



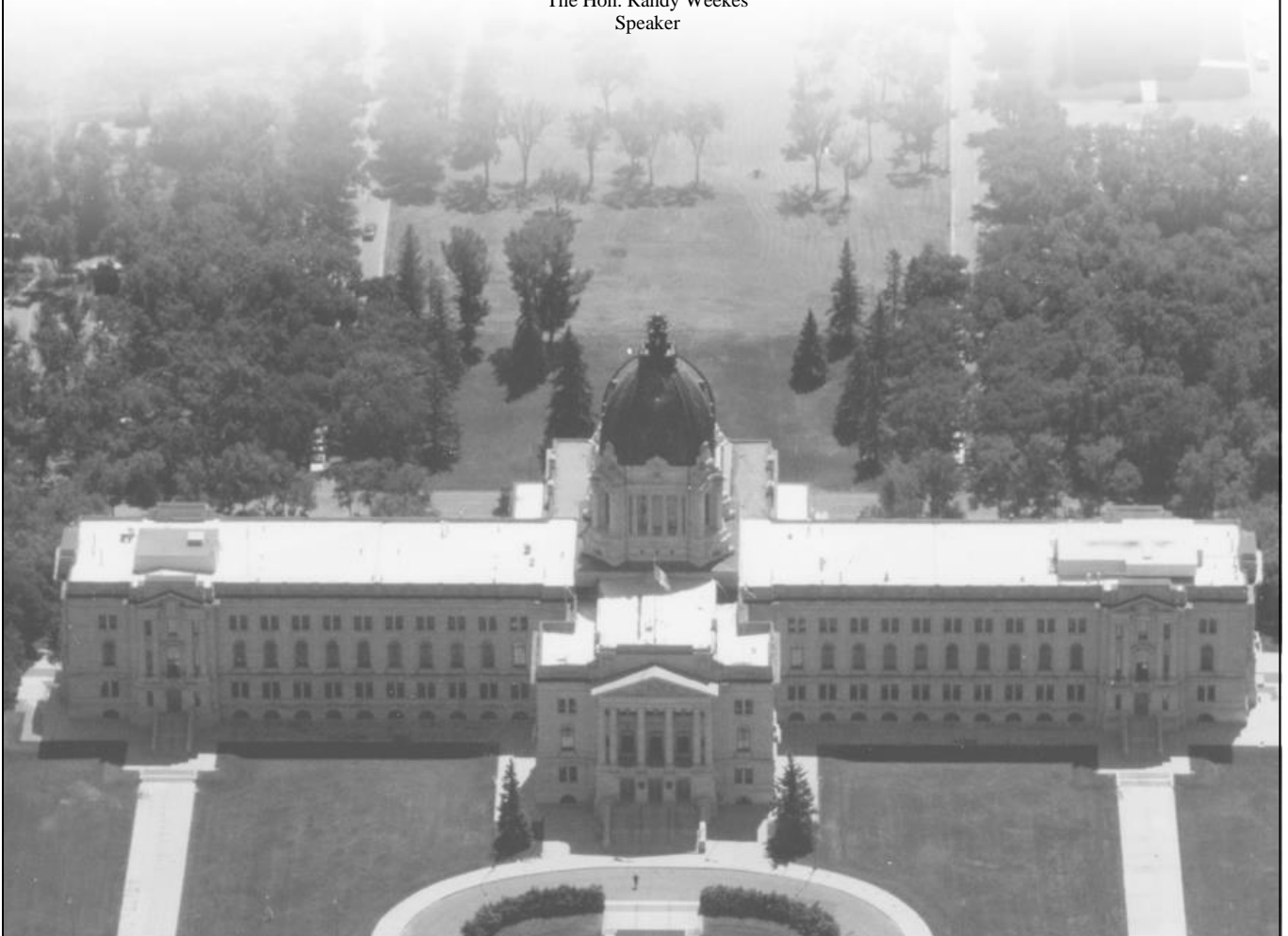
THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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 Burianyk
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

Hansard on the internet
Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Calendar>

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Lambert4351

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 137 — *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023*

Loi modificative de 2023 sur l'éducation (Déclaration des droits des parents)

Cockrill4351

Beck4351

Young, A.4352

Duncan4357

Sarauer4359

Recorded Division4364

ROYAL ASSENT4365

MOTIONS

Session Adjournment

Harrison, J.4365

[The Assembly met at 09:00.]

[Prayers]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Ms. Lambert: — I wish to order questions 156 to 161.

The Speaker: — Order. Pursuant to the sessional order, debate on third readings and any amendment shall not exceed two hours. The time will be displayed on the Chamber clock.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 137 — *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023/Loi modificative de 2023 sur l'éducation (Déclaration des droits des parents)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 137, *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023* now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 137, *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — All in favour? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me no pleasure to rise and enter this debate on Bill 137. The fact that we're here today debating this piece of legislation instead of the real priorities of the people of Saskatchewan, it's the clearest sign yet of how out of touch and tired this government has become.

Instead of working to provide the solutions that Saskatchewan people need on health care, on the cost of living, and on the very real concerns in our education system, instead of focusing on the real issues that keep families up at night in our province, this government is using their majority to ram through a bill whose only purpose is to sow division and strip vulnerable kids of their rights.

Mr. Speaker, it's undemocratic and it's shameful. It is beyond disappointing to see this government using vulnerable kids to play wedge politics and to try to score political points. It's beyond disappointing.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reaction that we've seen from Saskatchewan people, that is what gives me hope. It gives me hope because we've seen so many people from all walks of life

stand up and say what this government is doing is wrong.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am so incredibly proud of this team who has brought those concerns and those cautions to the floor of this Assembly to be heard, even if that tired and out-of-touch government isn't interested in hearing what they have to say. Mr. Speaker, we've seen so many people, so many amazing people, speaking out about this bill — faith leaders, teachers, and school divisions, students, the Children's Advocate, and the Human Rights Commission, workers, First Nation and Métis leaders, lawyers, and the courts. And most of all, we've heard from parents. So many across this province, Mr. Speaker, are stepping up to say no to this Premier's attempt to divide us.

And, Mr. Speaker, to all of them, I say thank you. Thank you for using your voice and for speaking out against this government's attempt to sow even further division.

Mr. Speaker, it's taken so much work from all of us inside and outside this Assembly to get to the point where we're at today. We tried to fix the problems in this bill. Last night my colleague put forward amendments, one that would have created a real parental engagement strategy where the government would work with parents, work with school divisions, and community councils as true partners. But of course, Mr. Speaker, that government voted that amendment down.

And we also put forward an amendment to try to fix what is most broken about this bill, the part that puts children, vulnerable children, at risk of irreparable harm. Our do-no-harm amendment would have made an exemption for cases where there's just no way to get parental consent without putting vulnerable kids at risk, something that that minister dismissed last night in committee as hypothetical. It's not a hypothetical question, Mr. Speaker. It's very real. It's a life-and-death reality for a very small and very vulnerable group of kids in this province.

This government showed through their votes last night that in a small minority of cases, teachers will have to choose between shoving kids back in the closet or putting them in harm's way. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people know that that simply is not right. And when all is said and done, this government with their big majority, well they're going to do what they wish. But, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatchewan I say this, our fight does not end here today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's only begun.

Yesterday that Premier made it very clear he has no intention of changing course. He's not going to listen to all of the voices who have spoken out about this bill. He's not going to keep from moving forward, ramming forward with this bill, a bill that sows division and that puts vulnerable kids at risk. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I guess that's his choice to make. And that's a choice that every member on that government side is going to have to make.

But, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will also have a choice to make about this time next year. They're going to choose between this team, this team that has put in the work, that is listening, that is standing up for human rights, a team that is focused on the things that matter to Saskatchewan people, a team that knows that this is a province where we are better served, we are stronger together.

On the other side they're going to continue to see a government that is tired and out of touch, that are only listening to themselves, and that they have shown themselves to be willing to use children, vulnerable children as political pawns, a government that plays on people's fears and actively sows division.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? I'm okay with those two choices. Because in Saskatchewan, we know this so clearly, hope beats fear every single time.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to vote against this bill, and I will clearly be voting against this bill.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Diversity. Equality. Respect. These are things that the people of Saskatchewan believe in. These are things that we used to think all members in this Assembly believed in. Diversity. Equality. Respect. Inherent to the very values of this province, "from many peoples, strength." And yet here we are, special sitting of the legislature.

