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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Fort Whyte	
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Madam Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Derek Johnson (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, I'd like to call Bill 205—

Madam Speaker: It has—

Mr. Johnson: —Filipino heritage—act.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 205—The Filipino Heritage Month Act

Madam Speaker: It has been indicated that the House will consider this morning debate on second reading of Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona, who has eight minutes remaining.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): It's always a pleasure to put words on a record in this House, to have it in posterity, as they say, where people review the very important words that we as MLAs bring to this House. I think as, certainly as myself, my own family history as an immigrant, really, this bill,

Bill 205, speaks to that experience, Filipino heritage month.

In Transcona, we have a large and growing Filipino community, one that is very vibrant, and the reason they moved out to Transcona is because it's affordable. You have the ability to buy a home, to attend excellent schools, to be part of a community that has well-established community clubs, churches and other important pieces like a very vibrant BIZ zone that is now also starting to attract Filipino business owners, and something that's adding a new vibrancy to that strip between Kanata and Bond Street on Regent Avenue, one that has seen a lot of devastation during the pandemic, Madam Speaker, and we're looking forward to an increased commercial activity in that area.

But I will say that affordability piece is something that really has me concerned. When we talk about new Canadians coming into this country, again, I think about my own family's experience. I grew up with a mom and dad, a father that worked, just like many Filipino Canadians worked hard for their family.

But I will tell you, Madam Speaker, he was able to afford a home. My mom didn't work until I was in grade 12. It was affordable. He was lucky enough to work in a unionized environment, one that looked after workers. What's missing, and what's been going on lately in Manitoba, is that it's become now unaffordable.

And it's always the new Canadians that bear the brunt of that, and we know that with Filipino Canadians, many overrepresented in the service sector, many overrepresented in the health-care field, who are at the front lines, putting their lives at risk for really low wage jobs. And if I can tell you, Madam Speaker, when we talk about celebrating Filipino heritage month, I would like it to be wrapped around, you know, a broader government narrative, one that's looking after the welfare of Manitobans.

So, how do you do that? How do you wrap that around a broader government narrative? Well, first you look after those that are impacted the most when we have pandemics, rising prices, affordability crises that are occurring right now.

How do you do that? Well, you do what's going on in BC. They're raising the minimum wage. Why?

Because it's important to not only look after the welfare of people that are working on those, really, those front-facing jobs, the ones that are the most impacted by things like COVID.

And what happens is there's a four—almost a \$4 difference. What used to be a Manitoba advantage is now becoming a BC advantage: \$15.65 an hour to work in the minimum wage job, really, I think, Madam Speaker, speaks to a broader narrative of looking after a population, the welfare of its citizens. And we have to remember that.

So, while we are here today debating Filipino heritage month, it also has to be wrapped around that broader narrative of what we're saying about valuing the work that new Canadians do. Because, like I said before, growing up, we only had one wage earner. I defy anybody in 2022 to have one wage earner in a home and still manage to have three children go to university and still manage to create a life that valued not only our culture but also ourselves as people.

So, when we talk about a broader government narrative about that, we need to ensure that, when we bring bills like this forward, that we also have bills that support these people in their everyday life. Is that correct? And this is what's missing, the value that we place on people's labour.

I mean, we always say we have great M-N-P program, and we do. But once people get here, we need to ensure that they can afford to live here. Working—and this is an experience that I had in my schools as I was in my previous career—families working two or three jobs just to make ends meet. Why? Because they're making \$11.65—is that correct?—\$11.65.

* (10:10)

An Honourable Member: Abysmally low number like that.

Mr. Altomare: Absolutely abysmal, I would agree with the member from Flin Flon.

The other thing that needs to be taken care of here also, Madam Speaker is this paid sick leave, especially for workers in these industries and sectors. Talking about, like I said earlier as I got up to debate, a broader government narrative looking after the welfare of its citizens.

How do you do that? Ten days of paid sick leave. The other side of the House always says, well, it's Trudeau's fault. It's not Trudeau's fault.

We in Manitoba can take the step and take the proactive step to ensure when we're debating bills like Bill 205 that it's within that broader government narrative of looking after the welfare of its citizens. And I tell you, they can bring something to the House that has paid sick leave for those working in these low-wage, minimum-wage jobs.

