



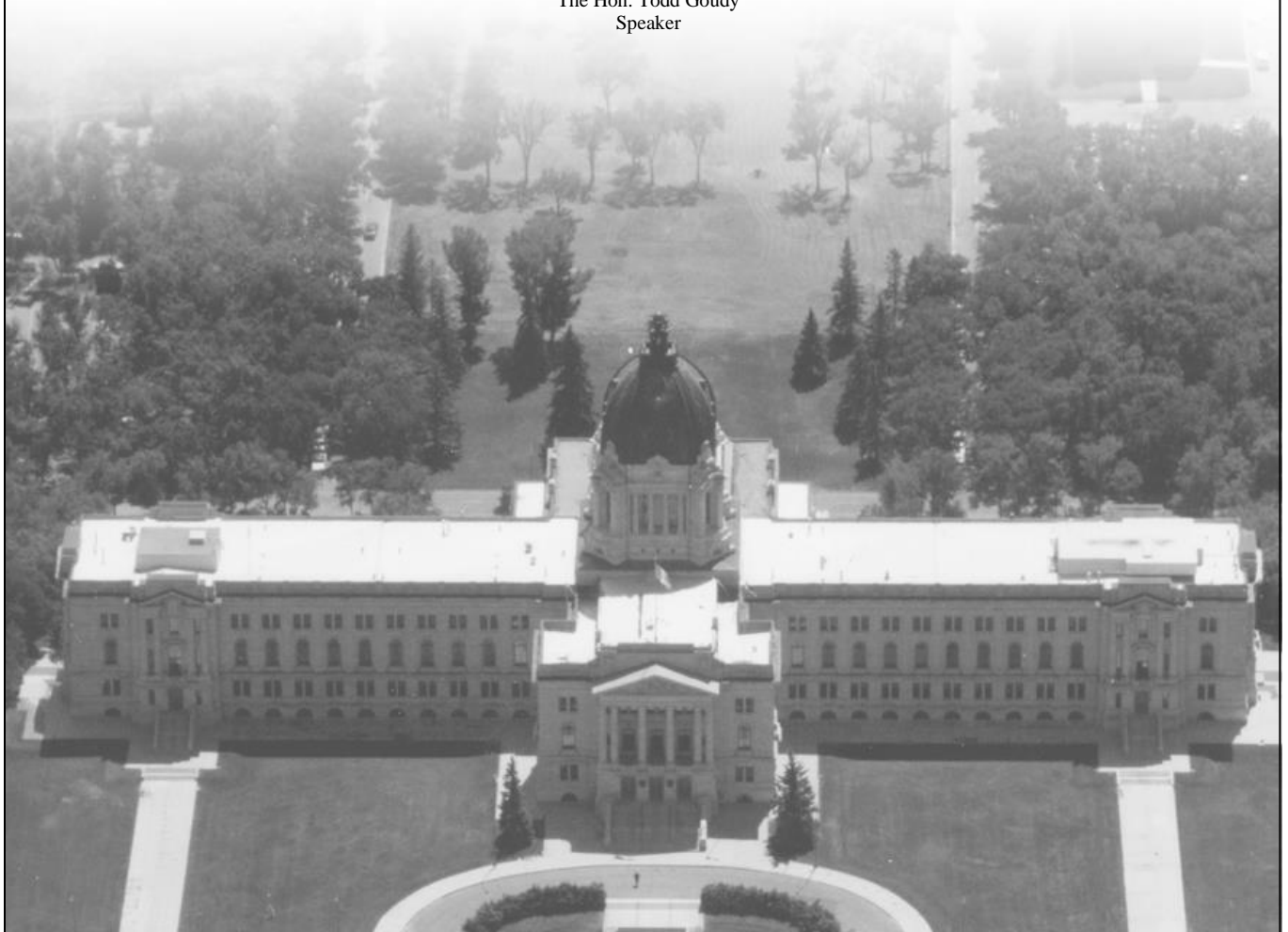
FIRST SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Todd Goudy
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st Session — 30th Legislature

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

Speaker — Hon. Todd Goudy
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 27

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

Speaker Goudy: — Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I have an incredible family in your east gallery. I will say that they are doing a really great job.

I have a special guest today, Holly Allison-Kay. I have a member's statement about her as well, but she's not alone today. She is joined today with her husband, Gerard; daughters Katherine, Alexandria, Stephanie; and a grandson Stuart. So I will request to all members of this Chamber to join me and welcome to their Assembly.

While I'm standing on my feet, I will definitely recognize and I will say welcome to my CA [constituency assistant], Bre Litzenberger. She's been a really strong supporter during my first year of the office, so she's been supporting a lot. So I will request again to all members in this Chamber to join me and welcome her to her Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

Bhajan Brar: — Mr. Speaker, I am seeking leave to make an extended introduction. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Bhajan Brar: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I have an incredible guest in the Speaker's gallery, Dr. Rajni Patel. He has been serving our Regina community as a family physician since the last 42 years. He is hard-working, kind, and dedicated to his profession. Mr. Speaker, I request all members to join me to welcome Dr. Rajni Patel to his Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

Jacqueline Roy: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce Mr. Dylan Morin who is sitting across from us today in the gallery. Mr. Morin is a disabilities advocate for people with intellectual disabilities and indeed all kinds of disabilities here in Regina and across the province. Mr. Speaker, he does travel a lot.

He was a volunteer and then eventually a worker on our campaign. It is wonderful to have him with us here today, and

we'd like to thank him for the work he does on behalf of everyone with disabilities here in Saskatchewan.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Warman.

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome Dylan to his Assembly this afternoon. He's no stranger to this place. Had several good meetings over the last number of years during my time on Human Services Committee as well. And once again, Dylan, welcome to your Assembly and hope you enjoy the afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the member from Regina Pasqua in welcoming Dr. Patel to his Assembly today, on behalf of the official opposition and as shadow minister of Health. I do appreciate your time in being here as well as your work in the community as a physician. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Dr. Patel to his Assembly today.

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

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the couple members opposite and the member from Regina Pasqua in welcoming Dr. Patel to this here his legislature. We greatly appreciate your service to the health care operations that we have going on in the province, so thank you for your many years of service to our great province. Thank you, Dr. Patel.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Betty Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I too also want to join my colleagues in welcoming Dr. Patel into the Legislative Assembly. It's always important to recognize and acknowledge and thank those that work in the health care field and especially working in mental health and addictions. And I just want to say thank you so much for all the work that you do, the compassion that you have, and the commitment that you have in helping those that are needing help when it comes to mental health and addictions. Miigwech.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Kim Breckner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately provide adequate funding to public, Catholic, and francophone schools in Saskatchewan and fix the crisis in the classrooms.

The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces to experience a decline in per-student funding in our public schools, a loss of 10 per cent since 2012; that the Sask Party government's

cuts to education means that teachers, EAs [educational assistant], and support staff continue to be overworked and underpaid while students don't have the supports they need; that international studies show Saskatchewan students are drastically falling behind in reading, math, and science, with Saskatchewan ranking second worst in math scores and third worst in reading among the provinces.

With that, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately provide adequate funding to public, Catholic, and francophone schools in Saskatchewan and fix the crisis in the classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories to this petition reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland.

Tajinder Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for adequate and equitable SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] rates.

They wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program is a program for people with significant and enduring disabilities who have barriers to employment; that current SAID rates mean that individuals who rely on the program live well below the poverty line; that this failure to increase the program represents a decrease of 20 per cent of benefits since 2012.

With that, I will say the prayer that reads as follows:

Call on the Government of Saskatchewan to increase SAID rates to account for inflation; index the SAID basic amount to inflation going forward; and provide targeted relief to those in deepest poverty, such as single individuals paying market rent.

This petition has been signed by people from Saskatoon. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to this legislature calling for the recruitment and retention of pediatric specialists.

Signatories of this petition, Mr. Speaker, wish to draw to our attention the following: that parents of children requiring pediatric specialists will have to leave the province to get the medical care that they need for their children; that Saskatchewan has an insufficient number of pediatric specialists, including neurologists, immunologists, adolescent medicine, and ENTs [otolaryngologist]; and that Saskatchewan children requiring specialized care are not receiving the medical treatment that they need here in Saskatchewan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately recruit an appropriate complement of pediatric specialists and adjunct services, and develop a plan to address the service gaps in pediatric specialty fields.

The signatories of this petition today reside in Vanscoy and Sedley. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly to address the affordability crisis.

The signatories to this petition wish to bring to the attention that according to Angus Reid, 84 per cent of Saskatchewan people are feeling stressed about money, the highest such rates of financial insecurity in Canada; that half the Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketing in 2022; and that while other provinces have acted, the Sask Party continues to ignore the opposition's calls for gas relief.

I'll read the prayer as follows and:

Respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

The signatories to this petition are from Regina and Sedley, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

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

Sally Housser: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that struggling Saskatchewan families face a real hard time in their pocketbooks, I'm pleased to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to suspend the fuel tax.

The undersigned would like to state that Saskatchewan people are struggling to keep up with the increased costs of food, shelter, and other basic necessities, and wages have not kept up with the rate of inflation; that according to an October 2023 Angus Reid poll, more than one-third of people in Saskatchewan are struggling with the cost of living; that the Sask Party government could provide immediate cost-of-living relief to Saskatchewan families by suspending the 15-cents-per-litre provincial gas tax; that the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party], the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, among others, have been calling for immediate gas tax relief for not only months but years; and that other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland have suspended or reduced their provincial fuel taxes to make life more affordable for residents of their province.

I will now read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

The undersigned reside in Prince Albert, Regina, and Hudson Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Retiring Administrative Assistant Helped Build Community

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize an incredible leader in my community, Holly Allison-Kay.

Holly has worked at Coronation Park Community School as the main administrative assistant for the past 21 years. Mr. Speaker, Holly is not someone who just simply shows up and does her job every day; she's someone who goes extra miles.

During her years of services, she has been a dedicated advocate for building a strong community for the students and staff at school. For example she was the main organizer at Coronation Park Community School for holiday lunch. Holly organized volunteers and sponsors from all around the community, and all the students and the staff get a hot meal.

Our office has also had the pleasure of working with her for two years now.

Mr. Speaker, Holly is retiring this year. I know that she will be greatly missed by her students and staff at Coronation Park School. I will ask all members to join me in thanking Holly for many years of her hard work and dedication.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Agribition 2024 Sees Record Attendance

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Agribition 2024 has officially ended. The stats might not be fully in yet, but the indicators seem to show that this was the highest on-record attendance of any Agribition.

[13:45]

Many of my colleagues and I on this side of the House grew up in the livestock industry, Mr. Speaker. We know how difficult it can be to make an event like this happen. Every year producers pull it off, and they keep coming back better than ever. Whether you are a first-time exhibitor, a seasoned veteran, a competitor in one of the many rodeo events, or a spectator, you helped show why Saskatchewan is synonymous with agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, thank you to the producers who brought their cattle to the show, and congratulations to all the show winners. You are proof that

Saskatchewan and Canada have some of the best livestock in the world. Thank you to the over 400 volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this year's Agribition run smoothly.

And one more thank you to the many folks who attended and witnessed the best of agribusiness right here in Regina at this year's Canadian Western Agribition. This event just isn't possible without all these factors coming together in true Saskatchewan fashion. Thank you to all involved.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Addressing Homelessness in Saskatchewan

Brent Blakley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight a prevailing issue in the province that exists and is sorely in need of attention. During these winter months, I can't help but think of these people in the province that suffer from homelessness.

These are people we see huddled in doorways, using their shopping carts with their belongings to try to shelter themselves from the cold and the wind. Some folks will be huddled in tents or flimsy cardboard shelters perhaps with a gas heater in their attempt to stay warm.

During a recent webinar that I had the honour to be a part of, Mr. Speaker, the panel addressed the issue of homelessness and discussed a number of contributing factors in the lives of unhoused people.

The problems of increased drug use, mental unwellness, and the increase of those suffering from intergenerational trauma were identified. They indicated that homelessness has increased dramatically since the COVID pandemic we experienced in 2020.

But there was one panellist from the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness said that while these are all contributing factors, Mr. Speaker, to the lives of these folks, that housing is the first step in solving homelessness. He continued that lack of housing starts, the cost of rent, and the vacancy rate will need to be addressed to begin to solve homelessness.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to working with the Minister of Social Services to address these issues and more. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

Balgonie Hosts 35th Annual Dinner Theatre

Brad Crassweller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In early November the town of Balgonie held their 35th annual dinner theatre. The night consisted of a deliciously cooked meal along with a two-act play. The local drama club, Tumbleweed Theatre, began practising at the end of August, and the actors entertained the crowd with the play *Hurry Hard*, directed by Tara Little. The actors, the kitchen staff, the wait staff, the MC [master of ceremonies], and the bartenders are all community volunteers. Community members also donate the food that's prepared for the meal.

Jack Leibel and Heather Entner have both played pivotal roles in this event from its inception, selling tickets, attracting corporate donors, doing backstage work, and organizing the entire event. Each year the funds raised from this dinner theatre stay in the community and support local groups. This year the funds raised were distributed between the Balgonie Multiplex, the recreation board, the volunteer fire department, first responders, the curling rink, Balgonie Dance and Twirl, Balgonie Swimming Pool, and the Balgonie Early Learning Centre and Balgonie Playschool.

Mr. Speaker, Balgonie Dinner Theatre has raised over \$1 million across its 35-year history and reinvested it all back into the community. I'd like to congratulate the town of Balgonie for successfully hosting the Balgonie Dinner Theatre for 35 years. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland.

University of Saskatchewan a World Leader in Research

Tajinder Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The University of Saskatchewan is a world leader in vaccine development, sustainability, water and food security. The U of S [University of Saskatchewan] campus has many world-class facilities, including the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, Canadian Light Source, Global Institute for Food Security, Global Institute for Water Security, National Research Council, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The professionals at these institutes perform cutting-edge research and development that are not only beneficial to this province or this country but to the whole world. I worked at the U of S for twelve and a half years at the department of plant sciences and the Crop Development Centre in the College of Agriculture. I was part of the barley and oat breeding program at the U of S. The Crop Development Centre creates new varieties in different crops. The farmers grow these varieties which turn into food. Food brings people together.

In the coming weeks and months, I will be in consultation with the university students, employees, faculty, and management to understand their issues and concerns. I'll bring forward these issues that matter the most to this community and other post-secondary education institutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

World AIDS Day Raises Awareness of Prevention, Testing, and Treatment

Terri Bromm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize December 1st as World AIDS Day. Every year December 1st serves as a reminder to raise awareness about HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] prevention, testing, and treatment. In Saskatchewan we also observe Indigenous AIDS Awareness Week from December 1st to December 7th.

HIV and AIDS are preventable and treatable, and testing remains critical in the fight against it. Early diagnosis and proper medication allow many people to live healthy lives. Stigma

remains a significant barrier in addressing HIV and AIDS. Anyone, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or economic status can be affected. We must combat misinformation and fear with education and empathy.

Saskatchewan is committed to improving health care access for individuals living with AIDS and HIV. Medications for prevention and treatment are fully covered for those who meet medical criteria, ensuring better support and outcomes. We recognize the dedication of health care professionals, community organizations, and volunteers who work tirelessly to make care accessible. Their efforts are vital and deeply appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, let us unite globally and locally to create understanding, encourage regular testing and support to those living with AIDS and HIV. Knowing your status is one of the most powerful tools in preventing the spread. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Saskatchewan's Technology Sector Contributes to Economic Growth

Chris Beaudry: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to share some incredible news regarding Saskatchewan's booming technology sector.

In the recently released report titled *The State of Saskatchewan's Tech Sector*, it shows the province's technology sector has seen a 108.6 per cent increase in employment growth rate since 2019. This is the largest increase out of all Prairie provinces, outpacing both Alberta and Manitoba over the same period. This puts us well on track to meet and exceed Saskatchewan's Growth Plan goal of tripling the tech sector by 2030.

The report also highlights job growth, where the tech sector accounted for 10 per cent of all job creation in the province from 2016 to 2023. This growth is only possible through Saskatchewan's business-friendly tech ecosystem that is accelerating new technologies while generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, contributing to our strong economy.