And it bears asking, Mr. Speaker, why are we here? On this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we know why we're here. And we have done everything we can. And we were clear from the outset. Unfortunately, perhaps tragically, we can't stop this bill from proceeding. We know that. Members opposite know that. The public knows that.

And yet here we are. We're here to pass a piece of legislation — or the members opposite are — that will penalize a small minority, a minority within a minority within a minority, that the courts of Saskatchewan have said will face irreparable harm from this piece of legislation, a small group seven times more likely to experience self-harm or suicide.

When the leading cause of death of young people in this province is suicide, here we are. Not to address that tragedy. Not to fix that problem. But to pass a piece of legislation aimed at punching down on terrified, vulnerable children — a handful.

And in order to do this, Mr. Speaker, this government, who was given a mandate by the people of Saskatchewan, has ambushed this province. There's no reason for us to be here doing this in a special, expensive sitting of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and yet here we are. These aren't the type of things that should happen in a proud, accountable, transparent democracy, Mr. Speaker. These are the things that happen in a banana republic, not a mature democracy.

They've changed the rules. They've forced this ridiculous session, which for members opposite is just performative. Members of the opposition, the Saskatchewan New Democrats, we have been doing our job with integrity, with commitment, with dedication. I look at my colleagues on their feet for hours, making case after case, diverse cases. Appealing to law, appealing to compassion, appealing to minority rights, appealing to people who should care about education, perhaps health care, a choking economy.

And I think about the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, the

many countless who have engaged with sincerity, sharing stories, stories that are hard to hear let alone put down in words — let alone put down in words — with the bravery and the confidence to have them read on the floor of the Assembly of Saskatchewan.

[09:15]

I know you've heard those stories, Mr. Speaker. I know members opposite have listened to those stories. And yet here we are.

And to the members opposite, I would say you have done everything you can, everything possible to make this as performative and as humiliating and shameful an exercise as possible. And it's because you believe in your cause.

They believe in their cause, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a visit. What is their cause? Because let's remember this is a painful, hurtful, but ultimately ineffective exercise in democracy that we're engaged in right now, Mr. Speaker.

They've changed the rules. They don't even have to stack the deck. We know what the balance of seats is in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. We know what the balance of power is. But there could still be some compassion. There could still be some integrity.

Earlier this summer, Mr. Speaker, I had the good fortune to sit next to a Conservative member from New Brunswick on a bus. Just happened to sit down and he introduced himself; said, I'm an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from New Brunswick. I said, oh, I'm an MLA from Saskatchewan. I'm a New Democrat. He said, oh, I'm a Conservative. I said, well that's okay. I know some.

He said, well but I want to be really clear. This is a true story, Mr. Speaker. He said, I'm not one of those Conservatives. I'm one of the members who stood up against Premier Blaine Higgs. I'm one of the members who spoke out.

So we know, Mr. Speaker, there's at least a few conservatives with integrity left in this country, Mr. Speaker. There don't seem to be many left in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. This was a member. He represented what he described as the Bible belt of New Brunswick, a very socially conservative province, Mr. Speaker, a very traditional, proud province. And yet this man who'd been a cabinet minister had the courage of his convictions. And he knew that this was wrong, and he knew it was the worst kind of politics.

And I didn't ask. I was just going to sit and chat nicely with this friendly gentleman sitting next to me. But it was important to him that I knew. And I think it's important that people know that despite political differences, we can and we should. And there are still people out there across the spectrum who believe in human rights, equality, and diversity.

But not here, Mr. Speaker, because let's remember there's no reason for this special sitting. We don't need to do this. Again look at the desks. There's like two and a half times more members on that side. They could pass this without this dangerous charade, Mr. Speaker. You don't need to use the notwithstanding clause unless there is some secret deadline between October 20th, which I think is today — it's been a long

week — and October 25th. What was going to happen this weekend?

You could have done this next week, could have saved possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe millions. I have no idea how much this special sitting is going to cost in dollars and cents. But I know what it has cost in integrity, and I know what it has cost in the suffering for a minority of people in this province, Mr. Speaker. And again, this is a dangerous charade. And it is a charade not because what we do in this Assembly doesn't matter — it does — but it is a dangerous charade because there was no reason for it. It is theatre to serve some end of the members opposite.

We've been here for nearly 40 hours, Mr. Speaker, 40 hours of debate. And they're not listening. They're sitting there — we've seen it reported — air buds in, *Succession* playing, maybe *Lord of the Rings*, depending on what time of day it is, Mr. Speaker. Novels out, air buds in. They're not listening.

And they could have just forced this on the province or they could have had the courage of their convictions, Mr. Speaker: go seek a mandate. You could have stood up on Wednesday and led with this in your Speech from the Throne, again unless perhaps there's some secret deadline we're all working towards. You could have led your Throne Speech with this, this year's Sask first. Except this year it's kids last, which really puts Saskatchewan last, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite could have had the courage of their convictions. They could have stood up, Mr. Speaker, whatever those convictions are. Love the sinner; hate the sin. They could say the quiet part out loud, which they've tiptoed dangerously close to in this past week, Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes they've stood up and spoke. Except now, Mr. Speaker, it's not just love the sinner; hate the sin. It's penalize the sinner. Except now, according to what's been put forward by the members opposite, it's the children who are problematic, the children who are sinful.

Except we know, Mr. Speaker, children aren't sinful. They are born perfect just the way they are. Being gay, being trans, questioning your identity, it's not a sin. It's not a sin you choose to live with. It's not something you lean into. It's who you are. Mr. Speaker, "from many peoples, strength." Children are not born broken or flawed.

So say the quiet part out loud, Mr. Speaker. Have the courage of your convictions. But the members opposite, they think that those children — those gender-, sexually diverse people, people who don't fit the mould of what they think Saskatchewan should look like — they think those people should be quiet. Perhaps they should go away. Perhaps they should move. Perhaps those are the people they don't mind leaving this province.

Because again we've heard it through dog whistles, through whispers, even in comments made last night by the Minister of Justice. It's, you know, we have to — going to paraphrase — rewrite the balance of what's happening in schools, what's happening out there. Where are all these trans kids coming from, Mr. Speaker? My words. Maybe it's the internet. Maybe it's the teachers. Maybe they've been here all along, but that's not what these members believe, Mr. Speaker.

And I would challenge them. If you think it's a choice, if you have the courage of your convictions, if you think it's a sin, if you think it's wrong, if you think it's misguided, stand up and say it out loud. Lead for the people you are so desperately seeking approval from. But they won't, Mr. Speaker, and it is cowardly and it is dangerous and it's a shame. Unfortunately it is now our shame here in Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we've done everything that we can on this side of the House, and we knew from the start we would not be able to stop this. We've done everything we can, and the members opposite have not done the bare minimum: listening, accountability, respect for democratic institutions, respect for this magnificent building we are all privileged to have earned a seat in to represent this province, to build it. Make it better. Leave it better than you found it, Mr. Speaker.

A commitment to transparency. But again, they won't say it out loud. They don't have that courage of their convictions. They're not quite brave enough to say that quiet part out loud. But we know where you're at. We see where you're sitting. All of you, we see how you're voting. And we know what this is truly about, even this show trial here today.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Education minister last night, he talked about consultation. He talked about accountability. He talked about how the election in 2020 was part of that consultation. But he can't produce any evidence that this is something he's heard. He can't produce a shred of substantive proof that this has been heard across the province.

And to the members opposite who sit by virtue in agreement with that Minister for Education, who says that the 2020 election was part of the consultation done on this, I don't remember you running on this. Mr. Speaker, even in last year's Throne Speech, which was something else, we didn't see any evidence of this, Mr. Speaker, even with the constantly changing narrative on the other side.

We see no evidence of anything except what has been provided to the courts by the Saskatchewan Party government, the courts which have a higher standard than the floor of this Assembly. And all we know for certain is that this was undertaken on August 10th, whether under duress, inspiration. But this isn't something that they've consulted on, Mr. Speaker.

August 10th. And again, if we're working toward some secret deadline, if there's some reason this had to happen before October 25th, to the members opposite, to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: bring it on. Because we know where we stand, Mr. Speaker, and the people of the province see this and they see your record — shuttered hospitals, health care under water. No one in this province can find a family doctor, Mr. Speaker. They're closing emergency rooms. There are people in ERs [emergency room], small communities across this province — emergency rooms, ICUs [intensive care unit] — that do not have a doctor.