It's the very least we can do. It's 2022. We're going to lose their advantage quickly. People are going to immigrate to Manitoba, see that it's better in other provinces, and what are they going to do? They will leave.

And in order to make sure that this kind of stuff doesn't happen, we have to frame bills like Bill 205 in these broader government narratives. What are they doing to ensure the welfare of the citizens of Manitoba?

I can say you can start with increasing minimum wage and bring the people that that impacts to the table and saying, what's the plan here to improve the life of everyday Manitobans? It's more than just bringing bills like Bill 205. While important, we also have to realize that we have a duty, Madam Speaker, to ensure that once people come to this country, they can bring forth to their fullest extent the gifts that they can bring to Manitoba and Canada.

And I thank you for the time this morning.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Morning, Madam Speaker.

It's my first speaking engagement here in the House this session and I'd like to—it's great to see all the faces on our side of the House this morning and your face, Madam Speaker, as well.

I'm speaking this morning about Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, brought forward to my good friend from Brandon East, who indicated to me this morning that there's a lot of people from Brandon watching today, hoping for swift passage of this bill so we can proclaim June every year as Filipino heritage month.

So I'm hoping for all-party support this morning to get this through finally and move it on to committee and third reading.

I'd like to talk a little bit this morning about my personal experience with Filipinos here in Manitoba as a former partner in The Russell Inn. That business depended on immigrants to fill labour shortages in Russell and, indeed, in rural Manitoba.

So I talked to the human resources manager, Leanne Bily, earlier this morning, and, since 2007, 200 Filipinos have come to Russell to start their lives in Canada. Now, of those 200, lots have moved on. They've taken entry-level jobs at The Russell Inn in housekeeping, waitressing, bartending, whatever.

Hard-working people—they managed to bring their families over, and some of them who had different careers in the Philippines have moved on. They've moved out of Russell. Some have stayed in Russell. But they've moved across the country.

So it's been very important for rural businesses to have immigration of Filipinos to Manitoba. Right now, there's 100 employees at The Russell Inn—72 of them are Filipino. Madam Speaker, just about three-quarters of the workforce at The Russell Inn is Filipino. And, like I say, they're very instrumental in rural businesses being able to find employees.

I'd just like to mention a couple of those employees: Mike and Kate De Mesa. They both came over separately to the Russell Inn and they met there, they got married and now they've moved across Canada.

Mike has joined the Canadian Armed Forces. He now serves with the navy out of Halifax. Kate became a flight attendant with WestJet, and, right now, she's not working. But they both live in Halifax and very much follow them on Facebook, and Mike, especially, helped me tremendously during my nomination process back in 2015; sold memberships for me in Russell, talked to people, very outgoing fellow and, you know, I miss talking to him very much, but we stay in touch on Facebook.

The—and there's been a lot of intermarriages in Russell because of the Filipino people arriving there. The executive chef at The Russell Inn, Wes Osborne, married a Filipino girl, Ritz Manoop, in December, 2020, and I'm pleased to say they're expecting their first child this year. So, again, there's been a lot of that happen, a lot of good things happen.

So, Madam Speaker, it's not just Russell. You know, 20 per cent of the Philippine population in Manitoba live outside of Winnipeg, and in my constituency there's a number of them in Virden, Minnedosa, Hamiota, Shoal Lake, all filling very vital jobs that we can't find people to fill.

The member for Waverley (Mr. Reyes) came out to my constituency and we toured around and met with the Filipino population in Russell, visited a sole proprietorship store that a family had started there.

And, you know, that was very much appreciated by the Filipinos in Riding Mountain and I know the member for Waverley certainly enjoyed the tour.

So, Madam Speaker, these Filipino people remind me of Ukrainian people who immigrated back in the turn of the century, in 1900, in that era: hard-working people, fun loving, family oriented, and we should be so proud to have them as new Canadians, and be thankful what they've contributed to our workforce and to our cultural fabric of the province.

So, again, I encourage everyone in this House to put their support behind this bill today. It's a non-partisan bill. It's looking to honour the Filipino population here in Manitoba by marking a week for them.

