens of thousands — that's quite a thing to say in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It's another thing to, you know, say out there in the rotunda or perhaps in an affidavit filing, but of course we don't see that, Mr. Speaker. We see seven parents, 18 emails, I believe.

And so again, like, what is the problem that they're trying to solve both with changing the rules, Mr. Speaker, and with this issue overall? And like again, most of the chattering classes out there really think this is an internal problem for this government to manage. But even if it is external, Mr. Speaker . . . So let's be generous. It's easy to see why you would want to distract from some of these external problems.

You know, we look at seniors. I've been taking calls from constituents, Mr. Speaker, with the closing of the Lutheran care home. A great operation, somewhere people felt proud and safe, and confident that they could send their parents, that they could send their loved one. Dozens of families questioning . . . People are being moved out right now and the calls that I'm receiving from constituents are that they don't know where their mom is going. Perhaps it's their mother — severe dementia, stage 4 care — and the message that they're getting is well, there's not a lot of beds out there. The wait-list for an urgent placement, an urgent placement into long-term care, Mr. Speaker, right now is six months.

So the message these families are getting is, sorry, maybe your mom's going to Broadview, maybe she's going to go languish in a hospital bed somewhere, Mr. Speaker. And that is a crisis. These are people who built this province, and again these are vulnerable people. But time and time again we see from this government, we see from that leadership, we see from that Premier that only certain people matter to this government. It's not vulnerable children and it's not vulnerable seniors who are now effectively homeless and their families are struggling and desperate for any kind of answer.

We look at the cost-of-living crisis, Mr. Speaker, and again this is something I can understand that the government would want to distract from. You know, my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre mentioned food bank use, which is something that we see skyrocketing, unfortunately, across the province, Mr. Speaker, not just in Regina.

But it takes me back when I think about this motion, when I think about all of the machinery of government and the weight and the import that's being put on this. And I go back to the very first meeting I had with a constituent when we broke for the summer, very first meeting, next day, met for coffee at Stone's Throw, great local business place where I have a lot of meetings with folks. And I didn't think twice about having the meeting there with my constituent, Mr. Speaker.

And then it emerged, the reason I was having a meeting with this person. She'd asked me to meet about some work concerns, Mr. Speaker. She's a public employee here in Saskatchewan. But she'd recently lost her job. Her husband also a civil servant, Mr. Speaker. These are solidly middle-class, probably upper-middle-class constituents of mine, Mr. Speaker, you know, living in a classic Regina bungalow in the south end of the city, and she had lost her job due to a lack of support for mental health.

And their family was struggling; she'd been out of work for nearly six months. And despite having a good-paying job working for this government, they were using the food bank. Yes, they were still in their house. Yes, they still had a vehicle. But the corner that they could cut when they sat around their kitchen table was their food budget.

And she talked to me about how ashamed she was, the cyclone of impact that this has on somebody's mental health, when they're trying to get out of poverty and it's next to impossible. And they were using the food bank and she was going without . . . She told me having, you know, one meal a day, she and her husband had lost something like 40 pounds put together since she had lost her job because they were cutting back on their meals, because she wanted her children to be protected from the reality that they were living. They didn't want to cut their Disney+ subscription so that her four-year-old could still watch *Moana*. Now, Mr. Speaker, I've got a three-year-old as well. I know what the endless cycle of *Moana* is like, and I appreciate that choice.

And this is a middle-class person, Mr. Speaker, this is a middle-class family — two public servants own their house, own their car. That is a crisis, Mr. Speaker. When we look at food bank use, those are the people using food banks.

Another group of people using food banks here in Saskatchewan in disproportionately and shamefully high numbers, Mr. Speaker, are new Canadians. In August of 2023 the food bank here in Regina fed 5,400 new Canadian families — 5,400. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, that is four times more than they fed in August of 2022. You want to talk about year-over-year growth? That is a number I would hope members opposite pay some attention to. Think about that.

We need people in Saskatchewan. We need people to be moving here, to bring their families, their expertise, their wealth, their hope. We need them to be moving here investing, putting down roots. And we say, come to Saskatchewan, land of opportunity.