Programs such as the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Agtech Growth Fund introduced by our government have helped incentivize local investments in Saskatchewan companies. The report shows that Saskatchewan now has a total of 347 tech companies.

Saskatchewan is full of opportunity and we're proud of our local innovators. We look forward to growing our province's tech industry which is creating more jobs and a bright future for Saskatchewan people.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government's Fiscal Management and Crop Insurance

Carla Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, this government's deficit has doubled since budget time, a fact that

they of course failed to mention during the most recent election. And rather than acknowledging their own financial mismanagement and waste, the Minister of Finance decided to once again put the blame on agricultural producers for accessing their own crop insurance reserve fund. These are their own dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier tell the people of Saskatchewan why he points the finger at farmers when it's really the incompetence of his own government that's to blame?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely wrong on all counts, Mr. Speaker, and the Leader of the Opposition should know better. Mr. Speaker, I merely set out accounting rules. You have to show payments when they go out, Mr. Speaker. Crop insurance payments are payments.

But, Mr. Speaker, I made it abundantly clear to the media. We made it abundantly clear to farm leaders. Mr. Speaker, this is what the program's designed for. This is why farmers pay premiums into crop insurance, Mr. Speaker, so they're protected from losses such as this. That doesn't mean you don't report it.

Mr. Speaker, it's ridiculous what she was saying. The Minister of Agriculture and I had a call with farm leaders that same day, earlier in the day, an embargo call to outline to them what my speaking notes would be, Mr. Speaker. It's just simply wrong. At no time did I or any member on this side of the government blame producers. They are the backbone of this economy, Mr. Speaker. That program is working the way it's designed.

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

Cost of Living and Affordability Measures

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, what's ridiculous is that government's inability to balance a budget in this province.

Now Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker, are in need of cost-of-living relief, and they need it now. Yet the Minister of Finance had to admit on Thursday that the tax cuts that he's bringing forward will not come into effect until 2026. Mr. Speaker, that is more than a year from now for Saskatchewan families to wait for any relief.

To the Premier: why did his government deny our proposals last week to cut the gas tax and cut the tax on groceries and deny Saskatchewan people the relief that they need today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Because, Mr. Speaker, PST [provincial sales tax] isn't on groceries, Mr. Speaker. And the opposition, on their platform, they campaigned on the gas tax which the people of the province rejected. Mr. Speaker, it was temporary. The income tax measures that we are going to be enacting, Mr. Speaker, are going to be permanent.

Mr. Speaker, the members will be pleased to know that later today, after it's introduced in the House, Mr. Speaker, I will be sending a letter to Minister Freeland and Minister Bibeau asking

them to enact those measures as of January 1st, Mr. Speaker, those amongst many measures that we campaigned on for the month of October on affordability that Saskatchewan citizens desperately desire. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this government claims that they've been listening. If they had been listening, they would understand that Saskatchewan people cannot wait until 2026 to get the relief that they desperately need today. Now the minister, the minister admitted, and he quoted, that there would be a lag time before people would see relief. And then his deputy minister admitted that that relief wouldn't come until 2026. Mr. Speaker, I will say it again because this government doesn't seem to understand. People need relief now.

To the Premier: what are those people in desperate need of relief supposed to do in the meantime while they're waiting for that government's tax cuts to come into effect?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the federal government has target dates for income tax changes that provincial governments are going to make, Mr. Speaker. But as I said, I will be sending a letter later today to the two federal ministers, minister of CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] and the Minister of Finance, asking them to enact those as of January 1st, Mr. Speaker. We believe they should be able to do that. They've done that for other measures, federal measures, Mr. Speaker. There's no reason they can't do it for provincial measures.

As far as other affordability measures that would kick in right away, Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the members opposite carbon tax off of home heating fuel, Mr. Speaker, has been extended and it's been in place for a number of months now.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking affordability measures very, very seriously. During the campaign, we campaigned on that. The income tax, which we've talked about in this House already, Mr. Speaker, which I would welcome the members if they so see fit, we could put it through all processes today and enact it today. Mr. Speaker, also increasing the low-income tax credit by 20 per cent. And the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I will thank the members opposite, thank the minister for voting with our motion for that carve-out on home heating when it comes to the carbon tax. But, Mr. Speaker, why wait for another level of the government when we can make these changes today? Cutting the gas tax would save families hundreds of dollars, and it can happen right away. Cuts to the PST on groceries that do exist, Mr. Speaker, would save \$25 million per year.

[14:00]

Again, these are changes we could make right here and right now. Mr. Speaker, there's no need to wait till 2026. There's no need to wait for another level of government. Why does the Premier continue to sit on his hands? Let's cut these taxes today.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, members on this side, on the government side of the House campaigned for the month of October on a series of affordability measures for Saskatchewan citizens. The members on the opposition side also campaigned on some affordability measures.

Mr. Speaker, ultimately we were given the privilege to form government. We're going to keep our promises. The people of Saskatchewan rightfully expect us to enact what we campaigned on. We're going to do what we said, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned earlier, with leave, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, we can put those affordability measures on income tax, we can pass those in the House today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Provincial Sales Tax on Grocery Items

Trent Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, you know, this Sask Party government is failing to deliver cost-of-living relief that's needed now. Last week the Premier said there's no PST on groceries in the province, and then of course we heard that from the Finance minister on the floor of this Assembly here today.

But we know that that's not the case, Mr. Speaker. Foods that hard-working families buy every day in the grocery stores are subject to the PST imposed by that Sask Party government, foods like rotisserie chickens and prepared chili. Does the Premier really think that rotisserie chickens and chili aren't grocery items?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I noticed last week the members opposite in this line of questioning said very carefully "on prepared foods." There is PST on prepared foods, Mr. Speaker. There's also on chips. There's also on candy.

Mr. Speaker, there is no PST on bread. There is no PST on milk. There is no PST on meat. There is no PST on vegetables. There is no PST on fruit. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite clearly know that.

I noticed with interest last week one of their social media posts showed a shopping cart and said, join with us in telling the province to take PST off of this. And I noticed, Mr. Speaker, every item I could identify in that shopping cart was eggs, milk, fruit, vegetables. There is no PST on those items, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Well at least being inconsistent is consistent for that minister, Mr. Speaker, because just a few days ago he was claiming that he had just a small, small deficit. Then we learned, oh, he's become the Finance minister and \$500 million more, Mr. Speaker.

You know, they continue to deny reality for families across this province with respect to the cost of living. Moms and dads are trying to put healthy, nutritious meals together for their kids, and they get slapped with the Sask Party government's 6 per cent PST on groceries.

Take granola bars. They used to be totally exempt from the PST, zero per cent. Now under that out-of-touch Sask Party government, granola bars are hit with the 6 per cent PST. Does the minister really think granola bars aren't groceries?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, prepared foods and candy there is PST on. Mr. Speaker, there is not on bread. There is not on milk. There is not on eggs. There is not on meat. There is not on vegetables. There is not on fruit, Mr. Speaker. And for them to insinuate otherwise is just simply incorrect, Mr. Speaker.

I'd ask the member opposite — the post I'm talking about that he put on social media, Mr. Speaker — those items in that basket, does he believe there is PST on those?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Well I think with performance like that, that member will have a chance to ask questions in this Assembly some day very soon, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, the fact is that the Premier of Saskatchewan told the people of Saskatchewan that there's no PST on groceries in this province. We know of course that's not the case. Pre-made salads and cut fruits and vegetables — something busy families grab from stores on their way between schools and two activities and between shifts — these are foods that are now all subject to the Sask Party's 6 per cent PST on groceries. It's making life more expensive.

Does the Sask Party government really think pre-made salads, vegetables, and fruits in the grocery store aren't really groceries?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier many times, meat, eggs, milk — groceries, Mr. Speaker — vegetables, fruit, there is no PST on those, Mr. Speaker.

I would come back to the members opposite. You know, the member there, very cocky and arrogant about the whole thing suggesting that, Mr. Speaker, insinuating one month after the election, talking about when he's going to be on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

We just went through an election campaign, Mr. Speaker. We campaigned on a suite of affordability measures for citizens in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We promised those. We're going to deliver those.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Jobs in Manufacturing and State of Provincial Economy

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So no cost-of-living relief and no action on local jobs. The clock is ticking, Mr. Speaker, but it's not too late.

Last week we learned that this Sask Party government's broken promises are leading to 79 jobs being lost today at a Saskatoon-based manufacturer. These are good-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker, but these 79 families are getting pink slips for Christmas because of this government's broken promises.

Will the Sask Party government stop sitting on their hands and start to support made-in-Saskatchewan manufacturing and get to work to save these jobs today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We just got off of Manufacturing Week here in Saskatchewan, which I think showcased and promoted the incredible work that our manufacturers are doing for employment and for building capital and investing in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I'll just share a few of the, I think, pretty valuable parts of what our manufacturing sector is providing to this province. Employing 33,000 people, Mr. Speaker. The capital investment in this province in 2023 was just under a billion dollars, 27 per cent increase from 2022, Mr. Speaker. Let's see. Manufacturing sales, \$24.4 billion; 35 per cent increase from 2018, Mr. Speaker.

We talked about the 33,000 people that are working in this province, Mr. Speaker. We talked about 7,000 jobs that we've seen in an increase here in 2024 from where we were in 2023, Mr. Speaker. We've got an incredible record in our province right now of job creation, contrary, contrary to where the NDP has been. Records of unprecedented . . .

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well we heard it here from the minister of exports who's exporting 79 jobs to Calgary- and California-based companies. They broke their word, and those 79 good-paying Saskatchewan jobs are about to be lost today.

What does that minister have to say to those families in Martensville, Warman, Saskatoon, families that are receiving pink slips today because of that Sask Party government's broken promises?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, the promise we've made to the people of Saskatchewan is to ensure that they have jobs that they have available to them.

We have a number of skills training programs right now, Mr. Speaker, that we talked about, ensuring that we've got people ready for the job market that is available to them, Mr. Speaker.

In fact just in the Throne Speech we talked about two initiatives that we're going to have to support our young entrepreneurs in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're providing \$5,000 bursaries to young entrepreneurs to help them develop their business. We're talking about working with the chambers of commerce to pilot a new investment tax credit to help small and medium-sized businesses in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this is our commitment to ensuring the people in Saskatchewan have opportunities.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's great to hear those commitments, but those 79 families don't want to go back to school. They don't want a \$5,000 bursary for entrepreneurship. They want to keep the job that they have today.

Mr. Speaker, these decisions by that Sask Party government are killing Saskatchewan-based jobs, and they also damage our international reputation. What does this say to other investors looking to put money into Saskatchewan? What does this signal to industry when you have a Sask Party government making promises — actually you have two Saskatchewan premiers in fact making promises — only to turn their back and break their word after two or three years?

How can this government ruin our investment reputation and still ask for the trust of the people of Saskatchewan?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, let's talk exports. Let's talk about this province's economy. Let's talk about 2023, Saskatchewan exported nearly \$50 billion in products to 163 countries. Let's talk about the multiple export records that were broken in 2023 — agri-food exports, agricultural equipment exports, exports to Latin American countries. Mr. Speaker, these jobs just didn't appear out of nowhere. This came from the hard-working people that are currently working in this province, Mr. Speaker.

In fact one in three jobs in this province support our international exports, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the NDP is supporting, is that zero international trade offices. They want to talk about trade. They want to shut down trade offices, Mr. Speaker. The NDP economic policy is, Mr. Speaker, to support the carbon tax and to oppose our key industries, including mining, forestry, and agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Provision of Care for Mental Health and Addictions

Betty Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked last week about in-patient services at Willowview Recovery facility in Lumsden. Unfortunately the answer I got from the minister was a bit confusing, so I'll ask again.

To the minister: how many in-patient treatment spaces are being

offered today at Willowview Recovery?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, as I spoke about last week, the facility the member opposite is speaking about has had some difficulties in opening to full in-patient services due to technical requirements in the building that related to fire safety.

This has been very frustrating for myself as well, but I am encouraged that the provider, the RM [rural municipality] of Lumsden, and the building inspectors are working very hard to get Willowview beds opened as soon as they can. The services that we're talking about are part of the 500 addiction treatment spaces we have announced that we are working towards, Mr. Speaker.

So I would say that even though there is a delay, this is actually a good news story. Our government is working towards new treatment spaces so that those who need these very important services are able to receive them so that they can overcome addiction and live healthy, safe lives in recovery, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Betty Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister was trying to say “zero.” There's zero in-patient treatment spaces. Just last week a government press release stated “we now have 215 new treatment spaces.” And that figure included “60 treatment spaces at the Willowview Recovery Centre in Lumsden.”

The minister explained this last week by saying “someone misspoke.” Could the minister explain how a government-issued press release misspoke?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And once again I thank the member opposite for the question. And it is unfortunate that the facility is not quite prepared for full in-patient beds. But as I said, they're working on getting them opened as soon as possible.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is more than one type of treatment bed, whether that be in-patient, out-patient, or virtual. So I would just briefly like to explain that there are, with Willowview, intensive out-patient care being done today. It is in-person care that has up to seven hours per day of structured programming at that facility, which includes group therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, relapse prevention, as well as evidence-based practices such as mediation and family and cultural support, Mr. Speaker. Additionally, participants are provided transportation, meals, time for wellness, physical wellness, and free time to process what they're learning in the programming.

So as you can see, there are services being provided, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Betty Nippi-Albright: — I do hope that the Sask Party government won't make a habit of misspeaking in official press releases, Mr. Speaker. The minister also said that in-patients' beds will be open soon, “hopefully in December.” Hopefully. But a staffer at Willowview Recovery stated, “And I don't have a date. Sorry. I don't have a date. I'm not trying to mislead you. I don't have a clue.”

Can the minister explain why the staff at Willowview have no clue that they'll be opening 60 in-patient beds this month?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I've already said the provider, the RM of Lumsden, and the building inspectors are working very diligently to try and get those beds open full-time for in-patient services. In the meantime there are other services that are being provided to individuals that are going through that centre, Mr. Speaker. The services that we were talking about are part of those 500 addictions spaces that we're bringing as we move to a recovery-oriented system of care.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I find a little disturbing is, they're not acknowledging the fact that we are actually opening beds. We are providing services. We are moving forward, not like when the NDP opposition had the opportunity to lead. They closed services. They closed services in my community of Estevan, beds that were so important for individuals, Mr. Speaker. I wish they would just listen to the answer instead of trying to speak over when I'm trying to let them know what actually happened.

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

Accommodation Expenses for Attendance at Conferences

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Sask Party government blocked our emergency motions for immediate and basic relief at a time when Saskatchewan families are cutting back on almost everything.

While families are tightening their belts, it's same old, same old from this Premier and his ministers. They're staying at luxury hotels costing over \$800 a night on the public tab. Now I understand the Premier wants to make an amendment to his itinerary and says it only cost 550 a night. Either way it's excessive, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier release his full itinerary about who he saw, what he did while wining and dining on the public's credit card?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I saw the NDP had put out some information as per their interpretation, which I think left a lot to the imagination, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, there was no \$800 hotel rooms, nor would we be staying in \$800

hotel rooms at any point in time, Mr. Speaker. We did stay, coming from the Western Premiers' Conference in Yukon, in a hotel in downtown Toronto to advocate at a conference on US [United States]-Canada relations, which seemed to be pretty important relations to be building at that point in time, given what's happening today. The cost of the hotel room was \$446, Mr. Speaker.

We're very transparent in the costs that we release to the Saskatchewan people because it is ultimately their dollars that we are investing in these advocacy, in these relation-building initiatives and efforts that we undertake, in particular when it comes to the US.

We know the Leader of the Opposition and a delegation has also travelled, Mr. Speaker, travelled to Ottawa to work on ensuring that the NDP and the Liberal leaders are re-elected. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition if they would endeavour to be equally as transparent with the expenses that they and their delegation undertake.