So with that, Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Filipinos have been calling Manitoba home for decades, and have established their roots and families in this province everywhere from urban centres to rural Manitoba, and there is certainly a large number of Filipinos residing in Wolseley.

The Filipino community has become an integral part of Manitoba's social, economic, political and cultural fabric, and the Filipino language has become one of the most commonly spoken languages in Manitoba. The Filipino community has contributed tremendously to the growth, prosperity and development of Manitoba and will continue to do so.

The appreciation of the vibrant Filipino heritage and culture and the success and strength of the community is traditionally celebrated during the month of June because June 12 is Philippine Independence Day. It is already recognized by the federal government and is celebrated across Canada, including here in Manitoba.

I do recall us discussing the idea of Filipino heritage month last year or the year before—I've lost track during pandemic years—but when my colleague, the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino), initially introduced a very similar bill, and I'm glad to see that the government is finally moving towards some interest in recognizing the Filipino community members in Manitoba.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the disproportional impacts on Filipino community, because I don't think we can talk about heritage and celebration, and hold up, really, any group of people of colour, you know, any different cultural group and

simply want to celebrate them, simply want to enjoy foods, and clothing, and dance and cultural norms from their cultures without actually making meaningful change that improves the lives of the community and the culture that we are celebrating and recognizing.

We know that Filipino Manitobans were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The data collected in Manitoba shows that Filipino Manitobans were disproportionately impacted and make up the largest share of COVID-19 cases compared to their share of the population in the province. The data also showed that Filipino women were more affected by the virus than other Filipino Manitobans.

* (10:20)

The PC government failed to release race-based and workplace COVID-19 data to Manitobans for months, and when the data was released, it confirmed what we already knew. People of colour, specifically Filipinos, were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Filipino Manitobans did not simply contract COVID-19 due to individual behaviour, but largely due to the jobs where they work. Many Filipinos, 'expecially' women, work in the health-care sector as housekeepers, health-care aides, nurses, home-care workers and personal-care-home workers, and, additionally, many Filipinos work in food manufacturing and the service industry, as well as in the transportation sector. All of these sectors had some of the highest rates of COVID-19 infections across Canada.

Filipinos also tend to live in multi-generational households and sometimes in tight living quarters, which has led to an easier spread of the virus, and the only real response by both the Pallister and Stefanson governments to the race-based data was to distribute COVID-19 information in several different languages. I do think that's important, I'm not criticizing the decision to do that, but it's—but the issue wasn't just communication.

If COVID infection was due to people not following directions, then that would have been the best way to help, but the issue was really about contracting it in the workplace. And what was needed, and what we repeatedly called for, was paid sick time, accountability in these workplaces, and we repeatedly called for the government to release the data on workplace transmission.

Critics have argued that the government needs to do a better job of taking occupational health approach for COVID safety at work. And part of showing our appreciation for the Filipino community should have included protecting them from being disproportionately impacted during the pandemic.

Another thing that we need to look at, if we want to truthfully and honestly celebrate the heritage and the presence of Filipinos in our province, is The Pay Transparency Act. So, I want to remind this House that, just recently, my colleague, the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino), introduced The Pay Transparency Act into this House, and we can honour the heritage of Filipino people by advancing equality. The gender pay gap often impacts Filipino women working in child care, home care, kitchen workers, cleaners.

And we also need to ensure paid sick leave for all Manitobans, but we recognize that Filipinos are more affected by the crowded working conditions and low wages.

When we talk about Filipino people, I think it's also important to remember, when we celebrate heritage, we're not talking about a group of people that are all exactly like each other. Diversity exists within Filipino communities, so when we pass regulations and acts that protect, for example, queer people, or trans people, or non-binary people in our culture, we're also—we need to keep in mind that a portion of Filipino community are impacted by those kinds of social justice laws, and, in fact, they're—you know, certainly, within the trans community and a lot of the queer culture, I've seen a very high representation of Filipino community.

And it's important that that becomes visible, that that is part of our celebration, part of recognizing the heritage and the wonderful gifts that queer Filipinos and trans Filipinos bring to our culture as well.

I also want to speak about some of the Filipino representation in politics. There are notable Filipino Manitobans who've had a seat in the Legislature representing the New Democratic Party.