Fifty-four hundred new Canadian families use the food bank in one month, again four times more than the year before.

So again I can understand, you know, when we look at the government motion, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this strange proceeding, perhaps it is an external concern. Perhaps they do want to distract from the cost-of-living crisis. Perhaps they do want to distract from that economic record, from the crisis that seniors across Saskatchewan are facing. Perhaps they want to distract from the economic stress and lack of consumer confidence that people are feeling. Because measure over measure over measure, unfortunately people in Saskatchewan are falling behind the rest of Canada. More people in Saskatchewan feel poorer than they ever have before.

Not reported by us, Mr. Speaker. It's according to RBC [Royal Bank of Canada]. Seniors are having to go back to work, Mr. Speaker. Again perhaps that's an urgent problem in need of a solution as opposed to what we see here, which is a solution in need of a problem.

And when we talk about those seniors, Mr. Speaker, it leads to the next crisis, perhaps one of the biggest crises facing Saskatchewan, and that's the state of health care. When the Lutheran care home closes, when, you know, they can't ship my constituent's mom off to Wolseley or North Battleford, you know, where her son isn't going to be able to visit her five days a week like he does right now, the other option is perhaps that they put her in a hospital. I'm not sure if all members know this but there are hundreds of seniors in beds in hospitals across the province, not necessarily because they need that level of acute care right now but because there is nowhere else to put them.

And again this becomes a bit of a self-fulfilling crisis, Mr. Speaker, because those beds are then full of seniors who aren't getting, certainly aren't getting the retirement they envisioned, not getting the care. And those beds are then not available to people who need urgent and acute care, those people coming to our emergency rooms, those 41 people the member from Saskatoon Fairview spoke about today, who have nowhere to go.

And it's not just seniors, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm thankful I haven't had a great deal of experience with our health care system, but I think back on the last time that I did, Mr. Speaker, which is when I had my son. And ironically, leaving the hospital a few days later I bumped into the Minister for Advanced Education and the former minister of Health, who's now the Minister for Corrections and Policing. I don't think they recognized me because I think I looked like I'd been hit by a bus but . . . Cute baby. Thank you, Minister. Let the record show the Minister for Advanced Education says I've got a cute baby. I'm biased, but I agree.

[16:15]

But in having that baby, Mr. Speaker, lying in an operating room and having the wonderful medical team around you list off all of the supplies that they don't have for your surgery is fairly disconcerting. Hearing the medical team talk about how, ooh, well I hope this doesn't go sideways because this is like our last bottle of — I don't even know what it's called — sterile water, distilled water. Oh, we don't have enough sheets. That's concerning, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly concerning to me. And

that is an experience that people across this province are having. It's not just health care professionals; it's also shortages of supplies. We've got operating rooms closed right now. It's astonishing, Mr. Speaker.

This is a real crisis, but again, are we here debating this? No. We're talking about rule changes upending democratic processes, public consultation, giving time for the public to scrutinize this bill. We are talking about upending all of this to, again, push forward a bill that no one has called for.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, like, it takes me to the concern of child care, which again, like, I would rather not have my child here with me somewhere in the back, I assume, with a loving caregiver. But there is a real shortage of child care spaces in the province right now. And I want to draw attention to that. Like, there is no parent anywhere who would rather do their job with a child in tow. I know members opposite are parents. I know they've experienced this. They're wonderful, but they're small agents of chaos.

There is a dire shortage here in Regina. I can think of two colleagues of mine, who are . . . or, pardon me, two friends of mine who are lawyers, Mr. Speaker, who are . . . I can choose my friends. I guess I choose poorly. No. Lawyers concerned for lawyers. Respect to the lawyers on our side.