Speaker Goudy: — Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Speaker Goudy: — And what's the point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during presenting petitions the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis and the member from Regina University both presented petitions on the gas tax. Mr. Speaker, the member from Chief Mistawasis said while other provinces have acted, the Sask Party continues to ignore the opposition's call for gas tax relief. And then the member from Regina University said the Saskatchewan Party government could immediately provide cost-of-living relief by suspending the 15-cent-per-litre gas tax relief.

The prayers are a little bit different, Mr. Speaker, but the descriptions are the same. Under rule 16(3)(d), it prohibits more than one petition on the same topic, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Nicole Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I would encourage you to allow the Table to look at the petitions to determine whether or not they are actually out of order. You'll find that the prayers of the petitions are actually quite different, Mr. Speaker. So I'd suggest that the government's point of order is not well taken, but I would ask that you let the Table do their work.

Speaker Goudy: — Yeah, that sounds reasonable. I think we could certainly allow that.

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry, I wasn't quite done. We have discussed a little bit about having the preamble to the petitions. If they are going to be used, and sometimes if they are matching, I think possibly that the government may have a point if

preambles are allowed and some of those comments. So I'd like the Clerks to consider that in their consideration.

I recognize the Minister of Remote and Rural Health.

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Speaker Goudy: — What was the point of order?

Hon. Lori Carr: — Mr. Speaker, during question period, the member from Regina South Albert said, and I quote, they're turning their backs and breaking their word. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly unparliamentary language, and I would ask that she withdraw and apologize.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize and withdraw.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 — *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 1, *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by Minister Reiter that Bill No. 1, *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act* be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall the bill be read for the second time?

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

Speaker Goudy: — I would like to table a letter from the Lieutenant Governor in regards to the Board of Internal Economy membership. And the letter reads:

November 28th, 2024

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to section 67 of *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*, I hereby inform the Assembly of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy, effective November 27th,

2024: Hon. Todd Goudy, Chair, Speaker; Hon. Lori Carr, Executive Council nominee; Hon. Tim McLeod, Executive Council nominee; Kevin Weedmark, MLA, government caucus nominee; Sean Wilson, MLA, government caucus nominee; Matt Love, MLA, opposition caucus nominee; Nicole Sarauer, MLA, opposition caucus nominee.

Yours sincerely,
Russ Mirasty,
Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Kim Gartner, seconded by the Hon. Eric Schmalz, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Jared Clarke.]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member of Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good Monday afternoon. It's me. I'm back. I could not have wished for a better scenario than to be talking right up till the end of session last Thursday and to have the chance to lead off today. So I want to extend my appreciation to the member from Willowgrove and the member from Swift Current who both spoke for their fair share of time as well. I was worried that I might have to start and finish on Thursday and here I am. Thank you.

An Hon. Member: — You're welcome.

Don McBean: — You're welcome. I told you I like to talk. From the last episode, I like leading with caveats, acronyms, song lyrics, etc.; McBean, not McBean; the improbability that Don McBean is an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

And this I do care to repeat slowly in verbatim that to each and every constituent of Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis regardless of voting for me or not, voting or not, being eligible to vote or not, I wish to repeat my solemn promise to serve you with honesty, passion, and determination in every matter available.

There was mention of the origin story, the rise from nothing of Saskatoon Northwest. And at that moment I didn't see the names that I wished to be read at that point. I will do so now: Phyllis Goetz, Marilyn Barlow, Gary Stevenson, Hugh and Lori Kurz, who joined forces with the 2020 candidate, Gillian Strange, to bring us an important step forward to the place where I am able to speak today.

And then I was racing through names trying to get done and I ended with mangling Corwyn's name. So here, let's see if I can get it right this time. One of the people joining us, Corwyn Shomachuk, started off just as another door knocker and proving himself to be so much more than that, with a depth of knowledge of the political spectrum and a laser focus on issues, definitely

someone to be keeping around. And then I was to move in to some words about who is Don McBean. And trust me, it's highly abridged. We're keeping an eye on the clock this time sort of.

Oh, mostly because I want to mention that my hometown is Swift Current and I hope that this might spur an opportunity with the member from Swift Current to see who we might still know in common. Maybe he knows about me by reputation already. I have no idea. But in the winter of '76-77, I was working in northern Alberta. A friend was quitting school, phoned me up and said, let's go to Quebec; it'll be an adventure; we'll learn French. And I answered, what a stupid idea. I'm from Swift Current. Why do I want to learn French?

Well life being what it is, I ended up in Quebec. I ended up moving to Quebec. I ended up spending 15 years of my adult life in Quebec. And since most of my adult life, I am a very proud bilingual Canadian and Saskatchewanian. In fact I'm really proud to être assis à côté de l'honorable membre de Regina Northeast, représentante de la communauté fransaskoise [Translation: to be sitting next to the hon. member from Regina Northeast, representative of the Fransaskois community]. I'm not Fransaskois but I certainly feel like I want to be.

The wrap of that story is never say never, and I implore us all to remove the heavy yoke and blinders of our identity and open our spirits to that of lifelong learners, inclusive to all. Short quote; seven words. The Dalai Lama said it; I choose to live by it: "Choose to be optimistic. It feels better."

[14:30]

Ferocious optimism is how I qualify that many times. And then a poem, because what good would a speech be without a poem? It's four short lines worthy of a doctoral thesis, I know. It's called "Outwitted":

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in

Four short lines but it encapsulates to me an important foundation of my life and our lives. We are all one people, which by the way is a great song by Joseph Naytowhow. Taught it to the whole school ever since I first heard it; taught it to the schools time after time.

Mr. Speaker, in the first draft I realized I'd left out my family. I'm glad we caught that. I have come close to forgetting about the kids but in some regards they're the ones I'm least concerned about forgetting. They are Valérie's and my family, and that love is unbreakable. It's been noted previously that we should never pass an opportunity to be a proud parent. It feeds our soul.

A few points — going to throw out their names — you want to know more, you know where to find me.

Katie McBean, oldest of the bunch. Lives with her partner, Fraser Sutherland, and the three aforementioned amazing grandchildren — Ellis, Bennett, and Oakley — in London, Ontario. She took her music degree into an education degree and then had three children and is very happily looking after three children.

Julien Hunt, six months younger than Katie — yes, they are from two different mothers — who with his partner, Virginie Charollais, who it's not hard to understand has given up living in Tahiti to live in Saskatoon, but love will do that. And they have brought to the world the fourth of our amazing grandchildren, Liam, giving mémé and grandpa a chance and the joy of the happily assumed responsibility to be close at hand to help out.

Emily McBean is living again now back in Montreal with her partner, the other Liam, Liam Cobbe. She took her music degree, volunteered with an urban beekeeping group, and has been working for the last seven, eight years — I've lost track — and has risen with this rapidly expanding company to be a fairly highly placed manager of a three-continent, for-profit, but ferociously dedicated, environmental company.

Sophie McBean, currently living in Sudbury and half-time in Ottawa as she finishes her fourth year residency in pediatrics. Talented musically like her sisters and brother but she skipped the music degree and went straight into kinesiology for physiotherapy which turned into medicine, and now is Dr. McBean wrapping up her pediatric residency in Ontario, and recently making the decision with her partner Dr. Reed Gillanders to return to Prince Albert to practise in the fall of 2025.

Manon Hunt, previously mentioned because she was the one that laughed so hard when she pointed out that I would never stay under 10 minutes. Manon is a French immersion kindergarten teacher in Saskatoon, eye on bigger and better things, looking forward to being in the same city as her partner, Ken, and his daughter Emmy.

Charles, my absolute favourite son, because he gets to be the only one. When he was three years old I would watch him play, and I would think oh I am so going to enjoy, and curious about where you'll be through school and as an adult. I'm still fascinated as he's in his mid-20s. Makes his living most of the time cooking, sometimes in restaurants, other towns, sometimes out in the bush for exploration camps, even cooking for cowboys in the interior of BC [British Columbia]. A fascinating story, to be continued. And when I read this last night to Valérie, I didn't include this because she would have told me, take it out. Maybe I should.

The last family member to speak about, saving the best for last, is the love of my life, LOML — many have known my acronym. There is so much I could say and sometimes I just say, she's French, as if that explains everything. And often it does.

The most important part is that on May 12th, 2010, she invited me out for a beer, ostensibly as a former colleague. Hey, let's catch up; haven't seen you for a while since you transferred to the other school. And I can only say that fourteen and a half years later, I'm still marvelling at how lucky I am.

There is another group that I wish to acknowledge as being fundamentally crucial to my decision to put my name on the ballot. Mr. Speaker, I want to express, in a most improbable manner, my thanks to the Sask Party government. Who they are and what they do served as a huge motivation to bring this retired guy back into the fray of life and the fray of this legislature. Because I thought, we've got to try to make this a better place and I'm going to do what I can to accomplish that.

It's well-recognized, as we're talking about all the matters of government, that education is an area needing great scrutiny. This is my home turf. I'm a retired principal; it's lived experience. I was a principal in 2017 when the first massive cuts were dropped on the education system. It's not an abstract concept to me. I lived it. Five per cent reduction, 5 per cent on 5 per cent, over and over. We pretended at first that it wasn't impacting into the classroom, but that didn't last too many years before it was obvious that it was.

I stepped out of the game in 2021, not because it was terrible — captains don't abandon even sinking ships — but simply because that was the year that was scheduled for us to be retiring. I've been in the schools lots since, doing replacement teaching, being a college supervisor, and I can tell you it's not getting better. I marvel at the degree of decline that is going on with these cuts just compounding themselves year after year.

Then there was the debacle of the collective agreement negotiations last spring. Oh my goodness. Not 18 months ago, this party, as an opening gesture in the collective agreement negotiations with the province's teachers, their teachers, the teachers of their children, the teachers of their grandchildren . . . Opening gesture were billboards vilifying teachers about how greedy they are. It's seared in my memory, one of those seared-in-the-memory moments, seeing the billboard on Warman Road and thinking thoughts that can't be repeated in the Chamber.

The strike days, the solidarity and empowerment of the teachers such as we've rarely seen, with the former minister of Education up, outdoing himself with missteps and misspeaks.

And am I forgetting Bill 137? Of course not. The massive outreach, rammed through using the hubris of the notwithstanding clause, targeted the most vulnerable children in our schools. It showed us that the Sask Party's not focused on the real issues in classrooms today. This is not an abstract concept. This is not something principled. I'm an elementary school principal. I know that the principals and the amazing teachers and the counsellors, everyone in the building, have always dealt with these concerns in a humane and strategic manner, fitting of the situation.

We don't need more government in the classroom. We don't need the government knowing best.

So yeah, we heard about education on the doorstep. We heard about health care. We heard about affordability. Education is my home turf. I recognize the rot more easily, more quickly. But we heard about a lot of other things, and every time I heard one and asked a few questions, it was clear that no matter which rock we lift, there is questionable practice.

I got asked often, well what are you going to do about it? And I would refer them to my 93-word blurb on my initial door-hanger card that went in the mailboxes. I don't have experience. I don't know these things. But I do know that the two words of those 93, to be honest and principled, were going to be the guide. The sentence was "an honest and principled NDP government." And they'd say, oh you won't be able to make the NDP government do that. And I said, well I will. Because I look at the 26 around me and I know that they have those same two words ringing in their minds as well.

How do we do that? The best we can. Though we're not the government — we came close — I have absolute faith that the others are with me in that, to be an honest and principled NDP opposition. And with hope against hope, I choose to be optimistic.

I will be supporting the amendment. I will not be supporting the government's motion to accept the Speech from the Throne.

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry, just want to take a moment to caution the member and all of us. But just a few comments there. We have to be careful of the intent of actions. And saying that vilifying teachers, that they are greedy, and also the phrase, targeting, allowing them to target the most vulnerable among us. Just some of those things, it's giving intent rather than just the actions. So just a caution on that.

I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly an honour to rise today to deliver my response to the Throne Speech. Few people ever have the honour to serve the residents of this great province in this legislature, and it's a responsibility that no one should take lightly.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate you as well as the member from Lumsden-Morse on your new roles here in the Assembly. I'm confident you'll both be fair and reasonable in your decisions and will assist us all in maintaining the decorum that this place demands.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many members on this side of the Assembly, and yourself as well, have had the pleasure of listening to me ramble on and on at various functions over the years. So to some of the new members on this side of the floor and to the members on the other side of the floor, I would just like to thank everyone in advance for bearing with me.

I'd like to begin by thanking some of the people who have supported me along the way. Every member who serves is supported by a strong team of friends, family, and volunteers that work diligently behind the scenes to make us successful, both as candidates and as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

First I would like to thank the residents of the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency for putting their faith in me and electing me to serve as their representative in this, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I'm honoured and humbled to be here and promise to do the best that I can do to be their voice in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, this may be a little contentious, but I've heard many different members over the years claim that they have the best constituency assistant in the province. While I'm sure there are many great CAs, those members, with all due respect, are incorrect. Best CA in the province works out of the Cut Knife-Turtleford office and her name is Jackie Gallon. Not only does Jackie manage to keep me organized, which is a feat quite unto itself, she is kind and a compassionate person that truly cares about the constituents of Cut Knife-Turtleford and works tirelessly to help them.

[14:45]

Jackie also served as my campaign manager during the election and was instrumental in keeping me focused on what and where I needed to be, as well as organizing the many volunteers that came through our office on a daily basis. Following the election she had the constituency office up and running within days and we never missed a beat. Thank you, Jackie.

I would also like to thank Cheryl, Becky, and Bonnie for spending countless hours on the phones during the campaign, reaching out to supporters from one corner of the constituency to the other. My financial agent, Gayla, deserves my gratitude as well for taking on that demanding role. As a former business manager in previous campaigns myself, I know that the work really begins after the election is over, and for that I say thank you. Thank you as well to Steve for travelling both with me and on his own as we put on a lot of miles installing election signs, only to take them down a few short weeks later.

And to all the other countless volunteers who helped out during the campaign making calls, door knocking, installing signs, scrutineering, or any other job that was required, I am eternally grateful and appreciate you all.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said many times that no one here serves alone. We are all blessed with the love and support of our families, and without them we wouldn't be here. I would like to thank my parents Lorne and Marilyn Thorsteinson. And for just a lesson in phonetics, it's Thorsteinson. Pretty easy, just as it's written. Don't need to add any extra letters or anything because it's long enough already. So I'd like to thank my parents, Lorne and Marilyn Thorsteinson, for shaping me into the man I am today, for their love and support especially at home on the ranch when I have to be away. I hope I do you proud.

I'd like to thank my sons Cody, Shane, and Jacob and my daughters-in-law Hayley and Amanda and all of my future grandchildren — hint, hint, hint — for their support. They are the future of our province and why I strive to make our province a better place.

Finally I would like to thank my wife, Lana. Lana has been and continues to be my greatest supporter. She's always willing to dive in and help, even when it may be uncomfortable. I have fond memories of watching her chase bred heifers into the corral through the mud with a huge smile on her face and her flip-flops in her hand. Lana, you've always been there for me throughout this journey. You always have my back and push me to be a better person. I couldn't do this without you. I love you and thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I've been involved in agriculture my entire life, and I will continue to be while I fulfill my role as MLA and beyond. My heart has always been in the livestock industry, and that will never change. While there will be some significant changes to the operations on the farm, to quote the great Corb Lund song, "Life is always better with some cows around."

I grew up in the 4-H movement, and I'm happy to give back to the organization that has given me so much at every possible opportunity. It gave me my first taste of politics at a young age. I learned parliamentary procedure, how to chair meetings, and the roles and responsibilities of various positions at the club level. I was elected as a member district rep to provincial council and a regional rep to executive council. I was also honoured to

be selected from members across the province to attend the national 4-H conference in Washington, DC [District of Columbia]. It was an experience I will never forget and I will carry those memories with me always.

As a member of the executive council, I was chosen to chair the public and government relations committee in the late '80s and early '90s. At the time we were facing a few difficulties with government funding, and we were hoping to secure a meeting with the minister of Agriculture. Unfortunately the minister at the time, Premier Devine, was unable to accommodate our schedule, so we ended up getting a meeting with the leader of the opposition Roy Romanow.