The record of this government, Mr. Speaker: four out of seven years with negative economic growth, Mr. Speaker. An economy that has done worse under that Premier's leadership than every other jurisdiction in Canada except for Newfoundland. An economy that is doing 10 per cent worse than it was in 2012, Mr. Speaker. Since 2018, fallen by 7.7 per cent, nearly 8 per cent, Mr.

Speaker. That's your record.

And now not only, Mr. Speaker, do the members opposite have the worst economic record in Canada except for Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, they also have the dubious distinction of one of the worst social records, Mr. Speaker. And we knew, tragically, they already led there — infant mortality, hungry children, homelessness.

[09:30]

It almost begs the question, Mr. Speaker, whether their policies and priorities are unkind and uncaring or whether they simply can't achieve good outcomes because of their terrible economic record.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province no longer trust the members opposite. They no longer trust that this is a government who is operating for anyone but themselves, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say, Mr. Speaker, it is worse than that because we're actually used to members opposite putting themselves, putting their own interests at the fore. And that's fine, Mr. Speaker. They like each other more than they like us, and that's okay. I think we'd say the same over here. They used to be at least decent to each other, decent to the province.

And we know this legislation is hurtful and damaging to this province, not just to that handful of terrified children out there, to adults who've lived through some of this trauma. It's harmful to our reputation. Again, we're making *The New York Times*. We've made *The Economist*. We've made *The Guardian*. How many times under this Premier's watch and for what? Violating the human rights of children, inviting a convicted, wife-beating murderer to this Assembly and then defending it for five days. The moral compass is askew, Mr. Speaker.

But the members opposite at least used to be decent to each other, at least outwardly. And we know, you can look at the benches and look at the voting records, Mr. Speaker. We know this isn't easy for all members opposite because it is not right. And to the members opposite who are struggling with this, it's good you should struggle with this, Mr. Speaker, because it's not the right thing to do. It's not the right thing to do for people in this province. It may not be the right thing to do for your family members, to your staff, the people who work in this building.

Mr. Speaker, even for a caucus, even for a government that used to put themselves and put each other above all else, they're not even doing that, Mr. Speaker. It is an increasingly small, zealous circle that is putting their own beliefs at the forefront, and they don't even have the courage to come out and say it out loud.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I come back to that question of trust. We certainly don't trust you. We haven't for a while. We fight elections about that every few years. And we don't believe you when you say you're putting the best interests of this province first, Mr. Speaker. And it's even harder when we see the changing narratives around this, Mr. Speaker.

And on the side of common sense, on the side of common shared values, which is where we're situating ourself, Mr. Speaker, there's a lack of trust, there's a lack of belief. Because we know

the record of members opposite. We know this isn't about protecting families. We know this isn't about children. It's about righting the balance, I believe were the Justice minister's words.

What's happening with families, with society and education? The Justice minister, Mr. Speaker, I would point out had her shot at education. And what did we see there, Mr. Speaker? What did we see? We saw the Justice minister take an opportunity — choose my words carefully — to elaborate on a homework assignment for the sole purpose of denigrating treaty education and reconciliation in this province, Mr. Speaker, to throw teachers under the bus, Indigenous children, survivors. You know, Mr. Speaker, and again it's not just education.

And people in this province should pay attention. Because that minister had her kick at education, and a kick it was, Mr. Speaker. And now she's got her shot at justice, Mr. Speaker. And we've heard out there, this is about the rights of all Saskatchewan people. You know, if they're going after vulnerable, questioning children, who next, Mr. Speaker?

And the Justice minister has been quite clear. I'll read from an article in her own words, Mr. Speaker — which I'm happy to table in this Assembly — entitled "Something to talk about." And I'll quote:

Doesn't it simply make sense on every level — psychological, humanistic, legal — that while abortion should be available for the first trimester or so, more serious hurdles should be in place after that, considering what we know about fetal development and the rising survival rates of premature infants?

What's coming next, Mr. Speaker, from the same government who has done nothing to advance maternal health care, prenatal care, from the same government that has women in labour driving from Swift Current to Moose Jaw? The same government that cannot provide anesthesiologists for people who may need — let's say, worst case scenario — not who may choose, but who may need life-saving deliveries for them or their infants? You cannot get that, Mr. Speaker, under this government unless you're lucky enough to have an anesthesiologist in your town on that day. There's no note on the door of your hospital saying, whoops, sorry, hop in the car and drive three hours. And it is this government's record, Mr. Speaker. In 1986 there were over a dozen anesthesiologists in Prince Albert.

And yet, here we are, with a Justice minister who's signalled, who has put in her own writing, her own words, where this government might be going next.

And then, Mr. Speaker, there's our new Education minister, again who strains belief. People in this province, they don't believe him because there's nothing to believe. The minister had five hours in committee last night to make his case with experts, with public servants ready and waiting, Mr. Speaker, and what did we see? He couldn't do it. All we saw were the same tired, incompetent talking points, Mr. Speaker.

The minister spent five-odd hours condescending to the province about the things he's learned since August. And he could not come up with a good reason, a clear reason for this change. He couldn't make his own case, Mr. Speaker. The talking points

aren't cutting it. And I don't know if it's overconfidence, a fervoured, closely held belief in the actions he's undertaken on behalf of this government, on behalf of the people of the province, who are not supportive, Mr. Speaker.

But a word of advice to that new minister, so confident in all he's learned in the past couple of years that he's been in this province and the past couple of months that he's held this job. If you're going to try and convince people of something that's maybe a bit of a stretch, it has to relate to things that they already kind of believe.

And this minister can do nothing but stand up and say, the official opposition, Saskatchewan New Democrats and those like them — which, Mr. Speaker, is increasingly nearly 50 per cent of this province self-identified — those people hate children. Those people hate families. They don't care about families.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have spent a heady 16 years just hammering away, trying to convince the people of the province that the only folks who care about this economy, which again has shrunk under their watch, the only people who care about natural resources, who care about jobs, who care about fiscal responsibility are the members opposite. That well has run dry, Mr. Speaker.

People of this province have finally had enough. People of this province can see the lack of economic activity. They can see how much their grocery bill costs. They can see their wages are stagnant, Mr. Speaker. They can see the PST [provincial sales tax] added to every fun thing they try and do in this province, every pair of pants they buy to put on their kids, Mr. Speaker. Every time they go out, spend a little bit of money in the economy, they can see the impact that this government is having on their lives. That well has run dry.

So what are they trying to do now, Mr. Speaker? They're trying to convince this province that half of their neighbours hate families, don't care about kids. Mr. Speaker, I can speak for members on this side. We're sick of identity politics. I've said it before: it's the economy, stupid. Let's talk about cost of living. Let's talk about health care. Let's talk about the public services that are intrinsic, the basic needs of this province that you are failing to deliver on.

The only people who want to talk about trans issues, about queer kids, are the members opposite. Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, we will stand up and we will defend human rights any day of the week. But what we see is the increasingly calculated, desperate, thirsty grasping of members opposite as they try and convince the province that this caucus, who's had — what? — four babies on this side of the legislature? Five? It's probably had five babies. I apologize to my son; I forget he's around some times. Probably got what, like, 30 kids between us? They're trying to convince the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, the working parents on this side of the House don't care about families and are out of touch with the realities. It's a bold play, Mr. Speaker. Let's see how it pans out.

And to the Minister of Education, I'd remind him, if you're going to try and convince people of something, they should already believe it a little bit. And I know the people of this province do not believe that their neighbours hate families, hate parents.

People of this province are better than that — common values, common sense, Mr. Speaker.

His own talking points, his smugness has left him twisting in the wind, speaking down to a province. Because this room, these committees, these are accountability measures, Mr. Speaker. These are democratic institutions and they matter, Mr. Speaker, and it is a humiliation not for just that member, not for the minister, but it is a humiliation for this province and for our institutions and for our proud history. Leave it better than you found it, Mr. Speaker. Well, nobody believes that the members opposite are interested in doing that.