Mr. Speaker, two girlfriends of mine who have children and no child care spots. And these are people with some of the most privilege and they are looking at having to hire a nanny privately because there isn't anywhere for their children to go. One of them has a son just a little bit younger than my daughter. She has been on a wait-list since she was, like, eight weeks pregnant, and her son is now two and a half, and still nothing. Child care centres are changing their processes because they do not have the resources to maintain wait-lists, such is the demand.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I would purport that that is a crisis to many working families here in Saskatchewan that they would love to see this legislature pay some attention to. Maybe not upend the rules. Maybe not, I don't even know if you could notwithstanding-clause child care, but you know, pay some attention to, Mr. Speaker.

Because this matters. And it matters . . . The place where this is hitting home the most, Mr. Speaker, is of course in the education sector. And I know my colleague from Saskatoon Eastview is going to talk about this significantly as critic, as a former teacher. But this is something I hear from across the political spectrum, Mr. Speaker.

I was a school board trustee for a couple terms and had the privilege of being vice-president for the whole province. And guess what, Mr. Speaker. Of all those trustees, the only other out New Democrat that I knew as a trustee was Judy Bradley. Because like the secret was out on that one. Great, wonderful, accomplished woman, public servant, former cabinet minister in the Romanow government. So that was it. This isn't necessarily like a cabal of organized leftists.

But the school board trustees are deeply concerned about this. Why are they concerned, Mr. Speaker? Because they're seeing urgent government action. They're seeing the mighty weight of

the Sask Party agenda put on changing the rules of this legislature to force through this legislation, which I'd implore members: go back and look at the resolutions passed by your locally elected school boards. Not a priority.

I would encourage the members to go and ask the SPTRB [Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board], how many concerns have you received from the public? For members who don't know, the SPTRB is the Saskatchewan professional teachers regulatory body. It was brought in by this government to govern the profession when it was deemed that teachers should not be a self-governing profession.

And the SPTRB runs radio ads. Like they've got a booth at Agribition saying, hey parents, you've got concerns about what's going on in your kids' classrooms? Bring them to us. If there's a teacher not following the rules, if there's a teacher not following the curriculum, if there's a teacher not achieving the outcomes that you believe your child should have, bring them to us. We're a quasi-judicial body.

Ask the SPTRB how many complaints have they received of a nature that would be addressed by this legislation, Mr. Speaker. They've got annual meetings. I've gone and you should go. They're fun. They're interesting. You learn about this communications budget, that again is being spent on radio ads across the province, booths at trade show. When we all make our pilgrimage to Agribition we can go ask them ourselves. I'd encourage you. Have that conversation with them. They're good folks. You'd be surprised at the answer because, you know, the concerns that do come to the SPTRB and the concerns that are acted on are serious concerns.

When you look at what is actually found by that body, when you look at the things, the judgments they enforce, when they rip up somebody's teaching licence, it's typically for assaults and sexual assaults against minors. It is very serious business. And those people actually don't get to come to the hearings, because they're in jail. Because school divisions do their jobs. And school divisions matter. They take this seriously, Mr. Speaker. They hear from parents and they represent local voice in education.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this motion, when we look at things that the government has tried to do, when they have tried to change the rules . . . I hearken back to Bill 63, the endeavour by this government to actually do away with public input into education, the effort by this government to get rid of local voice in education, to eliminate school boards, and to centralize control here in Regina with — I can't remember what it was called, the public education quality advisory council; it had a really sexy name, Mr. Speaker — but essentially one government-controlled board here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

And the public spoke up, because people actually do care what happens in their children's schools. And there are mechanisms, and we see this happen. If people don't like their school board trustees, they vote them out. If people are concerned about their children's education, go ahead. Run for a seat. Heck, if you really hate the curriculum brought in by the Sask Party government around deepening this discussion on sexuality and gender identity, heck, run. Be a cabinet minister. Lots of options out there for people.

But school boards are accessible and they are responsible, and those are the bodies that we, and that this government has tasked with bringing forward local voice, parent voices, and parent choices in education. Where they struggle to bring in local choice is through the complete lack of funding, the strangulation of local initiatives in Saskatchewan. Because that's our strength, to bring it back, Mr. Speaker. "From many peoples, strength."