A staff member from 4-H Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and I travelled here, to this building, for our meeting. And I'll admit, as a 17-year-old kid from rural Saskatchewan, it was a little intimidating.

Mr. Speaker, I'll never forget what Mr. Romanow told us: the government spends more every day on paper clips than what you guys are asking for. Now I'm sure he was exaggerating, but I thought, wow, that's an awful lot of paper clips. Once I was assigned my office here, I fully expected to see every drawer of my desk right full of paper clips, not knowing what I could possibly do with them all. Perhaps technology and email has significantly reduced the number of paper clips we need over the years.

Mr. Speaker, the voters of Saskatchewan sent a clear message in the recent election. By granting us 53 per cent of the popular vote and electing a Saskatchewan Party government to a fifth consecutive term, we will become the second-longest-serving government in our province's history, surpassing the legacy of Tommy Douglas and just behind the great visionary, Walter Scott, our first premier.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this great province also voted for a strong economy and a bright future, but at the same time they also voted for change. This government is prepared to deliver on both of those fronts, as is clearly outlined in the Throne Speech.

As I toured through the constituency during the campaign, there were a few themes that seemed to prevail regardless of vocation, age, gender, or financial means, the first of which is the continually increasing cost of living. The general consensus was that the simplest way to ease the pressure would be to remove the Justin Trudeau-Jagmeet Singh Liberal-NDP coalition and their ridiculous carbon tax on everything and everyone. Unfortunately we will likely have to wait a bit longer before we have an opportunity to correct that situation.

In the meantime however our government has come up with a number of cost-saving initiatives that will put more money back into the pockets of every resident of Saskatchewan. Our first campaign announcement was that we would introduce the largest personal income tax reduction Saskatchewan has seen since 2008 by increasing the personal, spousal, and child exemptions and the senior supplement by \$500 a year for each of the next four years, as well as continuing to fully indexing the tax brackets. A family of four will save \$3,400, and a senior couple will save over \$3,100 over those four years.

Once fully implemented, over 166,000 low-income residents will be removed from the provincial tax roll completely. A family of four will pay no provincial income tax on the first \$72,425 earned. Compare that to when the NDP were last in government when that same family started paying at \$26,150, Mr. Speaker. That's a difference of over \$46,000 tax free in the province of Saskatchewan and a clear indicator of why we can never go back.

But wait, Mr. Speaker, we're not done there. Add to that all of the other affordability measures laid out in the Throne Speech. We will increase the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit by 20 per cent over the next four years as well. We're doubling the active families benefit as well as the threshold to qualify, making it accessible to more families across the province.

We're making it more affordable to buy your first home or renovate your existing home. There's a 50 per cent increase from 10 to \$15,000 in the first-time homebuyers tax credit. The home renovation tax credit is becoming permanent, allowing homeowners to claim up to \$4,000 per year on home renovation expenses, and seniors will be able to claim up to \$5,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, we want Saskatchewan to be the best place in Canada to live with a disability. That is why we are increasing the funding for a number of programs to assist those with disabilities and their families. We'll increase the amount people in the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program can earn before having any benefits reduced, by \$1,000. Along with that, we're increasing the number of tax credits for those living with a disability and their caregivers in order to make life more affordable.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we will be removing the carbon tax on natural gas and electricity used for home heating through 2025, saving residents approximately \$480 a year.

I am very pleased to see that Bill 1 of the thirtieth legislature will be *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act* to implement all of those changes and more, to make life more affordable for all those who call Saskatchewan home.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue that people brought up on a regular basis was how they don't feel safe in their own communities, even in their own homes. I remember speaking with members of one community who were frustrated with the lack of visible police presence in their area. The nearest RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] detachment is over an hour away and looks after a very large area. This community was paying to have an RCMP member staff a satellite office within their community from that detachment, but due to staffing challenges the position hadn't been filled in months.

Rural residents have told me that, when calling in an ongoing theft in their yard, it usually isn't till the next day they got a response. Then it was just a case of reporting what was stolen and hoping they might get some of it back.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. That is why we're investing heavily in increasing the number of law enforcement personnel across the province. Now don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. We value the hard-working front-line RCMP members that put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe. In fact I was fortunate to have an interaction with one of those members

not too long ago.

Following a long day on the campaign trail, I was making my way back home on a little-used gravel road near my house. I decided to take the back trail through the pasture instead of staying on the grid road, kind of a shortcut. After about half a mile I noticed headlights in my rear-view mirror. I thought to myself, there shouldn't be anyone on this road at this time of night. This is a little suspicious. Now in hindsight what I did next probably wasn't a good idea, but when I got to the top of a hill I stopped and got out of the truck, ready to confront whoever was coming up behind me. I was just reaching the back of the truck when the other vehicle crested the top of the hill, and that's when I got lit up.

As the red and blue lights came on, I started to laugh. I realized we were both thinking the same thing — no one should be on that trail at that time of night. We ended up chatting for about half an hour. I thanked him for being in the area and for all that he does. He told me of the frustration he and his fellow officers face on a daily basis. The catch-and-release system of justice that our federal government has implemented has them arresting the same people over and over again, then having to give them a ride home once they've got the paperwork done.

Mr. Speaker, in order to support our RCMP members, we've committed to fully funding an additional 180 officers across the province, an increase of \$28 million. The difficulty is that they're having problems filling these positions. Saskatchewan command would love to have them, but Ottawa isn't sending them out.

On top of this commitment to the RCMP, Mr. Speaker, we're adding funding for an additional 100 municipal police officers, increasing police presence in jurisdictions not served by the RCMP, such as Saskatoon, Regina, Weyburn, and others. Safer communities and neighbourhoods officers will also see an increase of 14 members. These initiatives will enhance the law enforcement capability within the province to help make our communities a safe place to live and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, we're also adding, on top of that, the Saskatchewan marshals service. Headquartered in Prince Albert, with satellite offices in various other communities, the marshals will support and assist RCMP, First Nations, and municipal police forces across the province.

[15:00]

With a strong focus on gangs, illegal weapons, and drugs, this mobile group of officers will be able to be deployed to areas of concern on short notice to significantly increase the police presence within that community. They will also be able to assist other police officers in the apprehension of prolific, high-risk offenders and wanted individuals where perhaps the local policing resources may be inadequate.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to hiring 500 law enforcement officers in order to keep the residents of this great province safe from those who wish to do it harm. We're also focusing on some of the root causes of crime, such as mental health and addictions. With the assistance of these additional law enforcement resources, combined with tougher laws, we will work on removing the drugs and the drug dealers from our streets.

In order to help those who have fallen into a life of addictions, we will be adding 500 addiction recovery spaces, and even more as required. There is no question that mental health and addictions often go hand in hand, but a person can't work on bettering their mental health while battling substance abuse. These measures will help individuals who are looking toward a path to recovery.

Mr. Speaker, I'm nearing the end of my remarks, but I would like to put on the record how Saskatchewan has changed since we had the honour to first form government in 2007. A good friend and former MLA said during the 2007 election that "Saskatchewan is the place to be from. I want to make Saskatchewan the place to be."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say, mission accomplished. Today in Saskatchewan there are over 250,000 more people living here than there were in 2007. During the 16 years previous, when the opposition was in government, we saw our population decline. Saskatchewan is now a vibrant, strong province with our best days still to come, with more people choosing to make Saskatchewan home, more people working in this province, and more people raising their families here. Saskatchewan will continue to be a leader in producing the food, fuel, and fertilizer that the world needs.

Mr. Speaker, I have the best promoter of our province that we could hope for in the Premier. While we have a federal government that doesn't seem to think it needs to tell the story of Saskatchewan on the world stage, our Premier proudly tells our story. And the world is listening. Exports of Saskatchewan products are at record highs, thanks to the hard work of this government and the producers and businesses of this province. There is no doubt that Saskatchewan is the place to be, and we will work hard for the people of this province to ensure that it remains that way for decades to come.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end my remarks by saying I will be voting against the amendment and I will be voting in favour of the motion put forward by the member from Kindersley-Biggar and seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers. Thank you.

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

Nathaniel Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet here today, rise to provide my response to the Speech from the Throne. Congratulations here are firstly in order to the new Speaker and Deputy Speakers who were acclaimed earlier in the week and to all the new and returning members. And a special thank you to the legislative staff who keep this building running all year-round and provided us with a very memorable swearing-in ceremony late last month.

Mr. Speaker, it feels a little bit surreal to be standing in this Chamber here with a 27-member government-in-waiting caucus. That's right. This caucus is ready to hit the ground running. There is a new sense of balance restored to our political landscape in the province. People voted for real change.

Mr. Speaker, this was my first time contesting a general election, and as the member from Regina Walsh Acres mentioned in his

response, running in a general election is much different than running in a by-election. Certainly all those folks didn't come out to help us. We were out there knocking doors with our volunteers. Missed all those friendly faces that came out in 2022 for sure.

Mr. Speaker, I was so proud to join this formidable team in September of 2022 following that Meewasin by-election. In the summer of 2022, New Democrats from around the province came out and, under the leadership of the member from Regina Lakeview, we brought a message of hope to the people of Saskatchewan that change was on the horizon. And then we did it two more times in the summer of 2023, electing my new colleagues from Regina Walsh Acres and Regina Coronation Park. And over the last two years, Mr. Speaker, this scrappy 14-member opposition was able to achieve so, so much.

I joined this team just in time to represent my community, alongside our opposition, standing firm in the face of a government who decided to attack vulnerable queer and trans youth in an emergency session of the legislature after it lost some votes to the far right nipping at its heels, pulling out a republican-style playbook of division and fear to distract from their abysmal record on health care and education and the economy.

Heading into an election year, this government showed its true colours and cemented its legacy as one willing to follow the worst of the culture wars. And in a desperate attempt to hold on to power, they chose to go down the dark path. This Premier, his former and current ministers, and this government's legacy will be one of attacking the most vulnerable in our communities, attacking the queer and trans community, and rolling back the human rights of children with the rarely used notwithstanding clause.

I was so proud to represent my 2SLGBTQIA+ [two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual plus] community throughout this gruelling session and proud to continue to bring their voice to this Chamber today. And no matter what distraction and wedge the Sask Party government threw in on any given day, our team of 14 MLAs stood every single day in this Chamber and fought for issues that really matter to people in Saskatchewan, be it health care, cost of living, education, or keeping good jobs right here in the province.

This was a message I was so proud to bring to the doorsteps of Saskatoon Meewasin as we knocked thousands of doors, day in and day out, connecting with voters during the 2024 provincial election. And now looking over this group of 27 members, I know that our work paid off. I can't wait to see what we'll be able to accomplish as a government in waiting.

Mr. Speaker, I will digress for a moment and begin my speech with the customary thank yous as we return to this Chamber. Firstly I do want to start by saying thank you to the people of Saskatoon Meewasin for choosing me to be their MLA. Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatoon Meewasin: whether you live in Saskatoon Central Business District, City Park, North Park, Richmond Heights, River Heights, or in the new areas in Lawson Heights neighbourhoods, it was an honour to be welcomed onto your doorsteps and to have the opportunity to listen to your concerns as well as hear about your hopes and dreams for this province that we call home. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has so,

so much potential. Thank you so much to the people of Saskatoon Meewasin for your support.

Now if the Chamber will allow me a short humble brag moment, I was very excited to see in the 2024 provincial election that in Saskatoon Meewasin we secured the largest percentage of the vote that the riding has ever seen, securing 59 per cent of the vote. This bested the last record that we set in 2022 provincial by-election with 57.8 per cent of the vote. Thank you. Thank you very much. My humble brag moment.

We'll call that the end of the humble brag moment because, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't have done it alone, not without an amazing campaign team on both accounts, a team of dedicated volunteers that came out. And so I want to say a special thank you to all of them here today.

To our campaign manager Dhuha Nader, thank you so much for your leadership and wrangling two candidates by the members of Saskatoon Meewasin and the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis. She had her hands full for sure. To our campaign team, Angie Kells, McGinnis Reeve, Paris, and Diane Deptuck, thank you so much for all that you did on that campaign. And I want to make a special shout-out to one special door knocker who joined me for hours on the doors, Robyn Cuthbert-Adair. Thank you so much for all the time you spent with me out there connecting with voters.

To Lynnett Boris who ran the phone lines throughout our campaign, I want to say thank you. And then lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a special thank you to our financial agent Gary Stevens and to the numerous campaign volunteers that came out knocking doors, putting up signs, licking envelopes, sending out door knockers, thank you so, so much. We couldn't have done this without you. Thank you so much for helping bring our message of hope and change to the people of Saskatchewan.

I also want to take a moment to thank the folks in our caucus office who have dutifully supported us over the last two years. Know that I am so grateful for the work that you do. With 14 new members comes big changes. It means new faces and changes, and a few folks will be going on to greater things.

I want to start by saying a big congratulations to Cheryl Stecyk on her recent retirement. Thank you so much for your tremendous service to the province of Saskatchewan. And to Warren McCall, the former MLA from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, our departing chief of staff, for bringing so much wisdom to our caucus table. And I want to say a big welcome to all the new staff who are joining us in the caucus office and the staff who will be joining us shortly as we hire up.

To my constituency assistant McGinnis Reeve, thank you so much for taking on the role as my constituency assistant in October 2023. McGinnis, I know that the future is so bright for you, and I know that you will make a fantastic lawyer one day. I have all the faith it will happen.

Mr. Speaker, we don't serve here alone. To my friends and family who supported me throughout this campaign, thank you so much. To my partner, James, for standing by me over the last two years and supporting me during the campaign, to my mom and sister — Carolyn and Melissa — thank you for your continued

love and support.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to mention my father, Gordon Teed, who left us far too early. We love you and miss you every day, and we wish you could be here with us. I know my dad would have had a tremendous amount of fun as I had entered this political journey. I can only imagine the antics that he would have gotten up to on the doorstep, so wish you were here.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say a special thank you to Maureen Torr who put her name forward to run for the Sask Party in Saskatoon Meewasin. It takes immense courage to put one's name on the ballot, to be vulnerable on a doorstep. Thank you for putting your name forward, and thank you so much for a congenial campaign.

As we head into the work of the thirtieth legislature, it's a great honour to be appointed the shadow minister of Labour and shadow minister of the Public Service Commission by our leader in her government in waiting. As a proud member of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] 59 on leave from Remai Modern, I'm excited to step into this role.

I was recently reflecting a bit on the importance of organized labour and how much it has affected the course of my own life while walking the picket lines with striking postal workers. My late father, Gordon Teed, was a mail carrier and CUPW [Canadian Union of Postal Workers] member with Canada Post for almost 30 years.

He loved this work. He loved the people. He loved being outdoors, and he loved that he could get to work early and be home early so that he could be there when we got home from school every day.

I think honestly he did it most days just to see all the cats and dogs on his route. He would regale us with stories of all the cats and dogs that he met, always a great story. Probably don't have enough time to share one with you here today, but I certainly know I got my love of animals from him. He always kept dog treats in his satchel to win over the most unruly and more bite-prone dogs on the route, with dog bites being one of the very many real safety concerns mail carriers face every single day.

That job ensured that he had a salary that meant he could support our family throughout our childhood. And more than salary, it gained us the health benefits. Benefits that had been earned through hard-fought collective agreements. Benefits that we wouldn't have had access to without a unionized job. This is why the work of unions is so important. They advocate for better wages, better health benefits, and safer working conditions.

We are so much stronger when we can speak with a collective voice, and we can accomplish so much more when we work together. I'm looking forward to working with workers across this province, be it unionized or not, and labour leaders across this province as we make this province a better place to call home.

And, Mr. Speaker, last but not least, I do want to say a special thank you to our leader, the member from Regina Lakeview, for leading us through an amazing election campaign. Under the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Regina Lakeview,

we saw our caucus double in size and double in the potential we will have advocating for the people of this province. Under your leadership, we form a formidable government in waiting. We would not be here without your leadership, and I am immensely grateful for the work you do for this team and for the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, I ran again for this seat because the work of making life better for the people of Saskatchewan was not finished. I ran because I love this province and I know we have so, so much potential. I ran because I was tired of seeing the Sask Party push us into last place on so many social and economic metrics. And as a queer person, Mr. Speaker, I ran to ensure that our Legislative Assembly represented the people that it served and brought voice to a historically under-represented and historically marginalized community.