[09:45]

Nobody believes that the members opposite care about children, Mr. Speaker, in education, keeping kids safe. Nobody believes that, Mr. Speaker. And there's a very clear example of this — Legacy Christian. We've seen schools in this province with actual documented abuse; criminal charges for sexual interference with minors; actual groomers in schools in Saskatchewan. And what did that self-righteous government do? They turned around and they increased their funding, Mr. Speaker. You raised their funding.

When presented with clear evidence of actual child abuse in schools, didn't even respond to the emails. Not tens of thousands of emails, Mr. Speaker, which maybe get overwhelming, especially if they're from registered hate groups, but emails saying, hey, this happened, I'm concerned about this. They turn around. They raised their funding, Mr. Speaker, at schools with documented child abuse, sexual abuse of children. That is the record of this government, Mr. Speaker.

So I would say, look at the records, look at the benches in this Assembly, and look at the issues raised and the integrity of the work, Mr. Speaker. And I have confidence in the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

So those of us, Mr. Speaker, the majority of people of this province who are on the side of common sense, common values, who care about families and children and parents being engaged in education, we don't believe the members opposite — who can't even get their own stories straight around a cabinet table — don't believe they're on the side of decency, Mr. Speaker, of common sense. And that might be okay for members opposite.

But even on the far sides of the fringe, the people for whom that government is so desperate for adoration, well they don't believe them either, Mr. Speaker. This is a premier who recalled the legislature two weeks early — spending untold public dollars for this show trial, two weeks of show trials — for a policy to solve a problem that, by his own admission, doesn't exist.

And last night the Premier, members of his cabinet can't be bothered to show up and vote for that bill to proceed to the floor of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, there is a prioritization . . . I apologize, Mr. Speaker. Apologize and withdraw.

There's a prioritization, Mr. Speaker, of the needs of that government, putting in place priority of fundraising, building up that war chest, Mr. Speaker, instead of a government that in solidarity, in solidarity prioritizes this legislation.

That far fringe sees that too, Mr. Speaker. They see that this is a government that prioritizes their own needs over these values. Those people again whose adoration and acceptance you are so hungry for, they're paying attention. They're not stupid either, Mr. Speaker.

People of Saskatchewan are not dumb. They care. We can solve any problem we put our minds to, Mr. Speaker. And they see that the members opposite care about shoring up their own fortress. You know, sitting in the keep of that castle, hoarding treasure is the priority over . . . going on the attack or stopping the moderate, principled members who have stood with them from jumping over the ramparts, figuratively leaping.

So let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. The side of common sense, on the side of culture wars, no one believes in this priority. Nobody believes that this is a true, necessary priority for this government. And we used to care about building this province. And we can look back, Mr. Speaker, through the history of this province and see what we've built, what we believed collectively until August 22nd, perhaps what we took for granted as common beliefs achieved by unanimous votes in this Assembly.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I read some words yesterday from 2014 from the now Minister of Advanced Education, on transgender rights, brought forward to be protected in *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to quote again to really underscore the cognitive dissonance with which we're all sitting, and I'll quote:

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, let me repeat the words that I have said in this Chamber previously. In Saskatchewan our law recognizes the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. We do this as a province because the causes for which we stand, of justice, of freedom, and of fairness, cannot flourish where discrimination is given rein to coexist.

This bill will maintain our position as a leader in protecting human rights and ensure that Saskatchewan remains a safe and welcoming province for all.

And here we are today.

Mr. Speaker, when human rights were first brought to Saskatchewan in 1947, there was an understanding that they might evolve, that they would evolve, that they should evolve, because people are important, Mr. Speaker. The freedoms of people in this province are important.

And now we have a government that for nothing but perhaps a closely held belief that they are not courageous enough to say out loud, or their own shameful political calculus is walking us back, Mr. Speaker, before 1947.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm fighting against my urge to continue to read from *Hansard* from 1947. Not just because of the eloquence that those members brought, on both sides, not just because it's a proud part of our history, and not just to have those words echo once more through this building.

But, Mr. Speaker, because in 1947 the members of this Assembly were somehow more progressive on both sides when it came to

understanding human rights legislation. And I'll quote the former member I believe from Qu'Appelle-Wolseley — I don't know if I'm allowed to say his name if it was in 1947 — Brockelbank, Mr. Speaker. And I'll quote:

I think that we will be able, in the future, probably to go farther, to make a broader and greater statement on the freedoms and liberties which we regard as our heritage. But I want the people of this province to remember this, that if they're going to retain their freedom, then they must be forever on their guard.

And I said this, Mr. Speaker, eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. And these are members who are taking us back. It's a regression, and not just the economic regression that we've seen under members opposite. The social regression, a regression of rights which is a wild choice to make as your legacy, as a government. Because let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, this is a choice. There is no urgency.

The Premier, himself, could not say outside of this Assembly that there was any evidence that this had happened in the province, Mr. Speaker. The Justice minister has nothing but a vague and entirely ominous allusion to a rebalancing of rights, Mr. Speaker. We've already canvassed what that agenda may be. And the Education minister has nothing but a few talking points in a desperate plea — that he believes clever — to people of the province to believe that their neighbours hate families and don't care about kids.

It's a regression in decency and it damages our reputation, Mr. Speaker. Not just in *The Economist*, not just in *The Guardian*, not just in *The New York Times*, not just in our local papers, on coffee row, conversations at grocery stores and hockey rinks. It is deeply damaging to the young people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

I was stopped in a store the other day by a woman who wanted me to know how misguided this was, who had worked in education and knew the priorities in that sector, Mr. Speaker, knew about how deeply parents want to be involved in their children's education. This is somebody who worked in homeschooling with families who are participating in a different way. This is somebody who knows the breadth of educational offerings in this province, who knows families in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what she told me? Her daughter has moved from this province, Mr. Speaker, and her daughter doesn't tell people she's from Saskatchewan because she doesn't want to have the conversation about what that means. That's awful, Mr. Speaker, and that's a true story.

[10:00]

The members opposite don't need to believe it, but I know people in the province, unfortunately, are having conversations like that in grocery stores, at hockey rinks, coffee shops, with their own family, with their own children. And I wish, Mr. Speaker, I wish the members opposite would believe that these are real people, would believe that these are real stories. Not just this one, which is true, Mr. Speaker, but the letters that have been read by my colleagues.

Those come from real people, Mr. Speaker. Those don't come from NDP [New Democratic Party] activists. Those don't come from, you know, some fervid shop with ChatGPT going on one computer and somebody frantically editing. These are real, earnest submissions made by people from communities across the province, maybe people who have never engaged their democracy in this way, the people who cared so much that they said share my story, share my words, Mr. Speaker.

I've got a stack here that I'm likely not going to be able to read but I will table in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I'd ask the members opposite to read them. There's people who've provided their names, Mr. Speaker. And this is just a sample of the letters that came into my office specifically. So I'd ask the members opposite to read those, to hear the voices that have been brought as coming from real flesh-and-blood people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

And even outside of this special sitting, Mr. Speaker, we see members of the public come to this Assembly with their concerns, which I've said again and I'll say before, Mr. Speaker, is no one's first choice. It's their last choice, Mr. Speaker, and it's a shame that it comes to that. No one should have to come to this building to bleed on the floor of the rotunda, to sit and weep in the galleries, to get the attention of their government, Mr. Speaker.

But again these are real people with stories that matter. These are people saying these are our priorities. This is my nonbinary child who died by suicide because there weren't ample supports, Mr. Speaker. These are the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, and we believe them. And I would beg the members opposite to believe them too.

Because when it comes to this province, Mr. Speaker, we can do anything. Lougheed, Blakeney, Davis — they believed that the work that they did made a better Canada. It made us stronger. They were proud of the work that they had done together to build up this great nation, to enshrine and protect freedoms, not to create opportunities for the values, for the beliefs, for the opportunity for vulnerable children to have their rights stripped away, Mr. Speaker.

Diversity. Equality. Respect. Those are things, Mr. Speaker, we used to believe, we all agreed on in this Assembly. Regardless of which side of the aisle we sat on, diversity, equality, respect — those were commonly held values, Mr. Speaker. Common sense. And yet here we are, Mr. Speaker.

I say it again. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom, Mr. Speaker. If we believe in diversity, if we believe in equality of all people in this province, no matter how old they are — maybe they're under 16, maybe they've only ever lived under this government, 16 years — their rights, their opportunities to be their true selves, they matter as well, Mr. Speaker.