The first place that school divisions have to cut when they're faced with another deficit budget that doesn't keep up with enrolment and inflations, it's local initiatives, Mr. Speaker. It's those unique things that school divisions want to do for their communities that have unique values, that have unique priorities, that have diversity. That's the first thing on the floor.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of noise around education funding here in Saskatchewan. But I think it's important to talk about, especially in the context of the government motion, when we look at where they're prioritizing, Mr. Speaker. Because the average per-student spend here in Saskatchewan since 2012, since 2012 excluding capital spending which we have to exclude — the new minister for Education may not understand that we have to exclude capital spending — since 2012 the average per-student spend in Saskatchewan, by their own measures, by their own internal reporting on their dashboards, has increased by less than 4 per cent.

Saskatchewan used to have one of the highest spends per student in Canada, and now we're near the bottom of the pack. So in those 10 years, let's think about some of the costs the school divisions have incurred that would have eaten up that 4 per cent meagre increase in the last decade: cost of utilities, busing, salaries, resources, maintenance. Even if inflation was only 2 per cent for each of those years, that increase would be at least 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

The chronic underfunding has taken its toll on Saskatchewan students and on Saskatchewan school boards, and again, on that ability of locally elected boards to represent the diversity that they have in their communities in those schools. And it's those schools that are going to continue to bear the brunt of the lack of care shown by this government, Mr. Speaker. Because it's those schools that are having their funding cut and insufficient to meet needs.

So let's talk about some of the extra supports that are going to be needed, Mr. Speaker. Because as we sit here and we debate this government motion, we talk about the ins and outs of legislative processes. We should also recognize that we're not talking about some of these other things like mental health supports. And while the new Education minister may believe that they're ample, I would like to take the time to draw his attention to the education sector staffing profile on his government's own website. Let's look at the supports by the government's own measure that are available, that they are reporting on themselves.

The Speaker: — I'd like to remind the member that you're speaking to the motion. So you need to refer to it once in a while. You'll have lots of opportunity to speak to the bill later.

Ms. A. Young: — I can't wait, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I recognize that. So I'll circle back, Mr. Speaker, to the business at hand. And I look forward, I'm aquiver with anticipation to get to

talk about the education sector staffing profile when I do get to speak to the bill. And I'm sure the new Education minister will appreciate a couple of days' head start to be able to figure out where it is that's located and also familiarize himself with some of the figures therein.

So, Mr. Speaker, again when we look at the rule change and we look at what this government is trying to do with this motion, it's actually about limiting public input, it's about limiting transparency, and it's about limiting accountability. Because again, we only have a few days. They've got so many members, Mr. Speaker, who are so sure of themselves in this endeavour. We know this bill is going to pass.

But gosh, Mr. Speaker, do I wish there was more opportunity for oversight. Do I wish these members had taken the time, the leadership team over there had taken the time to consult or even think a little bit reflexively and reflectively. Because it can't all be good news, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we had a member opposite celebrating Foster Families Month. And we thank them for the good work that they do, Mr. Speaker. But by virtue of the existence of foster families, we know that there's families who aren't best placed, according to this government, to care for their kids. And we know keeping families together, Mr. Speaker, is in the best interests of those children but we know that's not always the case. If that was the case, this province would not have one of the highest rates of child apprehension. And if that's the case, Mr. Speaker, there are examples of times when parents, as determined by this government, are not always able to provide that care and wraparound support.

[16:30]

And again we see this government changing the rules of the legislature, clamouring for parents' rights while they continue to take children from their families, while they continue to cut education funding for locally elected boards who are then not able to fund and represent the diversity in their own communities, and cut funding to things like school community councils, Mr. Speaker — again, the bodies set out by this government, by our legislation, by our Acts to bring local voice into education.

We would not have a need for foster families and for a struggling child apprehension system, Mr. Speaker, if every single family had all the supports that they need and every single family was in fact the best place for every child. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the government in control of child apprehension. This is the government in control. And the members opposite can't look at the state of social services in this province and know that there's adequate support for children and for families right now, Mr. Speaker.