Mr. Speaker, that brings us to today, turning attention to the Throne Speech. And I'm going to start my attention putting credit where credit is due.

With my labour hat on, I'm pleased to see the commitment in the Throne Speech to finally putting together a nursing task force. Mr. Speaker, we will wait to see if the government will deliver, will listen to nurses on the front line. But this is a huge win on the part of health care workers who have been demanding a seat at the table to provide solutions to the problems we are facing in our health care system. I'm excited to work with our shadow minister of Health, shadow minister of Rural and Remote Health, and labour leaders in this province to ensure that that work goes smoothly.

And with my labour and jobs hat on at the moment, I'm very pleased to see our commitment to freezing the small-business tax rate to 1 per cent included in this Throne Speech as well. As many of you know, our election platform committed to this while the Sask Party government had committed to doubling the tax. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, and in this case brings stability to a lot of small-business owners facing very uncertain economic conditions, those past, present, and future.

All right, Mr. Speaker, credit has been given. This is my third Throne Speech as an elected representative. It's not as many as the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove, and maybe one day I'll be able to say I've responded to 22 Throne Speeches. Let me know if I've been here too long though. That's certainly something to think about.

But I really, really hope that I can continue to respond to throne speeches and much ahead. But again, Mr. Speaker, this is the third time that I am responding to a Throne Speech that misses the mark for so, so many people in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, on the doorsteps folks wanted a government committed to making tangible changes to health care, to education, to the cost-of-living struggles that they're facing. Instead we received a visionless Throne Speech with a change in words alone but with no road map provided for that change.

On cost of living, the most pressing issue of our time facing the people of Saskatchewan, the Throne Speech offers no new affordability measures until tax time of next year, only for those

who are eligible to receive it. Vulnerable community members and folks who don't qualify left to struggle. And instead of providing immediate relief, they continue to vote against our motions to pause the gas tax and scrap the PST on groceries. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech misses the mark on the cost of living.

On health care we see the Throne Speech miss another mark. During the campaign we saw the Sask Party promise nothing new for health care, only the continuation of a failed health care plan and no new dollars for our health care workers. We know that no new dollars will just continue lead to cuts.

We continue to see the only health care human resources plan shuffling staff from one building to another without any real strategy for rebuilding the relationships with health care workers. On health care we see no action how to get us out of last place on the worst-in-the-country surgery wait times, and we see no road map on how the Sask Party will provide everybody in the province with access to a primary health care provider. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech misses the mark on health care.

Every single day of the election, the 2024 provincial election, I heard concerns from Saskatchewan residents of the course the Sask Party government was taking on health care, on education, on the cost of living. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech misses the mark on those accounts.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will end my speech today with one ask of this changed Sask Party government. If this government is truly committed to decorum, to a more respectful Assembly, one where civility reigns, then I ask them here today to repeal Bill 137 and its use of the notwithstanding clause and rebuild the damaged relationship with the two-spirit community, the queer community, and the trans community of our province. This would certainly go a long way, healing divisions in this Chamber, and heal the damage that this policy has done in our communities. Because words matter. Words without actions mean nothing. It's time for the Sask Party government to show integrity and show that they have really changed.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to rise and advocate for my community and respect a quorum in this House, but until this harmful bill is repealed, any olive branch put forward by this Saskatchewan Party government rings hollow. I will not forget how callously and — to use their own words — with malice this Saskatchewan Party government attacked my community.

And, Mr. Speaker, for these reasons — lack of action on immediate cost-of-living relief, lack of action on any real generational investment or change in health care and education — I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the government and will be supporting the amendments moved by my colleagues, the member from Regina Walsh Acres, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Fairview. Thank you so much.

Speaker Goudy: — I just want to comment again; I'd mentioned it earlier. But it's important that we don't make judgments on the intent. And when we talk about members or governments, which include members attacking or doing things with malice, I think, yeah, I just would like to refrain in this Chamber from using those kinds of terminology. And I appreciate if the member in the future will remember that.

I recognize the member from Martensville-Blairmore.

Hon. Jamie Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just taking this all in today as I'm assuming that everybody does when they speak for the first time in this House.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and honoured guests, if there's a few still left, it is an honour to stand before you today to talk about the subject that I hold dear to my heart, the importance of stepping forward as a public servant.

It is fitting for the Throne Speech to be titled "A New Beginning." Out of 61 members here today, 31 are taking their seats for the first time — a tremendous honour and privilege. All of us in this Chamber today have this great responsibility.

Another thing we have in common is being thankful for the individuals that helped us along the way, and I would like to start by thanking the people that raised me, my mother and father. Even though they are no longer here today, I thank them for the way they raised me, raised me to know the value of hard work, being true to myself, and being kind to others.

My children: Arianna is my youngest, the most creative child I know, starting writing plays at six years old, memorizing all the lines to movies and TV shows, and explaining to anyone who was willing to listen how behind the scenes works, from production to editing. She definitely is not scared of horror movies, I'll tell you. My mother always told me that she wished I had a switch to be turned off. Well now I have a child just like myself. She has been the biggest cheerleader and loves to tell her friends and teachers that I am now an MLA. I am extremely grateful that I am able to show her how hard work and perseverance pays off.

Anthony, my son — strength and stability. He is my common-sense voice, always questioning if I really need to buy that new dress or telling me that we should just eat at home rather than going to a restaurant. He is truly a hard-working man, and I am so proud of the way he supported me through this journey. And he couldn't believe that I was able to meet the Premier. He was so impressed that he could now watch his mother from anywhere that he is.

Katarina, my best friend. This young entrepreneur, business college student, and caring young lady always has a smile on her face. She reminds me of how I used to be when I was young. She has taken a liking to politics in the past few years, and she attends most events with me and loves to come here to her legislature as much as she can. This young lady never once has said no when I asked her to help me with the campaigning, assisting in getting flyers together or hours of door knocking.

I am so blessed to have such amazing children. I love you dearly and I don't tell you that enough. You have the opportunity to achieve greatness, and you have the opportunity to change the world.

Maureen — Maureen Torr that had ran for Meewasin — what a blessing it was to be on this journey together. We were meant for great things, and I will always call you my sister. I thank my sister Sandra for stepping forward into the role of financial agent, as she is the most organized person that I know, and her husband,

Kevin, for allowing me to keep her as busy as I did.

Terry, a friend for the last 30 years, for helping me build signs and distribute as well as the occasional door knock, taking him out of his comfort zone. We have built many projects together and it may not be the best workmanship, since we weren't sure about the plumb and level situation, but we call ourselves "close-enough construction."

Udi, for always encouraging me to keep going and believing in me wholeheartedly, for taking on the role as my campaign manager. But he would definitely say that he's not the one managing me, and who really can? I thank him for introducing me to the world of becoming a stock car driver, and can't wait to get in that car seat this summer.

Sutter, a young gentleman in my constituency that has more passion for politics than even myself. The best door knocker you can find, this young man had volunteered for many other candidates here today as well.

The constituents of Martensville-Blairmore, who had faith in me to bring their voice forward, who showed up to support me. To all the former members of this Legislative Assembly that have paved the way for all of us to be here today. To the Premier for appointing me Provincial Secretary — what an incredible honour.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all of the administrative staff in the building, the security team, the commissionaires, the cafeteria staff, building maintenance, and everyone who keeps this legislature running from day to day. To our first premier, Walter Scott, for having the vision of a grand Saskatchewan.

The path that placed me here today started about three years . . . I mean many years ago but most recently three years ago. I was approached, asking if I would consider running to become a member of this Assembly. As I was left in awe, thinking why me, taking the time to really understand that it was my drive, belief in this province, my strong advocacy for women in politics, and my determination to work together for the betterment of all, calling my mother to inform her that I had spoke to someone who wanted me to consider running to become an MLA, I was crying, overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude and humbled by such a request.

I attended this gallery, right there in the Speaker's gallery, exactly three years today. My mother passed away a month later. I believe she let go knowing that her daughter would be okay, and that I was on the right path and the path that I was meant to be on.

Why do we do what we do here? What is it that has us pushing so hard? Are we fighting for a moment, or are we fighting for a purpose? Because I am here for a purpose, Mr. Speaker. "If all that I would want to do would be to sit and talk to you, would you listen?" Those are words from a 12-year-old, Mr. Speaker. Now how would we all answer? I know I would stop in my tracks and realize that life has gotten too loud. Now it's time to listen.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, today I stand before you to speak about something

that affects us all, and that's the government's role in shaping the future of our beloved province. We often hear about the government in the news or during elections or casually in conversation. But how many of us truly understand what it is, what it does for us on a daily basis? How many of us realize the immense efforts that go into making this province a better place to live and to raise our families?

It is crucial for each one of us to comprehend the role of the government, not just as a distant institution but as the very entity that works tirelessly for our collective well-being. And that reminds me of a quote, Mr. Speaker. "I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has." And that was Abraham Lincoln.

When we speak of growth in this province, I have experienced this first-hand, Mr. Speaker. Born and raised in Martensville, I have witnessed incredible growth over the last 47 years, recognized in our Throne Speech, from the exponential growth of over 112 per cent since 2006. I had the honour of working toward such a goal when I was elected as a city council member in 2012. This experience has given me the opportunity to learn how to work through the difficulties that come along with rapid growth, but it also gave me the opportunity to watch something flourish.

This was in large part due to the incredible leadership and the great working relationship with our province, as municipal revenue sharing increased to over 340 million this year alone, Mr. Speaker. And we have the provincial government to thank for that.

Martensville and area has a special place in my heart as it is my family's namesake. A little piece of history: my mother's father, Jacob Gerbrandt, owned half the land, which we call the south side, and my father's uncle owned the other half, the north end. My grandfather helped build a one-room schoolhouse that was located between Martensville and Dalmeny on Rose Leaf Road, which was approximately three and a half miles away from the family farm.

The seven original homeowners decided it would be a good idea to move the one-room schoolhouse closer, envisioning more of a community and possibly a hamlet. And this way, Mr. Speaker, they didn't have to go to school up hills both ways. My grandfather was quick to donate the land that the school would be placed, which the city hall sits on today.

After some discussion among the residents, they decided on two names that the hamlet would be called. The names were Rose Leaf or Martensville. Well we all know how that vote turned out. And this is how Martensville was able to grow and eventually become a city, the city that we have today, Mr. Speaker, from seven homes to just under 12,000 people today. To the people of Martensville: I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to continue serving you.

Dalmeny is also in my constituency. It is a town just northeast of Martensville. This is where Mennonites like my family settled in the early 1900s. The town developed in 1904 to 1905 — a year later the post office opened — and now has a population of just shy of 1,800 people. The residents of Dalmeny are humble and

kind and know the true meaning behind community spirit.

I would like to congratulate both councils on their electoral wins, Prairie Spirit school board members as well. I know that they will serve their communities wonderfully. I also want to mention Blairmore, a vibrant community in Saskatoon that is also in my constituency. Blairmore is filled with cultural diversity and communities coming together, hosting events in the local parks.

And on a more serious note, Mr. Speaker, God bless my mother for going through a breast cancer diagnosis through a pandemic. Having to enter the cancer centre in Saskatoon for her treatments on her own with no personal supports present was very difficult for me, myself having also gone through a difficult diagnosis in 2016 and was unable to proceed to surgery until 2017. This made life stressful and almost unbearable at times. But the blessing we both had, Mr. Speaker, was Saskatchewan health care. The dedicated doctors and nurses took care of us unbelievably.

Women's health is near to my heart. With my mother and I both going through difficulties in this department, I find it extremely important for every woman in Saskatchewan to be able to access an at-home self-screening for HPV [human papilloma virus]. That is the leading cause in cervical cancer.

The 2024-25 budget includes a \$3.5 million increase for breast cancer care. And again I'll say that — \$3.5 million increase for breast cancer care — and \$1 million grant for ovarian cancer research, Mr. Speaker, not to mention making it more affordable for couples struggling with fertility. It is such a blessing to be a parent in this province. And we as a government are assisting in the financial struggles by introducing a new fertility treatment tax credit.

Our goal is that every Saskatchewan resident will have access to a primary care health provider by 2028. Our government will ensure 450,000 surgeries will be performed over the next four years, shortening wait times. And five new hospitals are under development — five — with the closest one being, to myself, located only 30 minutes away in Rosthern. That is \$2.6 billion into health care infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

And having spent three years as the Canadian Women in Local Leadership governance representative — working with municipalities across Canada with opportunities to promote equal representation relating to external struggles that women face that may be difficult to run for office, and a subcommittee branched off of CanWILL [Canadian Women in Local Leadership] was gender-based violence — I was told I was chosen for that role based on my passion and deep understanding for the subject matter.

My deep understanding did not come from books. It did not come from movies. It came from lived experience. To admit that we're vulnerable takes all the courage in the world, and to admit that you are not in control does as well.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, my first day in uniform. We were called to a domestic violence situation including a firearm. The individual with the firearm had left before we got there. The victim was covering for such actions being taken against her. I remember thinking to myself, Mr. Speaker, why does she make excuses? Why does she stand up for this abuser? Many other

times sitting in court I held the same type of frustrations, wondering why these women stayed in these situations.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I had to ask myself that very same question. Here I was a strong woman with a sidearm placed on my hip, protecting the most vulnerable daily, keeping the individuals responsible for horrible crimes off the streets, when in reality I was going through the very same thing many of these women were.

People can criticize the government as well as the police officers for not doing enough, but what does this do? Criticizing doesn't solve the issue; action does. When I was ready to help myself, I broke through and finally became the strong woman that I was all along. Going through this difficult time, I didn't know where to turn. Like most women struggling, we need help, and to admit needing help is the biggest struggle. It was only then that I realized how much our government had in place for support for women going through domestic violence.

Women's shelters and second-stage housing is a need for women and children in dire circumstances, and this government recognizes that. Our government is committing to \$1 million over three years for support, counselling, and intervention. \$328,000 has been provided to second-stage housing in Saskatchewan, and this government is investing \$31.7 million in the 2024-25 budget on interpersonal violence supports. In addition, Mr. Speaker, victims of domestic violence who apply for social housing through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation are given priority and placed on the top of that list. Even though I did not need to access these supports, I knew they were there in my time of need.

And with this government, we are also hiring 500 new officers in our province, Mr. Speaker, not to mention 500 more additions recovery spaces since much of today's crime is driven by drug and alcohol addiction.

Again I want to recognize the new beginning. As I look around here, the whole Chamber, I see incredibly talented individuals. The people that I see here I am so honoured, so honoured to work with. And to be fair, Mr. Speaker, they don't look so tired and out of touch to me.

Mr. Speaker, I need to bring attention to how incredibly blessed we are, really, truly, to live in Saskatchewan as I think of all of our friends in Israel and Ukraine.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my time is coming to an end. I'm so sorry. I would like to thank you for your patience, number one, and for everyone else's patience as well — thank you — and the Assembly for this great honour, and God for this amazing blessing. God bless this province, God bless you all, and God save the King.

I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment, but I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Kindersley-Biggar and seconded by the member of Sask Rivers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it's a pleasure to be on my feet. And I want to start by saying just how humbled I am by the thoughtful responses from our new members here in the House as part of our new 27-member caucus. This is a passionate and committed group of members and I want to welcome all of you, and I look forward so much to getting to know all of you and the work that we're going to be doing here together over the next four years.

And you know, listening to the member for Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis speak a moment ago, you know, we laugh a lot about how verbose he is on our WhatsApp channel. But I mean, he certainly proved today just what an eloquent speaker he is and how many thoughtful comments he has to put on the record here in the Assembly. And it's just one small example that I want to share of just how excited I am to be a member of this expanded team and government in waiting.

But let me back up now. I do want to spend some time expressing my gratitude to the people of Saskatoon Nutana for placing their trust in me for another four-year term as their MLA.