We have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and we have the privilege to defend rights. I would hope that's something we all share. But what we should not do with this great privilege that all of us have in this Assembly no matter where you sit . . . Because I believe it was Allan Blakeney who said there are no bad seats in this building. We can protect rights, Mr. Speaker, and we should do no wrong.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this government's bill.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to third reading of this motion on the bill that was introduced so ably and capably by the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I am in full agreement with the minister's decision to move what was previously provincial education policy, from policy to legislation, and to provide clarity in terms of the roles and rights of parents in our education system.

Initially these policies were announced in the summer prior to the return of school to provide the clarity and consistency to school divisions, teachers, parents, and students, as I said, prior to the school year beginning. However as we know, that changed with the injunction that was granted at the end of September, and shortly after the Premier affirmed the desire of the government to use all tools necessary and available to ensure the policy direction prevailed.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that the extension of the number of sitting hours has allowed for 40 hours, nearly 40 hours now, of debate by members, double the 20 hours of debate normally prescribed under the rules of the Chamber and certainly more than the one and a half hours spent on average by members of the opposition on bills introduced by the government — an extraordinary amount of time to debate a matter that in any other time would be considered ordinary or common sense, to give parents the right to parent their children, to be involved in their lives, and more specifically their education.

I for one have been encouraged to see, despite what you may read in the media or what you may hear from the members opposite, that the vast majority of people in this province, including parents, agree. Parental inclusion is a good thing, not something to run from.

Members have had the ability over 40 hours to debate essentially policies that were already in place by practice or policy in many if not most school divisions. For example, it has been pointed out by the Minister of Education the requirement to notify parents when and in what manner sexual health education would be presented to students was already the standing policy in the majority of school divisions. Either informing or, in the case of a number of divisions, requiring parental consent was already in place.

But there was a lack of consistency in terms of whether it was parental information or parental consent or how much advance notice was given or even if the onus was on the school or in some cases the onus was on the parent. But again, some version existed in the majority of school divisions, and yet no one suggested that irreparable harm was being caused. So we created a provincial policy, in fact taken word for word from one of our public school division's administrative policies.

It is the government's belief that parents are partners in their children's education. As the Premier said, it must be the default position of the education system to involve parents. The default

position must be one of parental inclusion, not exclusion, and I was pleased to see that a number of school divisions confirmed that this is in fact their policies and always has been. North East School Division is one example, and most recently, my home school division of South East Cornerstone School Division. In recent days, the director of education has had this to say:

The majority of what seems to be included in the press release on this new legislation is either in *The Education Act* or is in policy as current practice.

He went on to say:

I think the major difference appears to be the policy regarding pronouns and name changes for trans youth. We have always had a default position in this school division that parents should be involved, regardless of age, in these discussions.

As I said, this has been the policy and practice for most divisions. But those opposing this bill, will they take the position or would they take the position that these school divisions like South East Cornerstone have and continue to subject students to irreparable harm?

The director continued by saying:

One of the first questions that's asked by schools is, do your parents know? And if they don't, can we help you in having a conversation with them?

He then clarified:

The only time we wouldn't have shared that information in the past is when there was a safety concern for the student.

Which is exactly the policy that we announced this summer, the same policy deemed to be that of causing irreparable harm, but nobody has been accusing South East Cornerstone of irreparable harm.

Mr. Speaker, while these are or have been the policies for most divisions, there has been a move under way to change that. I became aware of it last fall as students and teachers were returning to school for the new year, as one of our public divisions had introduced the new policy just prior to the summer break that would exclude parents when it came to names and pronouns should the student decide they didn't want their parents to know. And this was first brought to my attention by teachers who were not comfortable with this direction, who questioned their future employment if they decided not to sign saying that they would abide by that new policy. And as news of this new policy slowly filtered out, parents began to raise concerns, not just about the single policy change but the direction of which it was leading to. And so it was parents and teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this has been subject to most of the 40 hours of debate that's been purposed, which by the way is 40 more hours than was ever afforded to anyone when these policies quietly came into place. But I'll just say this, Mr. Speaker, parents are partners in education, period. Kids exploring their identities do better when parents are involved.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition on John Gormley's radio show said when it comes to kids not having a safe home, it's "one in a thousand." So why wouldn't we develop policy and now legislation that speaks to the vast, vast majority? The 999 out of 1,000 that is inclusive of parents while ensuring there are provisions for the one. The Leader of the Opposition apparently agrees with this, that it is the vast, vast majority of parents who aren't a risk to their own children. So let's develop policy with that in mind and not the straw man that we've been hearing about.

Mr. Speaker, this policy and now proposed legislation is alive to the practicalities of life. School division policies that were in place to withhold the preferred name and the pronoun of students were impractical. To think that the name and pronoun of a student without the knowledge of the parents, used in the classroom, on the school bus, on the playground, and somehow wouldn't get back to the student's parents? It's unlikely, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, this proposed legislation is a reminder that despite anyone's best intentions, one fact remains. Children are children. And we, from time to time, are required to put in guardrails. This already happens in education policy.

I would quote from a letter to the editor in the *Regina Leader-Post*, one that was critical of the government's legislation, particularly of allowing for the notification of sex ed, again which existed in the majority of school divisions. The author of that letter closes by saying, and I quote, "Teenagers are going to have sex with or without education about contraception. Parts of their brains governing judgment and impulse control aren't fully developed." To which I would reply, exactly.

[10:15]

Apparently the author of that letter didn't realize that her criticism actually helps to make the government's point. We are dealing with children who may not have the ability to fully appreciate or accurately perceive how their parents may respond. The answer must not be how do we keep them away; it must always be, in the words of Keith Keating, "... do your parents know? And if they don't, can we help you in having a conversation with them?" How else can we expect a parent to be able to support their child if the policy is to keep them away? Especially when a child is going through an issue that may be of a magnitude that most cannot imagine.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude with this. During my time as Education minister, I was very open with the fact that I had never been a school board trustee, nor was I a school teacher, but that I was the parent, and the parent of three children, two of whom are in the school system, and that what I wanted for my kids in terms of their education is what I would want for every child that I was responsible for: that they would develop the knowledge, the skills, and the character that would serve them well in life.

When it comes to our three children, Amanda and I have a set of our own values and beliefs that we want to instill in them. And if you knew the entire list, I'm sure that there would be things that you would agree with, and I'm sure that there would be some that you wouldn't, and that's fair. Raise your kids how you see fit, and we'll do likewise, if that's still allowed in today's world.

But there is one thing that we hold tightly to that is not negotiable, that our three will know and understand, regardless of who tries to tell them otherwise: that we don't keep secrets. That is a lesson — and “lesson” is far too pedestrian of a term — that is a lesson in our family that has been hard fought and hard won.

And so, as Minister of Education, I could not support something for your family, for your family, or for your family, that I could not abide by for my own. And so I will be supporting third reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, we started this conversation last Thursday saying, process matters. We still fully believe that process matters. And that conversation started when this government rammed through changes to the rules of procedure in this legislature to get this bill passed as quickly as they possibly could.

That bill was introduced that day, eight days ago, Mr. Speaker. This bill was introduced to the public eight days ago. Now members opposite can talk about how they doubled the time for debate — usually it's 20 hours; this time it's 40 hours. That was eight days ago, and it would have been shorter had this government got their way on Thursday.

What have we seen in these past eight days, Mr. Speaker? Well we've seen concerned statements from the Human Rights Commission, the resignation of a Human Rights Commissioner. We've seen statements from the Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan Trial Lawyers Association, the College of Law, many members of that faculty, Mr. Speaker. We have seen letters upon letters upon letters from youth, parents, teachers, allies, members of the public raising their concerns, asking this government: what are you doing, and why are you doing it so quickly?

Mr. Speaker, we saw this gallery fill with kids, Mr. Speaker. Queer youth and their allies left their classrooms to come to their legislature to say, what are you doing and why are you doing it so quickly and why aren't you listening to us? Mr. Speaker, that was in eight days. That's it. All of those voices in the maximum time this government has allowed for debate on this piece of legislation.

And like I've said before, you know, “debate” is a loose term here in this province. You didn't see much of a back-and-forth. I mean, you've just seen one entry on third reading. We saw one entry on second reading that wasn't the Minister of Education, and that was it. This opposition has done the work. We knew full well we couldn't stop the passage of this bill, but every single day the case was presented to this government about why this was the wrong decision, this was a bad decision, and this was a decision that was being made far too quickly, Mr. Speaker.