And again, the Premier could not find an example of a situation in which a family was excluded, but we can think of countless situations in which families have to do without, whether it's the mental health support that their children need — children like Bee — whether it's parents desperate for wraparound support for their students, their children with autism, children who maybe need language supports. It's years on the wait-list for a speech pathologist, Mr. Speaker.

And again I reflect on the examples that we do have: calls for urgent action, calls for the government to perhaps suspend the normal order of things and say hey, this is something that matters. We have those examples come to this legislature time and time and time again, Mr. Speaker, and they come and they sit in the gallery or they stand in the rotunda. And they come not as their first choice. Nobody comes to bleed on the floor of the legislature as their first option. They come because the systems have failed them. And too often the advocacy from their local MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] has not gone anywhere.

Those are immediate examples — you don't even have to go out and consult — of people who could use the attention and support of this government, Mr. Speaker. But again we've seen time and time again, they don't care. Only some people matter to this government, Mr. Speaker, which takes me back to, what is the problem that these members are trying to solve?

You know, they keep using examples, Mr. Speaker, around things like how, you know, you need to sign a permission form for your child to take an Advil or go on a field trip. And, Mr. Speaker, that's so that the school divisions can move liability off of themselves. This, even with the immunity clause that may get passed by the government, this is putting liability onto boards, onto employers, onto teachers, and onto this government, whether legal or whether simply moral.

So again I ask the government members if this is something — this draconian change to oversight, to the rules of the legislature, and to the ultimate changes that will result — if this is what you want your legacy to be, if this is what the people of Saskatchewan want their province to be known for, Mr. Speaker.

Because we keep seeing example, again and again and again and again, whether it's the *Drawing the Line* white paper, whether it's, you know, the five-day defence of Colin Thatcher before members opposite found their moral compass and realized, ooh, maybe common decency and common sense is actually on the other side of defending a convicted wife killer. Maybe we shouldn't be spending our political capital defending a murderer. It's bizarre, Mr. Speaker, but again, eventually they found their way. So perhaps, perhaps they'll find their way on this, Mr. Speaker, but it's not looking likely.

Government members have the option to change. This is all in your control. So to the members opposite: if there are those of you who are uncomfortable, who are having tough conversations with your family, who are having tough conversations with your constituents, with the people that you represent, or perhaps colleagues in other professions whose good opinion you hold dear, you are all in control of this. Because again there is no valid external reason other than deflecting from your own record to push forward this motion and the changes it will put in place, because there are multitudes of things that we would be better served to discuss.

So again, Mr. Speaker, it brings me back to my initial question of, what is the problem that they're trying to solve? And I keep coming back to that internal threat that they're having, Mr. Speaker. It's about, you know, keeping the tent together. Maybe it's about testing the waters. Hey, maybe, maybe this is the question they want to run the next election on, Mr. Speaker. I don't know. Wish I could hear what the Premier was saying.

I don't know, Mr. Speaker. But solving your own internal challenges, trying to shore up your flailing polling numbers and your utter lack of guiding principles or values beyond whatever the member from . . .

The Speaker: — I'd like to remind the member to refer to the motion, please.

Ms. A. Young: — Changing government process and spending this special sitting focused on some of the things that would better serve the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, is something I think people in this province would stand up and applaud that government for. It's not too late. You can say you've actually heard from people, maybe not the tens of thousands that, you know, the new Education minister has undoubtedly, certainly heard from. But talk to your neighbours. Because this is not anyone's priority . . .

The Speaker: — Member, you need to talk about the motion and talk through the Chair, please.

Ms. A. Young: — And with that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear I will not be supporting the government motion and will be concluding my remarks.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

Mr. Teed: — Oh, appreciate that. What a nice crew here. I want to thank my colleagues here before me who've done just a fantastic job of touching so many of the aspects of these rule changes. Firstly I just have to say a huge kudos to my colleague from Regina Douglas Park for just an absolutely outstanding speech on Thursday afternoon. I think the eyes of the province were on this Chamber and they saw someone with conviction, someone who was defending our democracy, Mr. Speaker. So I just have to say a huge thank you. Maybe we should just give her a little round of applause here.