Representing this vibrant community of students and veterans and shopkeepers, researchers, creatives, builders, energy workers, health care professionals, educators, and advocates is truly a profound privilege. Every day I am inspired by their passion and commitment to making Saskatchewan a better place, and I promise to continue bringing their voices and concerns forward here in the legislature.

To my campaign team and volunteers, I want to say thank you from the bottom heart. To my campaign manager, John Ashton, and to the many people who supported us — Tim Hutchinson, Lorraine Salt, Patrick, Brenda, Robert, Jacob, Bryan, Jayden, Angie, Shawn, Scott, Carrie, and Shirley — you know who you are, and I thank you so much for your invaluable contributions. Whether it was door knocking, putting up 800 lawn signs, organizing events like Desserts for Democracy, or simply cheering us on, you made this campaign both effective and memorable.

[15:45]

I'm proud of the professional collaborative campaign we ran with our neighbouring constituencies of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood and Saskatoon Stonebridge. And watching Keith and Darcy connect with voters, listen to their concerns, and advocate for better access to health care, affordable living, and quality education was truly inspiring. And I'll maybe just mention, Mr. Speaker, that I'm referring to the now hon. members for Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood and Stonebridge. Wanted to catch that before we went any further, but you know, their determination and integrity will serve this province well as part of our Sask NDP caucus.

I want to extend my deepest thanks of course to my family, who provide me with the strength to keep moving forward in this work. My mother, Eleanor, whose political instincts remain unmatched, has been my steadfast supporter from the very beginning. And if you're watching today, Mom, thank you so much and hi there.

To my spouse, Eric, and my four children — Katrin, Monica,

Gail, and Natalia — you are my greatest inspiration. Your love and encouragement keep me grounded. And this campaign was especially meaningful with my daughters taking on active roles. Katrin shared her photography talent, Monica flew in from Toronto to assist in key ridings, and Natalia served as my candidate handler. And having Natalia by my side throughout the campaign was a tremendous joy and it was thrilling to see the political spark it ignited. And your future is so bright, my dear, and I can't wait to see where life takes you next.

Behind every MLA is an incredible team, and I am fortunate to work with some of the best. To my constituent assistant, Kerry Schaefer, who has been with me since day one, your dedication has been extraordinary. As you face your battle with breast cancer, know that our thoughts and support are with you and we look forward to welcoming you back when your treatment is complete. To those who have stepped up in Kerry's absence — Donna Gilchrist, Brock Neufeldt, Paras Kumar, McGinnis Reeve, and Aiden Cobbe — thank you for your hard work and professionalism.

Our provincial and caucus teams also deserve recognition. Under the leadership of our new chief of staff, Jeremy Nolais, and campaign director, Cheryl Oates, we navigated this high-pressure election with focus and determination. To Tim Williams and the staff at party office and to the dedicated individuals in our caucus office, Mitch Bonokoski, Brock Bowman, Landen Kleisinger, Kelsey Morrison, Zoé Beaulieu Prpick — and I hope I got that right, Zoé — Janet Thorson and our outgoing administrative staff, Jannet Shanks and Cheryl Stecyk, thank you for ensuring we have the resources and knowledge to represent Saskatchewan effectively.

And I would be remiss if I didn't also mention Warren McCall. It's been such a great work to meet you and get to know you, and I'm so proud to be able to call you a friend and mentor and wish you all the best as you conclude your role as chief of staff here for our caucus.

So this fall we saw elections at both the provincial and municipal levels, with many stepping forward to serve their communities. And I want to thank outgoing Saskatoon mayor, Charlie Clark, and councillors Mairin Loewen, Sarina Gersher, and Hilary Gough for their service. I extend congratulations to Saskatoon's first female mayor, Cynthia Block, and to incoming councillors Jasmin Parker in Ward 6, Holly Kelleher at Ward 7, and Senos Timon in Ward 2, the first Black person elected to Saskatoon City Council. Their leadership represents a step forward for our city and I look forward to working with them as well.

Running for office requires courage and I want to acknowledge all those who let their name stand in the provincial election. Our Sask NDP candidates showcased the best of Saskatchewan across diverse fields like health care, agriculture, education, energy, and the arts.

I had the privilege of supporting many inspiring candidates during the campaign: Brenda Edel in Kindersley-Rosetown, a community leader, an advocate for accessibility whose work with CNIB and Barrier Free Saskatchewan exemplifies her commitment to inclusion; Jordan Weins in Dakota-Arm River, a research agrologist whose vision for sustainable agriculture was a testament to Saskatchewan's innovation and potential; Lenore

Pinder in Yorkton, a health care professional and community advocate with deep roots in local education and youth programs.

Others like Jay Kimball in Swift Current brought years of experience in the arts and public administration, while Mark Thunderchild demonstrated unparalleled passion and leadership throughout his campaign. Candidates like Clare McNab in Cypress Hills and Lorne Schroeder in Kelvington-Wadena embodied dedication to rural communities, while Doug Racine in Sask Rivers and Miles Nachbar in Meadow Lake showed a deep commitment to justice, compassion, and affordability. Finally Tom Kroczyński, my cousin in The Battlefords, a lifelong educator and volunteer, exemplified the spirit of service that defines Saskatchewan.

To all our candidates, I want to thank you for believing in this province and the vision of our leader, Carla Beck, who knows how much more we can be as a province, realizing our full potential. Despite our strong team, the election outcome didn't go quite exactly our way this time. But let me be clear; change is coming. The Saskatchewan NDP is preparing to expose this government's failures and mismanagements, while offering a brighter future forward.

The Throne Speech has revealed a government running out of ideas. Their record is one of cuts — cuts to health care, education, social services — that have led to declining outcomes for families and communities. Meanwhile costs have continued to rise with more taxes and fees burdening Saskatchewan families. And just last week we saw yet another budgetary update predicting a half a billion dollars more of debt by this Sask Party government.

These are critical times. Trade challenges with our southern neighbours and increasing uncertainty in global markets require strong, strategic leadership, and unfortunately this government remains preoccupied with internal divisions rather than addressing these pressing issues.

I'm thrilled to continue serving as the shadow minister for Water Security, SaskWater, Crown Investments Corporation, and now with the addition of SaskBuilds and Procurement to round out this vital portfolio. These agencies and ministries are foundational to the well-being and prosperity of Saskatchewan, and I am committed to holding the government accountable for their management. As shadow minister, my role is to demand fairness, transparency, accountability, and justice in the execution of these mandates.

And these principles are not just political rhetoric. They are the expectations of the people of Saskatchewan, who rightly demand that their government act in the best interests of everyone, not just a select few. From ensuring that public infrastructure projects are delivered efficiently and transparently, to safeguarding water resources and habitat for future generations, these are responsibilities that affect the daily lives of all Saskatchewan residents.

The Crown Investments Corporation holds the trust of Saskatchewan people as a steward of their public assets. It is imperative that this trust is honoured through ethical decision making and responsible fiscal stewardship. Similarly the Water Security Agency and SaskWater are tasked with managing and protecting one of our most precious resources — water. With

increasing climate pressures and growing demands, I will work to ensure that their policies reflect true sustainability, equity, and a long-term vision.

Now, with the inclusion of SaskBuilds and Procurement in my portfolio, I look forward to scrutinizing the government's approach to public infrastructure projects and procurement processes, transparency in awarding contracts, cost efficiency, and adherence to high environmental and social standards. And those will be essential. Saskatchewan deserves projects that not only meet immediate needs but also lay the foundation for future growth and resilience, that they support local businesses and workers and not export them to businesses outside of the province in California, Alberta, and other points abroad.

In fulfilling these duties, I aim to be both prosecutorial and propositional. That means holding the government accountable where they fall short while also offering constructive solutions and policies that can better serve the people of this province. It is not enough to criticize, but we must also lead with ideas and a vision for a better Saskatchewan. My private member's bill on wetland conservation is testament to my commitment to offer approaches that address the shortcomings of this government.

The stakes are high, Mr. Speaker. These agencies and ministries play a pivotal role in the shaping of the province's economic, environmental, and social future. I take this responsibility seriously and am committed to ensuring that they operate with the highest standards of integrity and service to the people.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to continue representing Saskatoon Nutana. I remain committed to fighting for policies and programs that prioritize the needs of Saskatchewan people: affordable living, accessible health care, quality education, and strong support for families and communities.

And with that, I regret that I will not be able to support the motion put forward by the Sask Party government, and instead I stand firmly with the amendment from the member for Walsh Acres, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Chris Beaudry: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past, Mr. Speaker . . . And I do this. I'm generally on a stage and I wander and this and that, so I don't know if we can turn every microphone on, but it'll be difficult for me to stay in one place. But we'll give it a try.

So congratulations on your new role, Mr. Speaker. And to begin, I'd like to share a poem with you, and it's one I revisit time and time again before I make a big decision in my life, and I gladly offer this poem to all those listening. It is from Carlos Castaneda's teacher Don Juan, and it says:

Anything is one of a million paths. Therefore you must always keep in mind that a path is only a path. If you feel you should not follow it, you must not stay with it under any conditions. To have such clarity you must lead a disciplined life. Only then you will know that any path is only a path, and there is no affront to oneself or to others in dropping it if that is what your heart tells you to do. But your decision

to keep on the path or to leave it must be free of fear or ambition. I warn you. Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary.

This question is one that only a very old man asks. Does this path have a heart? All paths are the same: they lead nowhere. They are paths going through the bush, or into the bush. In my own . . . [time] I could say I have traversed long long paths, but I am not anywhere. Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good; if it doesn't, it is of no use. Both paths lead nowhere; but one has a heart, the other doesn't. One makes for a joyful journey; as long as you follow it, you are one with it. The other will make you curse your life. One makes you strong; the other weakens you.

[16:00]

Before you embark on any path ask the question: Does this path have a heart? If the answer is no, you will know it, and then you must choose another path. The trouble is nobody asks the question; and when a man finally realizes that he has taken a path without a heart, the path is ready to . . . [end] him. At that point very few men can stop to deliberate, and leave the path. A path without a heart is never enjoyable. You have to work hard even to take it. On the other hand, a path with heart is easy; it does not make you work at liking it.

Mr. Speaker, I've used this poem many times to point my life in a certain direction. At times a path with a heart may not seem logical, but the heart defies logic, Mr. Speaker.

One particular time was in the winter of 2018. It wasn't quite a year after the Broncos bus crash, and I had created a grief sharing group that met weekly. We would gather weekly and discuss what was at the forefront of our grieving process. I could share how some of these meetings were transformational, but I'd rather share an outsider's perspective. One winter night I was preparing to leave for the meeting, and my then three-year-old daughter asked me to stay home. I told her I was going to my grief group, and she replied with some great wisdom. She said, is that the meeting where you go cry with the moms, and when you're done crying you all feel a little bit better? To which I replied, yes. She then said, okay daddy, I'll see you in the morning.

I'm not ashamed that my path at that time put these grief meetings ahead of my family. These meetings increased my capacity to be with the difficulties of my current life situation. These meetings helped me be a more attentive father, a more patient husband, and allowed me to take better care of myself.

A path with a heart defies logic, Mr. Speaker. Logic would have said back in June for me to continue to grow my public speaking career. Logic would have said to spend the summer at the lake. But like I said, Mr. Speaker, a path with a heart defies logic. I again decided to follow what my heart was saying. It led me here today.

There have been many moments in my life which culminated in bringing me in front of you, and I don't intend to put you through an entire autobiography, but I'd like to share a few instances.

The first: in 1996 the Hon. June Draude came to the Naicam

School and spoke to my classroom. I was captivated by how she spoke. Her description of the work of an MLA and the important impact you can make on your constituency and province has not left my mind since that day.

The second: my grandfather told me many times . . . He would say, "Chris," — actually, he called me by my nickname in a heavy French accent — "Critters," he'd say, "If you're not trying to make the place you live in better every day, then what kind of place will you be living in?"

The final story: during a July 1st celebration in Spalding, Saskatchewan, I had the honour to eat dinner beside Kevin Phillips. Kevin had recently been elected, and I expressed my interest in politics to him. He mentioned to me that a great start would be to help his constituency board. And the following week I was put on the board, sitting beside — for those who are familiar — seated beside Bob McPherson.

These three moments stand out to me, and I'd like to give thanks to the individuals from these stories. To June Draude, my friend and political mentor, thank you. If it wasn't for the many phone calls and visits over the last few years, I would not be here. To Kevin Phillips, thank you for giving my first opportunity to learn the ropes on a CA board.

And to my grandfather, I could thank you for the quote, but that wouldn't be enough. There's so much more that I am grateful and thankful for — for teaching me about community, about family, and about tenderness. On the outside you may have seemed like a hard, old farmer, but on the inside you shined, and that light is still shining.

There are many more thank yous to be given out. To the people of Kelvington-Wadena, thank you. You took the time out of your busy lives to not vote once, but twice for me. Thank you for allowing me to be your voice in this legislature. I'm ready and willing to represent every single one of you.

To my campaign team — Lynn, Gerry, Melissa, Eric, Glenys, Brad, Marlene, Jacquie, Sarah, Bob, and Reagan — thank you. Your hours of hard work and determination were unmatched.

To my mother-in-law, Shannon, thank you. I can't thank you enough for the physical things you do to support us, like taking our children when Richelle and I had to go to events. No, that doesn't suffice. I thank you more. I thank you for helping raise our children and for being one of the largest supports in our lives.

To my father, thank you for being an example of perseverance and resolution in my life. You were my hero as a child, and it still brings me joy to be able to work with you on the farm daily. I know this change came as a surprise to you, and I again offer you my deepest thanks for your support in this journey.

To my mother, it's been just over five years since you passed, but I wouldn't be here without you. Mr. Speaker, when my mom was dying, she showed me a level of grace and fearlessness I have yet to see matched by any human. Mom, you faced a challenge we all must come to, and if we can wade through the waters of life with half the dignity and honour you did in death, then this will be an enjoyable journey.

Lastly to my wife and children, thank you. Thank you to each of you for being a cornerstone to lean on these last few months. A cornerstone is the first stone set of a masonry foundation. All other stones will be set in reference to this stone. The cornerstone determines the outcome of the structure. This is the physical cornerstone. In freemasonry the cornerstone also symbolizes sturdiness, morality, and truth. You erect this cornerstone in your heart and build a spiritual temple based on these principles. You four are my physical and spiritual cornerstones. Saying thank you to the four of you will never do you justice. To show you my thanks, I can only try to embody the qualities that the cornerstone represents for the time that we have together.

I learned a lot from these individuals, but the most important thing I've learned was service, how to be of service to others. There's a word called *seva*. It comes from the Sanskrit root *sev*, or to serve. *Seva* is a selfless service that is performed without any expectation of result or award for performing it. Such services can be performed to benefit other humans or society.

During my nomination this summer, Mr. Speaker, I asked the people of Kelvington-Wadena, what's the most important thing to you? I find that question can be a great north star. It can be a guiding light that we often lose. I heard many important things this summer, and many of the important things crossed over from town to town and family to family. The people of Kelvington-Wadena were able to tell me even the most difficult, most important things with patience, with grace, and with compassion, even when internally you could see there was a fire burning inside of them. I was able to witness the great personal power and clarity from these individuals.

I'd like to quickly touch on power and clarity, Mr. Speaker. It's been said that functional anger in its purest form is clarity. It's our body's way of telling us what we're okay with and what we're not okay with. Functional anger doesn't cross boundaries. It doesn't hurt others, it doesn't hurt ourselves, and functional anger is patient. Functional anger is in the present moment whereas dysfunctional anger crosses boundaries, is unclear. It hurts me, it hurts you, and it's not rooted in the present moment. It takes a lot of power, Mr. Speaker, to be with anger in a functional way. What is the power I'm speaking of? Webster's definition would say that power is possession or control, authority or influence over others. To me that sounds more like manipulation.

I'd like to share three definitions of power which to me describe power each in a different way. First Marshall Rosenberg's, and for those unfamiliar with Mr. Rosenberg, he created non-violent communication. Power is the capacity to name and identify, express and communicate our feelings and needs to develop more understanding in connection with ourselves and with others.