And as a note to government members: if this special sitting was pitched to you as a way of really sticking it to the Sask NDP, really hurting us — you know, we're going to make it long hours; we're going to make them go for 40 hours rather than 20 — I'll tell you what. This Sask NDP caucus, this official opposition has not been stronger, more resolved, more determined, more united

than we are right now. So for that and only that, I say thank you.

Now I'm going to read in one letter from one of my constituents, knowing I don't have enough time to read in all of the letters that I have received. But I do want to cede the floor to one of my constituents who is trans, and she has sent me a lot of emails over the past few weeks expressing how truly heartbroken she is about the decisions this government has made and what it means for her and her community. She said in this one in particular:

It is October 10th. It is World Mental Health Day. The irony is not lost on me that the Government of Saskatchewan is choosing this day specifically to make the mental health of a chosen minority worse. Scott Moe, Dustin Duncan, Jeremy Cockrill, and the rest of the Saskatchewan Party caucus, by attacking a small, vulnerable minority of children and wielding the power of the government to completely remove their human rights — specifically their rights to safety and dignity — will have a brutal and chilling effect on every transgender and gender-diverse person in Saskatchewan.

By targeting transgender and gender-diverse children, Scott Moe and his government have signalled to their supporters and the province as whole that abuse and attacks against transgender people is not only acceptable, it is a matter of government policy.

When the government attacks any minority specifically, it creates a socially acceptable minority for abuse and attack. We saw this in a spike in racial violence against Chinese people, East Asian people, and Pacific Islanders when the former president of the United States called COVID-19 the “China virus.”

When the government sets a tone, its supporters will follow. Scott Moe, Dustin Duncan, and Jeremy Cockrill will use the contents of 18 letters and create a policy over nine days to attack and abuse transgender people across the province in a cynical ploy to distract from their poor record on housing, the homeless, letting the health care system collapse during the height of the pandemic, and the affordability crisis that everyone except the Premier and his party will have to suffer.

This policy will make the province worse. The politics of this policy will make the province less safe, less inviting, and less worthy for a business to invest here lest they be seen as agreeing with the government's desire to suspend the rights of a minority group because of 18 letters received in a province of over 1 million people.

The Premier and his caucus have declared open season for attacks on transgender rights and transgender people in the province of Saskatchewan. They have deliberately chosen to make the province dangerous for transgender and gender-diverse people, because a small minority told them to do it. That is scary. That makes the mental health of transgender people worse, and to do it on World Mental Health Day is a choice made by a group of people with only the worst of intentions for the province and its most vulnerable people.

I'm going to read in another letter. This is from an individual who

is a registered doctoral psychologist:

I am speaking both as a citizen and as a registered doctoral psychologist with over a decade of mental health training. I am deeply disturbed by the new bill requiring parental consent before children can be addressed by their pronouns and chosen name. I have tried to reach out to MLAs, cabinet ministers, and Scott Moe himself to discuss my concerns and provide my mental health expertise. Unfortunately I have received little-to-no response.

I am in touch with many psychologists across the province, and as far as I'm aware the Saskatchewan Party has not consulted with any of them to learn about the potential mental health implications of this policy. I believe it is my duty to speak up and shed some light on this matter.

The state of mental health care in this province is devastating. On a regular basis I hear first-hand accounts from individuals who have struggled to access appropriate mental health treatment. Every single person is affected by the gaps in mental health services, whether they themselves are struggling or whether they are watching a family member or friend struggle. But instead of focusing on improving mental health care, our government is choosing to put their time, energy, and resources into this bill, a bill that will actively harm the mental health of our province's children.

I was going to start by providing a more detailed overview of the extensive body of scientific literature relevant to this new bill, but I think that's already been well established here. Studies consistently show that when trans and nonbinary children do not have their identity affirmed, for example, when they are misgendered and called by their dead name, they are at an increased risk of negative mental health outcomes including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide.

This bill isn't just condoning the misgendering and deadnaming of trans and nonbinary youth, it is actively encouraging and in fact mandating it. The policy is clear. Teachers must misgender and deadname a child until parental consent is obtained to use the correct pronouns and name, no matter how long this process may take and even where it is determined that it is not safe to seek parental consent. This means that the new bill is putting children at risk of mental health crises.

So we know that this policy isn't based on science or reason, but I also want to go beyond the science and talk about the lived experiences of people most impacted by this policy. Since this bill was announced, I have had the opportunity to talk to a number of individuals about the negative toll that this bill is already taking on their mental health.

Of course trans and nonbinary folks — including children, adolescents, and adults — are bearing the brunt of this. This is one of the most marginalized populations in our country. They experience discrimination on so many fronts and in so many forms. They are already at an increased risk of violence, suicide, and mental health concerns. And now not only is their government failing to protect them, their

government is actively working against them.

I have also heard from gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals who are deeply concerned for their trans and nonbinary friends. They are also concerned for their own rights. They point out that if the government is targeting trans and nonbinary folks, then what is to stop them from going after other members of the LGBTQ+ community?

Take a look through the pages of history, and it is easy to understand where these fears come from. As recently as the 1980s, homosexuality, as it was then referred to, was classified as a mental disorder. It was viewed as something to be treated or something to be punished or something to be erased. Now many of us look back on this chapter of history with horror, and yet it seems like the government hasn't learned from it.

This bill, by its design, will erase trans and nonbinary identities. With this bill, many trans and nonbinary kids will end up punished for being who they are. Make no mistake — by enacting this bill, our government is writing a chapter in history that our country will look back on with horror.

[10:30]

Scott Moe and other members of government will deny this, of course. They will claim that this bill isn't about targeting trans and nonbinary folks. They will claim that it is about protecting parents' rights to be informed. It isn't. If it were simply about informing parents, then there would be no need to provide parents with veto power, to give parents the authority to deny their child's right to be called by their proper name and pronouns.

If it were simply about informing parents, then this bill wouldn't just target trans and nonbinary children, it would target any child who shares any significant matter with a teacher. For example, coming out as gay, changing religions, or bringing a date to the school dance. There are so many significant events that teachers are privy to, yet trans and nonbinary children are the only ones having an entire bill enacted to give their parents veto power over how they are treated at school.

Scott Moe and his followers will also claim that most parents will be supportive of their child's identity and that being informed will bring families closer together. In a perfect world, that would be the case.

But it isn't a perfect world. Not every parent will support their child. There will be those who try to stamp out their child's identity, maybe even going so far as to place them in conversion therapy, which unfortunately still exists and which we know, without a shadow of a doubt, has truly horrifying mental health effects. Other parents will actually kick their child out of the home, which could lead to other disastrous effects for the child, including living in poverty, being unhoused, and being increasingly vulnerable to abuse.

There is no way for teachers to know for sure whether it is safe for a student to come out to their parents. Teachers are not in the home, and children who are abused often do not

disclose the abuse. I have asked members of this government to comment on whether there is a plan in place to help teachers predict whether it is safe for a child to come out to their family. No one has had an answer for this, as there is no answer. It is not possible.

Since there is no way to predict with absolute certainty which parents will and will not be supportive, I have also asked members of this government to comment on whether they have a plan in place to work with all families to increase support. This question too has gone unanswered.

I assume I have not received a response because the government has no response to give. They have not thought through the policy enough to develop specific strategies to increase family support, nor have they considered the amount of time such strategies would take to implement, nor the fact that children would be at risk while they wait for the strategies to take effect.

And even with appropriate supports in place, there will still be parents who do not support their child's identity. According to this bill, teachers are required to continue misgendering and deadnaming these children no matter the cost to their mental health. This means that children must choose between the mental health effects and perhaps physical dangers of coming out in an unsupportive home environment, or the mental health effects of being misgendered and deadnamed at schools.

Of course many parents will be supportive when their child comes out as trans or nonbinary. For these parents there's absolutely no need for legislation mandating that their child be outed to them. The children of supportive parents will come out to their parents in their own time. Children are the best judges of whether their parents will be supportive and also of how they want to initiate that conversation.