Also want to thank my colleague from Regina Rosemont, University for putting some comments on the record here tonight, speaking about rule changes as we've seen mentioned, and we bring it back to that motion on rule changes.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we maybe come back just quickly . . . I'll make sure to stay on topic. I'll make sure to keep referencing the rules. But I think it's important that we come back just a tiny bit here to the emergency debate, the emergency session of this Saskatchewan legislature that we find ourselves sitting in today.

Mr. Speaker, emergency sessions are really largely unprecedented. I think I heard someone mention it had been decades, possibly 25 years since the last time this . . . Mr. Speaker, you were here at that time. I'm going to have to look it up. I'm going to have to take a peek at this emergency session. Someone will have to give me a briefing on that. But you know, 25 years is a long time, and when you think about that, you look at the word "emergency" . . . 25 years. I mean, these aren't

sessions that are taken lightly, Mr. Speaker.

Every member of this legislature right now is here debating this, but you know, these members could be in their communities doing that important work as well. And so when you have a government call back the legislature for an emergency session, Mr. Speaker, you hope that that emergency is something that duly needs the response of the members.

And so I think about some of the things that we could be having an emergency debate on. You know, are we having an emergency debate on health care, on ER capacity, or finding a family doctor? No, that's not what this emergency debate is about.

Is it an emergency debate on the cost of living? Are we talking about the cost of groceries, Mr. Speaker, that just seem to keep going up and up and up? We have come off the Thanksgiving holiday season. You know, all of us here in this Chamber, we're really blessed we have these jobs. We represent the people of our ridings. And we're able to afford those bills, but for so many people in our province even a turkey at Thanksgiving is seemingly unattainable with those price points that we're seeing.

Are we talking about . . . We could have called the House back to talk about the cost of housing in our province. Mr. Speaker, we could be having an emergency debate on the economic record in this province which, frankly, over the last six years has been abysmal. We see the worst jobs record in the country. We see the second-last GDP [gross domestic product] in the country. That would be a very good reason to recall the legislature, change the rules, and ram through debate on any one of those topics, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reason we've been called back here today isn't health care. It's not the cost of living. It's not the economy. We've been called back for an emergency session to enshrine a piece of legislation that will force teachers to out vulnerable queer and trans youth. And I will speak to this at greater length at some point over the next couple of days.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that during my time on the doorstep this summer, be it in Meewasin in my constituency, in Walsh Acres and Coronation Park, or Lumsden-Morse, not one person expressed worry about this issue. Not one person said, go back to the legislature; change the rules; we need to deal with this right now. Not one. They had, like I mentioned, concerns over health care. They had concerns over the cost of living.

And, Mr. Speaker, this policy had been announced on August 22nd, and I had the chance to get out onto the doorsteps in my riding. Mr. Speaker, parents were frankly furious. They were furious that a government would stoop so low to attacking the most vulnerable children in our society, a population that represents 0.79 per cent. So I heard that feedback. I heard that feedback loud and clear.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we've seen is a government that has recalled the legislature to enshrine a piece of legislation that the judiciary has said, put a pause on. Through the judicial process we learned that this government had created this policy in eight days, that they had created this policy with 18 emails, seven of which were from parents. A policy that no minister — not the Premier, not the Minister of Health — can point to a specific

parent who has come to them saying, I was surprised to hear that my child was using a different pronoun in their classroom.

Mr. Speaker, this is a policy that has been paused by the court, a policy that was paused by the courts because it could inflict irreparable harm on children. Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that this policy will cause irreparable harm, and the fact that the government has chosen to pull us back to change the rules of the legislature to push this policy through is frankly astounding.