My mentor's definition: power is energy itself, the energy that makes up reality, the energy we bring to our lives and our choices. Power is both the energy that comes from being in reality and being in a state of acceptance of that reality and the energy that fuels our ability to act in accordance with that. Power's not domination over another. Power is not any of the fear patterns of fight, flight, or freeze, and it is not going polite. A mistake of power is one of the primary ignorances of our time.

My definition: power is the ability to be with large sensation and

not become reactive or distractive. Power's being response-able when large sensations and emotions are inside of us. This ability to respond leads us to responsibility. Power is the ability to raise your capacity to be with strong and large feelings. Power's the ability to make a choice to not distract or react from the large sensations inside of us. I seen this power in the people of Kelvington-Wadena this summer and fall.

Mr. Speaker, it leads me to believe that we'll see continued growth, leadership, and service from the people of Kelvington-Wadena. I seen it at the Klinger Dinger at Marean Lake where what began as a memorial to a valued community member has blossomed into something that continues to build a sense of pride and unity. The amazing folks from multiple communities have come together to build a trail that connects Marean Lake and Greenwater. They do this in memory of Kleon Swahn, affectionately known as Klinger to his friends and family.

I seen this at three 100th anniversary birthday celebrations this summer, Mr. Speaker: Foam Lake, Rose Valley, and Archerwill. I seen first-hand the amount of time and energy it takes to plan an event like this, having my wife Richelle be the Chair of the 100th anniversary in Rose Valley. A big thank you and congratulations to all the communities of Kelvington-Wadena who put on any event this year. The hard work, patience, and time to bring these events to the people of our communities does not go unnoticed.

The multiple fairs and rodeos, parades and ball tournaments and events that happen in Kelvington-Wadena can keep a family busy every weekend. I'm seeing a resurgence of community spirit in the communities of Kelvington-Wadena. Not that it left, Mr. Speaker, but post-COVID, it took time for events to be organized again and local boards to be refilled and refuelled. Well I'm here to tell you that that's happened and it's happening in Kelvington-Wadena. Selfless service is alive and well.

Not only is service alive and well, but another important aspect is thriving, and that's joyful effort — fun. I seen so much joy in our communities, be it from the dunk tank in Nokomis where an 11-year-old girl with the best arm I seen all day went 4 for 5 in dunking me, throwing harder than I can; watching families and friends enjoying our regional and provincial parks; and to the over 30 slo-pitch games I attended this summer — watched, played in, or failed in — the folks of Kelvington-Wadena really example the importance of enjoying what this province has to offer.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, another amazing winter of senior hockey began. How lucky am I and the people of Kelvington-Wadena to have six of the seven Long Lake Hockey League teams in our constituency, and two teams from the Wheatland Hockey League?

Two to four evenings a week from November to March, there's an opportunity to see our great volunteers and our great hockey players in action and to catch up on one of the best pastimes Saskatchewan has to offer. I know first-hand the difficulties of running a senior hockey team. It takes a community and more to bring this action to the fans and our province. My hats off to all of those volunteers.

Last Thursday, Mr. Speaker — well when I wrote this it was last

Thursday — so two Thursdays ago, Mr. Speaker, I was privileged to be a part of BHP's Movember hockey game. Not only is BHP helping drive our strong economy but they also have many individuals who care about their families, their friends, and their co-workers. Through their Movember initiative, the good folks at BHP raised over \$100,000 last year and are well on their way to reaching their goal this year.

Now I could not talk about the great constituency of Kelvington-Wadena without talking about one of my favourite events of the year. This type of event happens all over our great province and it's truly at the top of my list — fowl suppers — a place of gathering, of sharing, and of community. Maybe it's because of my background in farming and growing food but to cook and share a meal with another human, to me, is sacred. Taking a growing season's worth of labour and to offer it as sustenance to another person is a great honour.

[16:15]

And what an honour my family and I had to be able to share a meal and cook for the people of Kelvington-Wadena this fall. Towns big and small attracting hundreds out to give thanks and eat together. I'm not sure if you're aware, Mr. Speaker, but the town of Kuroki attracted almost five times its population for its fall supper. An amazing 442 people came through their doors. What a barter, what service in action, our great people of this province offering their hard-earned money for a meal served by selfless servants for the betterment of our communities.

It has been said, Mr. Speaker, that actions speak louder than words. Now I believe that's an incomplete statement. Yes, our actions are louder than our words but to me our intent trumps all of our actions. Intent is something that has been forgotten about far too often these days. I've been reminded by the people of Kelvington-Wadena the importance of intent. I've seen how positively infectious actions done with the intent of bettering others, bettering your community, your neighbour, your friends, and your family can be.

I want to challenge myself. I want to examine my intent — not only my intent for being here in this historic 30th legislation but to examine my intent in all the things I do. It's a personal challenge that I put on myself after what I've seen this summer from the people of Kelvington-Wadena. If I'm clear on my intent then I truly believe, Mr. Speaker, that my actions will be of the highest quality. What a chance for a new beginning, to lead with my intent.

Now I'd like to share two quotes, Mr. Speaker, the first from Viktor Frankl and the second from the 17th Karmapa. Viktor Frankl: "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." And from the Karmapa:

Our inner world is the pivotal domain for bringing about real change in the world that we all share. Neither social nor environmental justice is possible without significant changes in our attitudes and the intentional behaviour they give rise to. The transformation of our social and material world must begin with us.

Now if I am to best serve the people of Kelvington-Wadena, I need not look for more advice than what was just stated.

Changing myself is the pivotal way to bring change into the world. Changing my attitude and my intention begins with me. Now I know I create one side of the circumstances for how the people of Kelvington-Wadena view me. I hope I can create a view of an individual who is response-able and not reactive. I hope I can create a view of an individual who instills hope and a positive intent to the people of Saskatchewan.

My mentor often mentions it's good to come back to the beginning, be that in reading of a book, in working on a project, or in a spiritual practice. The beginning can often show us the path forward. A new beginning, I believe, is setting the cornerstone for the path forward.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, a lifetime ago, at least it feels that way, I was a hockey coach. I really miss the feeling of being part of a team. Maybe I was blinded by grief after Humboldt, or had just forgot the importance of what being on a team was like, but this summer and fall has reminded me of that, Mr. Speaker. I was reminded that we are all always on a multitude of teams, be it our family, our community, our province, our nation, and this planet.

For me today in this room, Saskatchewan is the team. We are the players. All I want is to be of service to the team. I hope I can use my skills, wisdom, and ability to be of the highest service to my team. I pray that I can accept whatever is set in front of me and face it for the betterment of the team.

When I coached, Mr. Speaker, people would ask me what I did in my spare time, and I would tell them this: I'd say I farm. And to me what farming is is making the conditions right for growth. I then would tell them, folks, that's essentially what I'm trying to do here with this team. We're trying to make the conditions right for growth. Well, Mr. Speaker, if something isn't broken, why fix it? And I agree with that statement. And that's what I hope to do here. I hope to make the conditions right for growth not only for myself but for this team.

Mr. Speaker, I notice some interesting similarities between playoff hockey and the nomination and election. Plan and prepare, and once it's go time you have the ability to adjust and adapt, minute by minute and hour by hour. If you cannot adapt or adjust the plan, certain things get missed and there is no time to recover. Then in the end when you look back at your plan, you see something that doesn't quite resemble the road travelled, but nevertheless you reach the destination.

That anecdote reminds me of an old Zen parable, Mr. Speaker, the parable of the student and master. There's a young student, and he wants to learn everything that the master knows so he heads out through the woods and he finds the master sitting on the edge of a cliff above a pool of water. And he says, Master, Master, please teach me. Allow me to learn from you. I want to know everything you will learn. If I were to come here every weekend, Master, how long would it take me to learn what you know? And the master says, 10 years.

And the student says, no, no, no, no, no. Master, I'm committed. I want to work hard. I'll leave my family. I'll come here Monday to Friday. I'll be with you five days a week. I'll go home to my family on the weekend. How long will it take me to know everything you know, Master? And the master replies, 25 years.

And the student, he's boggled. He says, what? What? No, I told you I would come here Monday to Friday. I'm serious. I want to work hard. I want to do the most important things. I want to do all that I can. I'll live with you seven days a week, Master. How long will it take me to learn everything you know? And the master says, 50 years.

I think, to me the moral of this story is that if we keep both eyes on our goal, we miss the path in front of us. It's not about keeping two eyes on the goal. One eye on the path, one eye on the goal. To me the moral of the story in this is keeping both eyes on the path. If the plan can change, the goal can change. So to keep both eyes on the path, we can see what's in front of us. We can see what's most important. We can see if this path has a heart. And to me, this path currently does.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Kindersley-Biggar, seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, and I will not be supporting the amendment.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Kim Breckner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am getting over a cold so this might be quite brief. And congratulations to you on your election, and to the newly elected Deputy Speaker.

It's amazing that we have two female race-car drivers in this Chamber. How cool is that? Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should start a club. I do want to get the member from Meewasin behind the wheel, so perhaps he can be an honorary member at some point.

It's been a pleasure getting to know you all. If I haven't been here in person due to illness, I have had an opportunity to watch all the speeches online, and it's been quite a pleasure getting to know my colleagues and the colleagues across the room.

I rise today in awe of the immense privilege and responsibility that the constituents of Saskatoon Riversdale have granted to me in being their representative. I want to thank a number of my supporters for helping me get here today. Firstly my husband, Paul, for supporting all my life's endeavours, even when it includes rescuing cats found on the campaign trail even though we already have two at home.

Thank you to my parents, Mike and Pauline. I was a bit nervous when I told them I was seeking the nomination. We never really discussed politics and I had no idea what their political ideologies were — especially my dad, a retired railroader, stereotypical car guy who, according to his friends, was a little rough around the edges in the '80s. And my mom, a retired nurse and a farm girl through and through. What would they think of all of this?

Well, Mr. Speaker, they were thrilled for me. My dad's lawn was home to some of the biggest NDP signs in Moose Jaw North, and my mom drove up from Regina to spend several days on the doorstep with me and couldn't stop telling people how proud she was of her daughter, even though I said, that's really embarrassing; please stop.

It also warmed my heart that my dear brother Matt, although we teased each other relentlessly as kids growing up and still do

sometimes, told me how excited he was to vote. In retrospect he never did say who he was voting for, but regardless. And thank you to my in-laws, Nadia and Bruce, and to my extended family who supported me through this endeavour.

Mr. Speaker, I think all members here can attest that an election takes a team. I'm so thankful for mine: my campaign manager, Darcy, and workers Ashley, Lindsay, Jeff, and Amy; my volunteers who spent countless hours whether knocking on doors, distributing literature, putting up signs, and many other tasks, especially Vicky, Veronica, Linden, Marc, Sacha, Gillian, Gerard, Krista-Dawn, Cara, Melanie, Stephen, Nicole, Keisha, and so many others. They should be proud of what we've accomplished.

I would also like to recognize my colleague members who supported me through this journey throughout the whole election, but especially when, less than two weeks before the election, I suffered a miscarriage, requiring two surgical interventions. In sharing this news, I heard from so many that had also experienced pregnancy loss and realized that I was far from alone.

In fact, the Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that between 15 to 25 per cent of pregnancies end in miscarriage, yet it's something we hardly talk about. Therefore, from the floor of this legislature, I want women to know that they are not alone. I also want to recognize the member from White City-Qu'Appelle for sharing his story of loss and reminding me that although we sit on different sides of this House, we still have so many shared experiences as humans.

I am so grateful for the staff at the Early Pregnancy Assessment Clinic and City Hospital Women's Health Centre for their work and incredible kindness and comfort they offered during this difficult time. I will do everything I can to support them and continue the important work of protecting women's bodily autonomy and access to health care.

I would like to thank the other candidates of Saskatoon Riversdale in this election, Olu Fakoyejo and leader of the Saskatchewan Green Party, Naomi Hunter. Our interactions were always respectful and pleasant. I thank each of them for their hard work.

To the voters of Riversdale, I want to thank them for their confidence in me. Riversdale is a diverse and vibrant community. I've had the pleasure of spending the last several months meeting my neighbours in Riversdale, King George, Holiday Park, Montgomery Place, Meadowgreen, and Pleasant Hill. Riversdale is home to people of varied cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status. There are people in the constituency who are doing very well while others struggle in poverty.

In Saskatoon Riversdale we have a number of great businesses, community centres, places of worship, parks, and recreational areas. We have the head office of Cameco, one of the largest uranium producers in the world, a resource that brings great wealth to our province. But we also have two permanent homeless shelters. We have St. Paul's Hospital, where health care workers have raised alarms over overcrowding and wait times.

On the doorsteps I constantly heard concerns over the cost of living. Many people have told me that they couldn't afford to stay

in their current apartments after significant rent increases. Many people have been touched by mental health and addictions. Crime is increasing and people are concerned about their security. These conversations on the doorstep have reaffirmed why I decided to seek election to the legislature.

Until recently, I never imagined I would be a politician. I viewed politics as a thankless job for people much smarter and more outgoing than I was. But I was compelled to politics by an enduring desire to solve problems, to get jobs done and create positive change.

I have my mother to thank for igniting this passion in me. She was a home care nurse working out of the Union Hospital in Moose Jaw where I grew up. When I was in seventh grade she signed me up as a hospital volunteer, and I volunteered every week until I graduated high school. These years taught me that there is great suffering in life, but even as a seventh grader I could do small things like taking time talking to lonely patients to create some good in the world despite the suffering.

As I grew up, the ability to do good began to feel like a responsibility. At university I volunteered as a Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon while also working part-time as a waitress and bank teller. Even while I had to work to support my university education like many of us have to do, I also had a duty to support other young people in the hopes that they too can achieve their own goals. As a lawyer I continue to use my skills for the benefit of the community. I have leveraged my understanding of legislature and regulation to help organizations meet their legal needs.

[16:30]

Over the past several years I've continued to feel that familiar pull of a situation that needs changing. I felt it when my aunt needed a kidney transplant. I was a match. I gave her my kidney, and it took a year and a half. I realized through this process how many people were being let down by the health care system. I've also watched a loved one try and seek help for their addiction but was told it would take months to access treatment, a timeline that's much too long for many people. The struggles that the people of Saskatoon Riversdale face, many of them are my struggles.

And that enduring desire to bring change, it brought me here today. It brought me to the legislature to do everything I can to improve the lives of my constituents; to address health care, mental health, and addictions; to address crime and cost of living; to remove barriers and provide support to the many Saskatoon Riversdale residents that are working so hard to live a good life.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the motion. I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Bengough.

Michael Weger: — Mr. Speaker, after spending 16 years appearing in Provincial Court referring to the judge up on the dais as their honour, I am now going to do my best to use the title "Mr. Speaker." So here we go.

I want to start, Mr. Speaker, by congratulating you on your appointment to such an important position. I will echo other members' comments when I state that I'm very confident in your ability to . . . [inaudible] . . . decorum in this room. They say that first impressions are everything, and you immediately left a great impression on me when you offered to be a tour guide on my first day here as an elected MLA. I look forward to getting to know you better, and hopefully we can continue our discussions on potentially repurposing a space in this building to be a workout room. I do believe however, Mr. Speaker, that we have more pressing matters to deal with in this fall session.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also wish to congratulate you on your position, and the similar comments go to you regarding first impressions. My wife, Cara, and I had the pleasure to be seated at a table with the member from Lumsden-Morse this past summer at the farewell dinner for Don McMorris, and we both left that evening impressed by how welcoming you were to this recently declared Sask Party candidate.

Mr. Speaker, it's such an absolute honour to be standing up in this Chamber. The importance of this institution and the responsibility that comes along with serving in this capacity is not lost on me. My career has involved learning about and helping clients navigate many of the laws and regulations that have been created in this building, and knowing that I may now have a small impact on some of the future legislation is very special.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that we each have followed different paths that have led us to serving the people of Saskatchewan in the capacity as MLA. I would like to touch on some events and people that were influential in my life, and in doing so, also draw attention to three rules that I try to live by.

Mr. Speaker, I was born in Wynyard, Saskatchewan, and resided there until I was 14 years old before moving to Midale, Saskatchewan. I'm the son of John and Elaine, and the younger sibling to my brother Les. My brother and I were raised in a modest household where our dad worked as the foreman for the RM of Big Quill, and our mom was a homemaker and ran a small private daycare in our house.