The Sask Party fails to acknowledge the damage that is done when an individual is outed against their will. Even if a child has a supportive family, we know how important it is for them to be able to come out on their own time and in their own way. This is true for gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual folks, and this is true for trans and nonbinary folks. This bill will result in one of two things: either trans and nonbinary kids have to remain in the closet in all areas of their life, or they have to be outed to their families before they are ready. Both of these options have negative mental health outcomes.

This bill has other implications even beyond the mental health effects. What about the implications when it comes to autonomy and consent? This policy is teaching kids that they should not have power over their own identities, their own lives, even their own bodies. As a woman, as a psychologist, and as a human being, I am not okay with this message.

This message is not only implicit, but it is explicit. The Sask Party's bill specifically says that children cannot receive sex education without the consent of their parents. Sex education has many purposes, but one of the most important is teaching kids about their right to make decisions about their own bodies and their right to set boundaries.

And again the bill is not just saying that parents must be informed; it is giving them veto power. That veto power creates risks for children of all gender identities, because all children can be exposed to the harms of sexual assault, unintended pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections.

It is especially horrifying to realize that children who are being sexually abused at home now cannot be taught about consent and healthy boundaries unless they first receive the consent of their abusers. As someone who works with survivors of sexual abuse on a daily basis, I cannot begin to express how devastating this is.

Every parent, health care provider, community member, and voter has an interest in protecting kids from abuse. Again the government may claim that this bill is about parental rights but to the untrained eye and to my trained eye, it seems like this policy is just a way of keeping a lid on children's gender identity when it doesn't fit with what those in power are most comfortable with. And I simply cannot fathom how members of this government have convinced themselves that targeting trans and nonbinary children is an appropriate use of the notwithstanding clause.

I have heard many individuals who are not gender-diverse state that they do not understand the experience of trans and nonbinary individuals. It is clear that the people who created this policy do not understand the experiences of trans and nonbinary individuals. Fortunately it isn't necessary for them to understand. What is necessary is for them to listen to the voices of those who are directly impacted by this bill, listen to trans and nonbinary folks.

It is also necessary for our government to consult with the experts, with those who have knowledge in mental health and child development and education and in gender-based discrimination. Our government is not only neglecting to do this, they are passing this bill outside the normal legislative process that would allow experts and members of the public time to make their voices heard.

Our government should be protecting its most marginalized citizens. They are failing these citizens. They are failing our children. They are failing LGBTQ+ communities. They are failing educators. And now, in trying to enact the notwithstanding clause, they are failing every single Saskatchewan citizen. This isn't democracy.

That is the end of the letter.

Now I hear the former minister of Education's remarks that he gave prior to mine, and he said, and please understand that I'm paraphrasing, but he said that he acknowledges that this will affect the minority of the minority of children in our province. And he says, so why not pass legislation for the majority of our province, the majority of the majority, the children who won't be affected?

Leaving some of that logic aside, Mr. Speaker, that is what the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is for. It's to protect the minorities, the vulnerable minorities, from decisions which could be harmful by government.

This government is openly acknowledging that they know that this bill will infringe on the rights of children, of vulnerable children, of gender-diverse children, of trans children. Because the notwithstanding clause is right in there. They're not even going to wait for the courts to tell them that.

They also know that this bill is infringing on the human rights code because that notwithstanding clause is also in there, Mr. Speaker, despite this government, in 2015, expanding that code. Mr. Speaker, something has changed since 2015, and they have yet to say what that is, Mr. Speaker. I mean, leaving the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* aside, there's also the UN [United Nations] convention of the rights of children, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't know if members opposite heard the Minister of Education yesterday in committee when asked whether or not he believed that this government, the Saskatchewan Party government is obligated to follow the UN convention of the rights of children. He said, Mr. Speaker, this government, this Saskatchewan Party government doesn't "... take orders from the United Nations," Mr. Speaker.

Is that the position of this government now, Mr. Speaker? What about UNDRIP [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples]? Does this government understand why the United Nations was even created in the first place, Mr. Speaker? That it was born out of World War II and the genocide, the Holocaust, the murder of Jewish people, Mr. Speaker. Does this government understand that, now that they don't take orders from the United Nations, Mr. Speaker?

I mean this is a government that has a flag of Israel out in the rotunda right now. If they won't listen to the voices of trans people, if they won't listen to the voices of psychologists, Mr. Speaker, maybe they will listen to this voice. This is coming from a lawyer who lives in Saskatoon. She sent this letter to the Premier and the Justice minister and cc'd myself.

She said:

To Saskatchewan leadership:

I write this email as a concerned resident of Saskatchewan, as a Jewish person living with a very real sense of fear and unsafeness. I write this email as a Canadian citizen whose gratitude for the existence of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms cannot be understated, especially in a time of crisis such as this.

As a person who recognizes the fundamental importance of the protection a Charter affords to the most vulnerable, I write this email as a resident of Saskatchewan who's deeply concerned by the Sask Party's blatant subversion of rule of law and the Sask Party's failure to protect its electorate.

The horrendous and unspeakable acts of violence in Israel and Palestine this past week are unjustifiable. They have made Jewish people like me feel unsafe in our skin. No person in Saskatchewan, Canada, or the world should ever feel unsafe for being who they are. This includes the Palestinian people living in Gaza and beyond who do not support the terrorist organization Hamas and who have

become the victims of unjustifiable violence. The right to feel safe and protected extends to all people, including the children and residents of Saskatchewan.

Government and thereby its elected officials have an obligation, a non-negotiable obligation to protect its citizens. This obligation extends to protecting the physical, economic, and psychological safety of its citizens. This is not an easy job. It is often a thankless job, but it is a necessary one. A job every single politician signs up for when they are elected to represent their electorate.

Bill 137 represents the Saskatchewan government's failure to protect one of its most vulnerable demographics — children. This alone should be enough to convince the Sask Party of the delegitimacy of this Bill. If a law begs the question that children may be harmed in the making of it, it is not worth implementing. Full stop.

If numerous residents of Canada publicly and directly raise concerns with the safety of Saskatchewan children from the implementation of this legislation, the governing party has an obligation to take this to heart and to adjust its laws accordingly. The concept of "parental rights" does not exist in law in Saskatchewan or Canada. In stark contrast, the obligation to protect the vulnerable and the obligation to protect children exists both in our civil and criminal law. It is a tenet of our legal system. To suggest otherwise is simply inaccurate.

[10:45]

If government enacts legislation that is lawfully determined to violate the rights and protections of Canadian citizens, as protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the law is struck down as unconstitutional. This is the basis of our constitutional democracy. This represents the proper checks and balances we have created in our civil and democratic society.

Government doesn't always get it right. The court doesn't always get it right. They communicate with one another, they dialogue, and in doing so, the government and the courts create laws that govern its citizens in the most humane, respectful, and protective manner that adheres to our Constitution.

The Sask Party's staunch decision to invoke the notwithstanding clause in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms represents the clearest affront to Canada's civil society. As a resident of Saskatchewan, a citizen of Canada, and a member of a minority group, the use of the notwithstanding clause conveys a message to me and all other minorities that we are dispensable, that we are not worthy of protection, that we particularly are not worthy of the protection afforded by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This Act says to me my government does not care about me. It does not protect me. This is the single biggest failing of a government.

I am heartbroken to say I am embarrassed and disappointed to be a resident of Saskatchewan. I have always been a proud Saskatchewanian. This is no longer true. I feel

immense shame in light of the Sask Party's attempt to pass Bill 137. More importantly I am scared and anxious, as a citizen of this province, country, and world, that my government is steadfastly invoking the notwithstanding clause.

Not only is the Sask Party implementing the improper process to invoke such a clause, doing so directly undermines the most important tenet of our society, the rule of law. If we lose this, we have nothing. Civil society as we know it will crumble. This is not an over-exaggeration. This will have lasting detrimental and potentially irreparable impacts on our society. History shows this.

I will not be a part of the demise of my beautiful province. I do not want to see civil society as I know it regress. I do not want to see vulnerable communities become fearful to live. But I am seeing it. And this will only continue with the passage of Bill 137 and the Sask Party invoking the notwithstanding clause.

I implore you to see the irreparable harm caused by the Sask Party's intended course of action. I do not support Bill 137. I do not support the use of the notwithstanding clause. I cannot and will not support a political party who proceeds in this fashion. This course of action stands in stark contrast to the obligation of government to protect its citizens. I will never support a government that does not protect its citizens. Do not proceed with Bill 137. Do not invoke the notwithstanding clause. Do not do this to our province. Do not do this to your electorate.