[16:45]

And you don't . . . remind the members opposite that it was their government who brought in gender identity and gender expression into *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* in 2014, a unanimous, a unanimous support by this Chamber. It was the Saskatchewan Party in 2014. And it's exactly that human rights code that's saying that this policy is in contravention, they're saying. And I have the policy in front of me. I know, I'm trying to stick to rules. I'm sure I can read that policy in greater detail tomorrow. I'll stick to the rules here that we're talking about, this motion of changing the rules of this House to make this happen faster.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to be perfectly clear — and I'm going to canvass this a lot more tomorrow — we will never come between you and your child. We will never come between a parent and their child. In fact we know that children do so much better in their educational pursuits when their parents are involved, when their guardians are involved. But, Mr. Speaker, I won't stand idly by when attacks are made on my community. I will not stand idly by when politicians target trans youth. I will not stand idly by as rules in our temple of democracy are changed to do just that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will jump closer to discussing the rules. I actually have a copy of the *Hansard* here from Thursday, you know, of my colleague from Regina Douglas Park who put some amazing comments on the record here. When we talk about rule changes, and right now we're debating those rule changes, rule changes that restrict debate on this bill.

So what we're seeing is, as opposed to using the regular process . . . So what we could have seen — I'm going to give an option to the government — what we could have seen is all of us members stay in our ridings, do the work that's so important that all of us do while we are in our ridings all over this province, come back October 25th, a Speech from the Throne, an announcement by this government that this is where they want to take the province. And they could introduce legislation in our regular process. And as members, we could all come together and debate that legislation or debate the Speech from the Throne which proposes that legislation, and we could all have a moment.

And actually what would be even more amazing is that we would actually have members of the government stand up and speak to that Speech from the Throne. But instead, what we're seeing is an emergency session, not on issues that matter most to the people of this province. And we're seeing a session that the government has said, okay, we want this bill passed before the 25th. I don't know what the hurry is. And my colleague from Regina University has done a fantastic job of canvassing, what is the problem that they're trying to solve with changing the rules

of our legislature? No, instead we're here and we've been given 40 hours of debate time cinched into one week.

So I'll remind the House that regularly when legislation is presented, you know, we start with the Speech from the Throne, and then that legislation is read in the House and every member has the chance to talk to an adjourned debate. Now, Mr. Speaker, we rarely do hear from the government side when it comes to adjourned debates in this House. But instead we're seeing a bill brought in out of session, cinched down to 40 hours so that they can push through this bill with as little, as little oversight as possible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm really glad that my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, you know, touched on the parliamentary democracy, our tradition of a parliamentary democracy. And you know what? As the rules of our parliamentary democracy vary from province to province, every legislature has a little something different. When you look at the House of Commons, there's a little bit of a different process. But what we've seen is a parliamentary democracy that has been developed over 400-ish years, slowly but surely codified.

You look at the UK [United Kingdom]. A constitution document is really just a pile of documents because their country had been developed and developed and developed. But what you see . . . And I'm so glad that my colleague, you know, read this in the House, talked about your position in this.

But what you see is a system of governance that lends well to getting things done. So you have an executive branch that sits in the legislature. That executive branch can only function when they have the confidence of the House. And it is an ability that the people can speak to the executive branch directly. We can ask the executive branch questions. Much different than our colleagues to the south where there isn't an ability of the legislatures or their Houses to speak directly. No, they speak to leaders of parties in that process.

But what is really unique about our system of government is that, as I mentioned, the executive has to maintain control of the legislature, and it makes sure that their agenda can pass forward. What that really means is it gives the executive and the government a huge amount of responsibility. We're talking about rights. The government doesn't really have rights; they have responsibilities. That's a whole other conversation — rights and responsibilities. Going back to grade 10, but we'll stay where we are today.

An Hon. Member: — Take us to school.

Mr. Teed: — Take us to school. But they have a responsibility to shepherd our democracy because when they have a majority government, as the government in Saskatchewan here — the Saskatchewan Party holds the most seats — they have the ability to lean the weights in their favour and that's what we're seeing here today. A government who is using its majority in this Chamber as a hammer, a hammer that they are applying to this room right now and tilting the scales of democracy.

And by scales of democracy, by . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, this is amazing that we get to debate this bill for 40 hours. But by cinching this bill into a week, not only is it throwing the

onus on an official opposition to keep track of this, but they're cinching it up so that the public has less eyes on that bill. And this all, all, all comes back to the fact that they can use their majority to tilt the scales in their direction.