My parents, Mr. Speaker, also come from modest beginnings. My dad grew up on a farm north of Grenfell on the edge of the Qu'Appelle Valley, and my mom grew up as the daughter of a garage owner in Redvers. Mr. Speaker, my dad has a grade 7 education and my mom has her grade 10. This wasn't by choice but more by necessity, as my dad needed to leave school to get a job and my mom left school when she met my dad. Despite their education, or lack thereof, my parents are two of the smartest people I know.

And in addition to that and likely more importantly, Mr. Speaker, they are two of the hardest working people I know. Just a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, after a first large dump of snow down in Weyburn, my 81-year-old father shovelled the sidewalk that runs in front of their house and along the entire city block in Weyburn. My dad owns a snow blower, Mr. Speaker, but I'm pretty sure he shovelled the sidewalk just to prove to himself that he could still do it. After hearing this, I was sure to go home and make sure my sidewalk and that of my neighbours was shovelled as well. He's still setting an example for me at 81.

As my brother and I grew up in Wynyard, we didn't realize how lucky we were to have a mom that was home in the morning to send us off to school and home in the afternoon when we got back home. Mom also made sure to tend to a very large garden and prepare pretty much all the food we ate from scratch. And that last part hasn't changed to this day, Mr. Speaker. My parents still put in the work to maintain a large garden. And if the member opposite from Mount Royal would like to follow my parents through the Weyburn Co-op, he would find that they pay very little PST, if any.

Despite my parents' modest income, they managed to ensure that we never went without. And when our home had to expand to keep up with two growing boys, my parents found a way to save up to put family room addition on their small house so my brother and I had a hang-out area. They added a nice porch and then a double-car garage in the back yard. Mr. Speaker, one summer we even expanded our basement by knocking out a cinder-block wall and then digging out a room that would later hold a deep-freeze and a workbench. As a family we all took turns hauling bits of broken cinder blocks, and then dirt and clay, up the basement stairs in a five-gallon pail. After all that, Mr. Speaker, my parents really could have benefited from a home renovation tax credit back in the '90s.

I tell this story, Mr. Speaker, to point out that I was taught that you have to work hard for things in life. My parents have worked hard for everything they have, and they taught me that I would have to do the same. My parents have also been there every step of the way to support me, and for that I cannot thank them enough. Rule no. 1, Mr. Speaker — work hard.

At the age of 14 my parents moved our family to the small town of Midale located in between Estevan and Weyburn on Highway 39. This, Mr. Speaker, was a move that would change my life forever. You see, Mr. Speaker, a year after moving to Midale the school hired a new principal, and when the new principal moved to town he brought with him three children. The most important was his oldest and very pretty blonde-haired daughter, Cara.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not kidding when I say that the boys were lined up at the door of their house looking to meet the new girl in town. I stayed at the back of the line and bided my time, Mr. Speaker, as I knew I had an advantage over the others. I was an outsider and so was she, and naturally we gravitated towards each other. And we spent an impressive amount of time together throughout our school years. Once we both moved to Regina to further our education, we knew we were meant to be together forever.

Almost 23 years ago, Mr. Speaker, I proposed to my wife by getting down on one knee in a snow bank directly in front of this building. I was attending the University of Regina as a part-time student working towards a Bachelor of Arts with a major in political science. I was working a part-time job changing oil on vehicles at Mr. Lube, and I was even working evenings at a CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] call centre.

Mr. Speaker, at the time I was so very far away from ever having the opportunity to set foot in this great building, but for some reason I was drawn to this location. Call it a premonition, but for whatever reason as we were driving down Albert Street on a cold January evening, I pulled into this parking lot out front and asked my high school sweetheart to marry me. I also, Mr. Speaker, had

a small diamond ring burning a hole in my pocket, and I could not wait until Valentine's Day.

Mr. Speaker, my wife is one of the most impressive people I know and absolutely the best teammate I could ever ask for. In school she was a great athlete, often competing on baseball and basketball teams with the boys when there weren't enough girls to form a team of their own. In addition to this, she worked a very busy part-time job as a lifeguard in Estevan once she had her driver's licence and could get back and forth after school.

After a short stint at the University of Regina, Cara began her career at CIBC. She started at the call centre and then moved into a branch position, where she helped to support our family while I attended law school in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for her strong desire to raise a large family, I'm sure my wife would be in an executive position with some financial institution or possibly standing exactly where I am standing today. She is definitely more than capable.

She has proven this time and time again as a co-president of the South Saskatchewan chapter of Cystic Fibrosis Canada and a major fundraising organizer, leading our family and Team Teresa on a path where we have been responsible for raising well over \$500,000 for cystic fibrosis research. All while managing the schedules of four busy children and the complications we faced with our daughter Teresa's cystic fibrosis diagnosis at the age of two and a half. And more recently, Cara used her organizational skills, her strong work ethic, and even her CIBC call centre skills while phone canvassing to be one of the best campaign managers in the province. In our time together, Mr. Speaker, we have accomplished many things that we never dreamt of, and I know that neither of us could have done it alone.

Rule no. 2 — support your teammate. In my particular case, Mr. Speaker, love your teammate. Mr. Speaker, I've identified two rules that I've tried to live by. And if you can follow these first two rules, I believe the third will be fulfilled naturally. And that third rule is to have fun. Essentially, the fun happens when you accomplish your goals. And no, Mr. Speaker, I know it isn't all going to be fun all the time. What I mean is that generally speaking, we have to enjoy what we are doing and also take time to enjoy the benefits of our hard work. In my personal life, the fun for me happens when I'm out on the lake with my kids, sitting around the campfire, or off on a two-wheeled motorcycle adventure.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you aren't having fun, you need to move on and choose a new path in life. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've had a chance to interact with all 33 members sitting on this side of the room, and I believe that we are all ready to work hard for the Saskatchewan people. We are ready to support one another as teammates, and we're ready to have fun.

I know my colleagues all worked very hard to win the support of their constituents. I have witnessed how the experienced members have stepped up to welcome and support the 16 newly elected members in this government, and the immediate camaraderie between the rookies has been inspirational. I am so proud to be a part of this class of 2024, and I am looking forward to the fun we will have together over the next two weeks as we help pass legislation to make life more affordable for Saskatchewan residents. And I am very optimistic for the next

four years. I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, this government is not tired and out of touch. We are fresh and full of ambition.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a firm believer that organized sports and activities are a pathway to success, especially when you pursue the above three rules. My love for sports was formed as I grew up in Wynyard and then Midale, and my love for sports has grown as a parent and volunteer coach and as a dance dad. That is why I'm so excited about the increased income threshold for the active families benefit. Helping parents afford to put their children in activities like hockey and dance will pay dividends to our province in the long run. Children participating in these activities are learning the skills they need and gaining experience that will help them to be strong, contributing members of society.

I also must mention my love for hockey in this speech, Mr. Speaker. There are so many lessons that could be learned from the game of hockey. The joke in our household, where my son and I both cheer for the Leafs, Mr. Speaker, is that cheering for the Leafs teaches you the life lesson on how to handle disappointment. I hope that this season cheering for the Leafs will also teach us about perseverance when they win the Stanley Cup. We can dream, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

Hockey is also one of those sports, Mr. Speaker, where you truly get out what you put into it. If you forecheck, if you backcheck, then you get the paycheque. With that I am very happy that our government continues to see the value in the community rinks affordability grant and the benefit in increasing this grant up to \$5,000 per ice surface.

Mr. Speaker, this grant will hopefully be used to help maintain places like the rink in Lang, Saskatchewan, which is in my riding. This rink was the hometown rink of my friend and local hockey success story, Jeff Schaeffer, and is the epitome of a quirky small-town rink. One of the oldest in the province, entering its 96th year of operation, Mr. Speaker, this rink is the one that received some notoriety with videos showing the young hockey players entering the ice surface from a suspended stairway that drops down directly onto the ice. I hope this grant will continue to support this rink's operation into year 100 and beyond.

Now many people have played their own unique role, directly or indirectly, in my path to becoming an MLA, and I owe them some recognition. My involvement in politics began shortly after starting my career at NSWB Law Firm in Weyburn. Straight out of law school, I articulated to Ronald Wormsbecker and I worked very closely with Greg Bobbitt, two very well-respected members of the bar and the community of Weyburn.

Very early on I recognized that if I wanted to be the best lawyer I could be, I should try to emulate certain appealing characteristics from each of these senior lawyers. So with Ron, I keyed in on his sense of humour and also his ability to listen to people and be compassionate, and these qualities have served me well. Some of the members may also recognize that Ron Wormsbecker served a four-year term in the '90s on the other side of the aisle. It's safe to say that I avoided his political influences.

Greg Bobbitt, on the other hand, taught me the art of

communicating and problem solving and collaboration. As Greg used to say, you get more flies with honey than vinegar. Greg also got me involved in the Saskatchewan Party when he handed over the duty of being appointed as Dustin Duncan's business manager, which also led me to be involved in the local constituency association.

I've also appreciated the advice and kind words received from both individuals after being elected. Ron, well he gave me a card that said something to the effect of, looks like you're the big dog now. And Greg gave me some excellent personal advice along with the recommendation to read the book *Profiles in Courage* authored by John F. Kennedy. According to Greg, it should be mandatory reading for any politician.

Greg, I want you to know that I checked the book out of the Legislative Library at my first opportunity and I just finished reading it this morning. And to borrow a message from J.F.K. [John F. Kennedy], Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't hurt for all residents of Saskatchewan to sometimes take a step back and consider not what this province can do for us, but what we can do for our province.

I want to also take this time, Mr. Speaker, to acknowledge Dustin Duncan for his 18 years of service to this province and to what was the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. I know the Premier and Dustin have jokingly referred to me as the upgrade from Weyburn, but I recognize the large shoes I have to fill, and I will do my best to fill them.

Also a thank you to Don McMorris for his 25 years of service. With the boundary changes, I picked up a portion of Don's old riding, and when we attended his retirement supper, Don spoke about how he had chosen to usually door knock the town of Kronau first. Well I took Don's advice, and Kronau was the first town that I attended on the campaign, and I personally knocked every door in town.

Mr. Speaker, there's one person who unfortunately is no longer with us for me to say thank you to. That individual is Derek Meyers. Mr. Speaker, Derek Meyers is well known to many in this Chamber as the previous MLA for Regina Walsh Acres. What many may not know is that Derek was three years older than me and a fellow graduate and fellow valedictorian from the Midale Central School.

When I was in grade 9 and Derek was in grade 12, he was the coolest kid in school. And, Mr. Speaker, maybe not for the reasons that would lead one to become an MLA. But, Mr. Speaker, as Derek's life took one turn after another, Derek ended up evolving from a childhood idol to a role model. Derek helped our family by acting as the celebrity MC at a number of our cystic fibrosis fundraising events, and his desire to help raise money for the cause was admirable.

I was so proud when I heard that Derek had decided to enter politics and, man, was he good at it. I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that if Derek's life had not been cut short by cancer, he would be on this side with us, still representing the good people of Regina Walsh Acres. And, Mr. Speaker, it's quite possible that he eventually would have been sitting in the front row.

Now for my campaign team and supporters during the election.

Thank you to Pat and Ryan Maloney for being in charge of our signs, and a special mention to my friend Cody Cossar, allowing me to install a four-by-four sign on his front lawn at 1 in the morning, and then helping with sign repair when the wind knocked a few down on windy days, and the odd one that went down on calm days.

Thank you to Krystal for being my financial agent and keeping everything organized. Thank you to my staff: my personal assistant, Andrea, my office manager, Della, and all the rest of the staff at Weger Paradis Law Firm, and my children and their friends for helping to hand deliver pamphlets to every residence in the city of Weyburn.

Thank you to the organizers for my small-town meet-and-greets: Neil Henry, Spencer Robertson, Stephanie Bacon, and Jarret Nelson. Thank you to the Sask Party office staff and especially Dylan Pollon for the campaign training and calming our concerns when we felt like we were all alone out in Weyburn. Thank you to my friend and fellow lawyer Scott Moffat for his advice throughout the campaign and at the beginning, when I believe his words were, if you want to do it, the time is now.

Thank you to my wife's parents, Kenda and Lloyd, and the rest of their family for their continuing words of encouragement. This is quite significant, Mr. Speaker. As previously mentioned, my father-in-law was a teacher and principal for 33 years in this province, and after retiring, he has gone on to be a principal in a remote school in northern Alberta for the past eight years. I'm only guessing, Mr. Speaker, that my father-in-law may have never cast a vote in favour of the Saskatchewan Party in previous elections. But I am optimistic that may have changed this past election.

I also hope to take the time over Christmas break to receive further feedback from my father-in-law about our education system. I respect his advice, Mr. Speaker, because of his experience, and also, Mr. Speaker, because he has worn a suit and tie to work, I am pretty sure, Mr. Speaker, for every single day of his career. In hockey we would say, look good, feel good, play good. For my father-in-law, it's look good, feel good, teach good.

Mr. Speaker, the first place I attended after receiving the nomination was to help at a branding at my wife's aunt and uncle's farm south of Bengough, and it was one of the first places we attended for coffee the day after the election. I greatly appreciate the support and words of encouragement from Carla and Terry Gravelle, and was very pleased to have them attend the Speech from the Throne the other day.

Mr. Speaker, my children are my inspiration. I have decided to do this job to set an example for them. My 19-year-old daughter, Teresa, is attending the University of Regina in her second year studying business. As mentioned Teresa suffers from cystic fibrosis and has been a fighter for the past 19 years of her life. At one time we just hoped that we would get to watch her ride a bike, graduate high school, maybe fall in love. Well we've been blessed to get to witness these things happen for her, Mr. Speaker, and now we have the hope that we will get to watch her graduate, take advantage of the graduate retention program, and then down the road the increased Saskatchewan first-time homebuyers credit.

My next daughter, Meaghan, is in grade 12 and hopes to attend the University of Regina next year to study social work or elementary education. I know she will excel in either profession and will have the opportunity to make an impact in the areas of education, mental health, or child care as she finds her way.

My son Bennett is the one of the hardest working 14-year-old hockey players that I know. Right now he hopes to follow his hockey passion and then one day to help keep our communities safe as a police officer.

And lastly my youngest daughter, Abigail, is our little stick of dynamite, and she is one of the busiest grade 6 girls in the province as she is a full-time dancer and a U13 [under 13] female AA hockey player. I'm proud to report that Abigail and her U13 Southeast Gold Wings AA team just returned to Saskatchewan in the wee hours of the morning, Mr. Speaker, after winning gold in the platinum division at the Hayley Wickenheiser hockey festival in Calgary.

I'm so very proud of my children, Mr. Speaker. It is very difficult for me to give up the time with them for this job, but I know that in the long run we will all benefit from this decision.

The most important thank you goes to the people of Weyburn-Bengough. Thank you for your support and for putting your trust in me. We have so much to be thankful for in our constituency with the recent construction of the Legacy Park Elementary School and the ongoing construction of the new Weyburn General Hospital.

Our government has heard the concerns of the voters and the focus is on improving education and health care. To the teachers and health care workers that took their time out of busy schedules to meet with me for roundtable meetings during the campaign, thank you, and we will do some more meetings in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I could suggest that I am one of the luckiest MLAs in this room for being able to represent what I could suggest is the best constituency in the province, but I don't want to start another debate before this one is concluded.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that improving our province has to be a team effort. In this Assembly we have our differences, but we should always remember that we're all on team Saskatchewan.

I have committed to being an MLA that is accountable, available, and approachable. I'm committed to making this province a better place to live, raise a family, and do business, and I will do just that. I believe the Speech from the Throne lays out a path to do just that. Now if you caught that, I was trying to harness my inner premier there, Mr. Speaker.

And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion put forward by the member from Kindersley-Biggart and seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers. I will not support the proposed amendment.

And further, I move to adjourn debate.

Speaker Goudy: — It's been moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

Speaker Goudy: — It's been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

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Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
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Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

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Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
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Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
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Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority
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