End of the letter, Mr. Speaker.

I ask this government, who are they going to listen to? None of these voices are enough for them, Mr. Speaker. And again this was in eight days from the introduction of the bill, we've had all of these voices speak out, Mr. Speaker. No wonder they didn't want this bill to go through the regular process, Mr. Speaker. No wonder they didn't want this bill to be debated and discussed and consulted on for six months, Mr. Speaker.

These are powerful messages. And she talks about a concept that hasn't been talked about much during the course of this conversation, during the course of this debate, and that is the rule of the law, Mr. Speaker. And I mentioned it on Thursday; I'm going to mention it again. The Premier's decision to use the term "judicial overreach," Mr. Speaker, on a decision related to an injunction application which is a pause on the policy to allow the court to hear arguments on the substantive application the Premier described as judicial overreach. That is a slap in the face, a shot across the bow to the rule of law, and it is Trump-style politics plain and simple. You can't call it much else than that.

And this province collectively has to and will say no to that kind of divisive politics. They will say no to that shot across the bow to the rule of law to the important tenets of our democratic institutions, Mr. Speaker. And like I said before, every single member of the bar who is a Sask Party MLA knows exactly what I'm talking about and should have spoken up.

You know, we've talked about it a bit. I want to bring it up again with what little time we have left before this government will

decide how they're voting on this bill, before each government MLA must decide how they're voting on this bill. Who else hasn't been consulted? And I think we've talked a lot, and I cannot overemphasize the importance of those in the community, those in the trans community, those in the queer community, and youth in particular who were left out of this conversation by their Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

But there are also other implications of this legislation that this government hasn't bothered to look into or consult on, Mr. Speaker. You know, one thing this legislation doesn't really contemplate or talk about is what happens in a case of a family breakdown, Mr. Speaker? Who is a parent pursuant to this legislation, Mr. Speaker? Is it all biological parents? What about parents who haven't been involved in the lives of their child? Do they have equal ability to say yes or no than a parent who has primary custody?

What about the mature minor doctrine? That's a very common doctrine, well understood, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice had brought up the fact that consent is required for some medical treatments, for some vaccinations. There is a mature minor exception to that that she failed to leave out, Mr. Speaker, and it isn't included in this bill. There is no exception for mature minors pursuant to this legislation, Mr. Speaker. How is that supposed to interplay with *The Children's Law Act*? Completely silent, no consultation with the family law bar, Mr. Speaker.

What about the best interests of the children, Mr. Speaker? What about the best interests of children? That is an understood principle that flows through the legislation that deals with children, be it child apprehension law, family law, you name it — every piece of legislation except for this one, Mr. Speaker.

In the event of a family breakdown and courts are left to decide what to do, custody and access time, Mr. Speaker, they don't turn to the parents and say, what do you want, what do you want? Okay, we'll pick you. They are obligated, pursuant to law, to look first to the best interests of the children. They take a child-centred approach. Our family law system is designed to take a child-centred approach. Why is this legislation different? Completely silent on that issue, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Justice has spoken here and spoken in media about the use of the notwithstanding clause. And her and I have been having a bit of a war of quotes, I would say — you know, quoting Allan Blakeney, quoting Peter Lougheed, Mr. Speaker. And she's right, this is unsettled law, Mr. Speaker. There is no clear line that has been determined yet as to when a notwithstanding clause should or should not be used.

But I do want government members to know that for the most part, most academics will agree that the notwithstanding clause should be used as a measure of last resort. Mr. Speaker, it is not being used as a measure of last resort here. That it should be used after the judicial process has completely worked its way through, that's not happening here, Mr. Speaker. That it should do as little harm as possible, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's what's happening here, Mr. Speaker.

And many would say that it should be used only to deal with publicly non-controversial issues, Mr. Speaker. I don't think you can get a much more controversial issue than this one, Mr.

Speaker. I will admit that this is a very divisive topic. I think that's exactly why this government has brought it up, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister of Justice will say that the Sask Party government is in good company with using the notwithstanding clause in the way that they have and for the purpose that they have, Mr. Speaker. I implore her to compare apples to apples.

Yes, Quebec has used it a lot of times. The context in which they have used it needs to be fully understood and talked about, Mr. Speaker. It was being done as bit of a protest, I would say, and they were using it for every piece of legislation over a course of time. I mean, is the government implying that that's what they're going to do next? I'm not saying they are, but if we're going to compare apples and apples, let's compare apples to apples, because this government stands alone in what they're doing now in terms of using the notwithstanding clause to purposely infringe on the rights of children, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

Now there was a time not very long ago where we agreed. We passed consent legislation on using the notwithstanding clause. That was to protect the rights of children to choose which school they wanted to attend, not to infringe on the rights of children, Mr. Speaker. And that bill never had to receive Royal Assent. Last resort, Mr. Speaker, the Court of Appeal made it so that bill was no longer necessary, Mr. Speaker.

So again I say for this government, you are making history today. And perhaps some of you are proud of that, but I hope for some of you it gives you pause because you are knowingly passing legislation which will infringe on the rights of vulnerable children, Mr. Speaker. And any government worth their salt would at least take pause before they did that, Mr. Speaker.

And there are a varying level of members on government side who, some have been here longer than others, Mr. Speaker. And I will say, you know, there are things that they have done as a government that I'm sure they are proud about, that I'm sure they are proud that they have done for the province of Saskatchewan. And for many . . . for some I would say I agree with them.

But this vote today, this will be your legacy. The rest of it gets washed away, because this is what makes history. This is legacy, Mr. Speaker. Whatever you've done before this won't matter, Mr. Speaker. That applies to every government MLA, not just every government MLA who votes today, but every MLA who wears the Sask Party banner, Mr. Speaker.

And I hope at the very least that gives you pause. If not the voices that have come to this Chamber, this Assembly, who's filled this gallery, if that didn't give you pause, if the letters didn't give you pause, if the voices of concern didn't give you pause from all of these organizations, Mr. Speaker, if the rollback of human rights doesn't give you pause, if the deliberate violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of children don't give you pause, perhaps that legacy will. That's my hope, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to the sessional order, debate time has expired. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — All those in favour, say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Speaker: — Those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 11:03 until 11:33.]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister that Bill No. 137, *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023/Loi modificative de 2023 sur l'éducation (Déclaration des droits des parents)* be now read a third time.

All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

[Yeas — 40]

Moe	McMorris	Hindley
Reiter	Harpauer	Duncan
Merriman	Tell	Makowsky
Marit	Cheveldayoff	Skoropad
Kaeding	Cockrill	L. Ross
Eyre	J. Harrison	Carr
Hargrave	T. McLeod	Buckingham
Bradshaw	Fiaz	Dennis
Kirsch	Lambert	Francis
C. Young	Bonk	Nerlien
B. McLeod	Friesen	Grewal
Goudy	Keisig	Lemaigre
Jenson	D. Harrison	Domotor
Wilson		

The Speaker: — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — 12]

Beck	Nippi-Albright	Mowat
Wotherspoon	Love	Teed
A. Young	Burki	Clarke
Sarauer	Conway	Bowes

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 40; those opposed, 12.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — I am advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is here for Royal Assent. All please rise.

[At 11:38 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber and took his seat upon the Throne. His Honour then gave Royal Assent to the following bill.]

ROYAL ASSENT

His Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly in its present session has passed a bill which, in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — Your Honour, the bill is as follows:

Bill No. 137 — *The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2023/Loi modificative de 2023 sur l'éducation (Déclaration des droits des parents)*

His Honour: — In His Majesty's name, I assent to this bill.

The Speaker: — Please rise for the departure of His Honour.

[At 11:39 His Honour retired from the Chamber.]

The Speaker: — Please be seated. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS**Session Adjournment**

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, in accordance with the parliamentary calendar, it shall stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on October 25th, 2023, unless earlier recalled by the Speaker upon the request of the government.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader moved:

That when the Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, in accordance with the parliamentary calendar, it shall stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on October 25th, 2023, unless earlier recalled by the Speaker upon the request of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This House now stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 25th.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:41.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Health

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Tim McLeod
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the
Provincial Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety
Minister Responsible for the Firearms Secretariat

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for
Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Environment

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Advanced Education