And so as a province, people should be watching right now. They absolutely should be watching that a government that has been told by the courts . . . Now my colleague went into some of the judiciary, the three levels. I've talked about the executive, the legislature. There's the judiciary . . . I'm just going to grab some water here, Mr. Speaker, and I'll get back to the rules.

The judiciary is in place to keep a check and balance on the executive. What has happened is a policy has come forward that the government wants to put forward and organizations have come forward and said no, we don't believe this policy is going to work; it's going to harm children; it's in contravention of . . .

The Speaker: — I have to remind you, you've got to speak to the motion. It's got to be mainly about the motion.

Mr. Teed: — [Inaudible] . . . bring my thought train back here to rules. Where was I going with this? The judiciary is saying no, you can't do that. That's the check. And then the government comes out and says, no, we don't believe that we should be being told by the judiciary; we are going to put forward legislation with the notwithstanding clause. Second use of the government's majority hammer.

So they're using their majority hammer to tilt the scales of democracy by changing the rules of the House, and they're using those rules to fast-track the use of the notwithstanding clause. Two examples of the government's using their majority as a hammer, Mr. Speaker.

Coming back to our 40 hours. What the 40 hours of debate on this bill basically does is that it ensures that this bill is not being seen by the people of Saskatchewan for a long time. For some reason, Mr. Speaker, the government wants to change the rules of this Assembly to pass a bill in under a week. Because, like, we can do the calculations quickly. If every one of us stands up and speaks for three hours, we're going to see this bill . . . Likely every member on this side will be done by Thursday. That's — Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday — three days for the media, three days for anyone in the public to read this bill.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, they obviously, either they don't think this is important or they want to rush it through. And so what we're seeing is we have seen stakeholders come forward during a court case to say, hey, hey, hey, this policy will do damage.

But in the 40 hours that we have in this House — it's going to be quick — we are going to see this policy move through. It's going to be the law of the land, the majority will make it happen. The majority will use the notwithstanding clause, and by Thursday, queer and trans kids will . . . it will put into question whether they can even safely come out of the closet or if they can safely tell a parent, not a parent but an adult in their life that something's different about them, that they are seeking someone of safety and confidence, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've heard from stakeholders. We've heard

from parents. We've heard from youth. Bring those people in. What's the point of ramming this through? What is the urgency? My colleague from Regina University mentioned, like, is it caucus management? Are there members of the government caucus that are threatening to cross the floor to the Saskatchewan United Party where they're seeing policies put forward, and the government is jumping? You know, what is the urgency here, Mr. Speaker, that they have to launch this so quickly?

So we're saying, slow it down. You don't need to rush this through in an emergency session. Put it in a regular session and bring in the stakeholders. Speak to parents. Bring in youth. Children 16 and under have no vote. They have no voice. Bring them forward. They weren't consulted on this process. We know because if youth under 16 were consulted, they would have said, this policy sucks. You know, I'm using language that a kid under 16 might use. They know that this policy is bogus. And, Mr. Speaker, bring in trans people. Bring in trans kids. Bring in queer people. Consult with those people because they will tell you a very different reality about this situation. But what we're seeing is no consultation. A bill rammed through in under three days that hasn't seen any kind of consultation.

Mr. Speaker, I put out a call on social media asking for folks in our community, folks who are impacted by this. Mr. Speaker, I've received hundreds of letters from real people who live in Saskatchewan. Like I cannot wait to read my 18 letters, seven of which are parents, in the legislature at some point in the next couple days. Because it's just so clear. None of these groups were consulted and none of them will have a voice.

We will be the only ones in this Chamber raising those voices. So it just really speaks to a failure to consult. And as I said, our democracy only works when people are engaged. The people of this province should be watching this process right now. This is what's happening to our democracy. You know, Mr. Speaker, we look at these rules. The public has only seen this legislation for almost about a day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the rest of the rules that we've seen changed . . .

The Speaker: — It has now reached 5 p.m. This House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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