Conrad Santos was first elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly under our party in 1981, and there is no doubt that Dr. Santos paved the way for Filipino politicians in Manitoba. Ted Marcelino is another prominent Filipino Manitoban that was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 2011, representing Tyndall Park, and the NDP's Flor Marcelino was the first Filipino and woman of

colour to be elected in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly back in 2007. She also served an interim leader of the—as interim leader of the NDP and leader of the official opposition from 2016 to 2017.

Her appointment to Cabinet in 2009 was also another first. She was the first woman of colour to be named to Cabinet in this province. I have no doubt that her daughter, the current member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino), will go on to do amazing things in this Legislature, as well.

As elected officials, Filipino Manitobans have elevated the voices of visible minorities and marginalized groups in Manitoba, and we are thankful for all the contributions Filipino Manitobans have made to the province's social, economic, cultural and political fabric.

Thank you for allowing me to put some words on the record, and I know that a number of my colleagues are really excited to speak to this bill today, so I will end my remarks there.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, it is important and significant that we have a Filipino heritage month in June. It is entirely in-appropriate because that is the month where traditionally there has been a lot of focus on Philippine heritage, including celebrations, Philippine ball and many other events.

There are many, many people who have come from the Philippines to Manitoba and it's over many years, so that those who are of Philippine heritage are now one of the largest groups, national heritage groups, that we have in Manitoba.

It's important to recognize this and it's important, as well, to recognize that people who are of Philippine heritage are now working in a wide range of jobs and positions in Manitoba—and they really are a cross-section of who we are as Manitobans. Now, many nurses, doctors, engineers, lawyers, even a Cabinet minister, this is—the heritage of the Philippines is now increasingly becoming part of the heritage of Manitoba. It is who we are, and it is important to recognize that with this month designation.

People with a Philippine heritage played an extraordinarily important role early on in the garment industry, and since then and currently in health care, but, clearly, it's not restricted to these areas. It includes many, many other areas of employment in our province.

There are and should be more attention by governments than there has been in terms of helping people who come from the Philippines get the credentials that they need. I met not long ago with a group of Philippine heritage people, people who'd come from the Philippines and were here who were trained as doctors and were having great difficulty in getting their training accepted and the updates that they needed in a reasonable period of time to be able to practice here.

It's just but one example. There are blocks in many other areas of employment that need to be attended to, as well. But, clearly, we could and should be doing much better. This was a weakness, really, over the last 20 years that has still not been adequately addressed, and needs to be for people who come from the Philippines, but also for people who come to our province from other places, more recently, of course, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

* (10:30)

The Philippine heritage is a rich one. We have notable people like Jose Rizal, who was involved in the Philippine independence movement, was an individual of many many talents and contributed to the history and the success of the Philippines as a country.

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Philippines and to talk with people not only about coming to Canada but to learn about what is happening today in the Philippines. It is a country which is growing rapidly and not just in population but in terms of economic potential, in terms of stature in the international community.

I think the current president may have set that back a little bit, but there are always movements forward, movements back. And, in general, the arc of history for the Philippines has been positive, and the Philippines will have, I'm sure, an incredible future and an increasingly important role in the global world in the years ahead.

There are many different groups from the Philippines, from different areas of the Philippines, and I have had the opportunity on summer days to get together with groups from different parts of the Philippines at various parks around the province, enjoying good company and good food and sharing a good time.

So I welcome the opportunity to speak and support this bill for a Philippine heritage month, and I hope that we're able to pass it and make it a reality in

time that this June can be the first Manitoba Philippine heritage month.

Thank you.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I am grateful for the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to this bill.

I think it's important to acknowledge that—I believe the concept for this bill was actually first brought forward by our colleague, the MLA for Notre Dame, and so I want to give her kudos because, you know, even though the government didn't support her efforts in that regard, they clearly saw a lot of value in the bill because they've brought it forward in this manner, although this morning they almost forgot to introduce it, but that's an aside.

So, Madam Speaker, you know, this bill recognizes the Filipino community in a really important way, and it's important for us all to be able to reflect on the history of the Filipino community here in Manitoba.

You know, being somebody who comes from a family that immigrated to Manitoba in the '70s, I know that our community, the Nigerian community—there's a wave of folks that came over in the '70s to Winnipeg and certainly the Filipino community provided a strong model for how you can establish roots here and connect folks in your communities and raise your families. And the contributions—I mean, everybody here can talk about the incredible contributions to our province and our country the Filipino community has made.

I think it's really important for us to not just talk about the contributions the Filipino community has made here and the importance of folks immigrating here, but we have to also be able to talk about what our responsibility is as, you know, legislators—people who make law and policy—to the Filipino community.

It's not good enough, actually, to stand up and talk about, you know, everything that a community provides and brings to the table and what this government can extract from people. You have to also be able to talk about what you can contribute, what you can provide, how you can lift up and affirm all of the amazing things that a community contributes and brings to our province.

So there's a couple of areas that I think are really important to touch on. My colleagues have already

kind of talked about this as well, but I'm going to reiterate these points because they're really important.

Now, you know, when we talk about ways in which the government can, you know, support the Filipino community, you know, make decisions that see and support the community in thriving, being able to have successful and positive health outcomes, economic outcomes, there are very tangible steps this government can take in order to do so. Providing paid sick leave is something that we have stressed. The Filipino community is represented in, you know, all job sectors, all areas, but certainly represented in the health-care sector and in front-line positions that we've seen really affected by this COVID-19 pandemic.

Reality of it is a lot of folks working in these roles don't have the ability to stay home when they're sick and also earn an income to put food on the table and provide for their families, which puts folks at greater risk of negative outcomes. We've seen that exacerbated during this pandemic.

With this bill in mind, it would be a great time for the government to get behind paid sick leave, and not just say that, you know, we want this bill to pass because we appreciate the Filipino community, but also be able to say, you know what, we're putting measures in place to make sure that those folks from that community who are working in our health-care sector, front-line essential services, et cetera, have what they need so that they can go to work when they're healthy, stay home when they're sick and still be able to make sure their families are taken care of, that they as individuals are taken care of. So that's one concrete thing this government can do right away to substantiate their appreciation for the Filipino community.

The other thing they can do is provide an actual living wage. This is something we've been talking about for years, and the reality of it is what this government has provided in terms of a minimum wage. They, basically, haven't really raised it, to say that—95 cents, I believe it is, the MLA for St. Johns—95 cents in six years? That is—it's shameful. It's actually disgraceful that this government would consider that respectful or reasonable.

Raising the minimum wage to an actual living wage would be another concrete, tangible step this government can take very quickly to ensure that the Filipino community, those folks working in front-line essential services, working jobs, really, across the board that are earning a minimum wage can actually

earn a livable wage and improve, again, outcomes, whether it's health-care outcomes, housing accessibility, you know, all of these areas are affected by that.

The other thing that I would say is, you know, and this is—seems pretty basic, I think, to a lot of people, but it's something that apparently we have to reiterate time and time again to this government—treat workers with respect: workers in health care, workers in education, front-line services. We have seen, unfortunately, this government make the decision to freeze the wages of folks in this province: public servants, health-care workers, allied health-care professionals. And we know that there's a significant number of Filipino folks from our communities who work in those jobs, who work in those careers and who have been affected by the wage freezes.

You know, the fact that there are still folks who do not have a fair contract. There are still front-line health care workers. There are still allied health-care professionals who don't have a contract, who didn't receive COVID pay top-up during this pandemic is absolutely inexcusable.

You know, we've stood with those folks multiple times now since the beginning of the pandemic to call for the government to do the right thing, provide that COVID top-up pay and, you know, stop freezing people's wages, get a fair deal negotiated and have these folks earning what they should be earning.

We see that, you know, affordability is a real challenge for folks: inflation is up, the cost of food is up, gas is up, hydro—thanks to these folks—has skyrocketed, people's bills are so high. You know, we heard yesterday that there's 5,000 folks now who are in arrears, 5,000 more folks in arrears with their hydro bill.

You know, this is something the government can address right away. You know, those are tangible steps they can take that would directly impact positively the Filipino community, which we all know has contributed immensely to our province. But, again, it is not enough for us to highlight and celebrate those details. We have to be able to look at what we can do as legislators, this government, and actually give back, make life easier for folks, make life better for folks.

And so I strongly encourage the government to look at those suggestions which we brought forward multiple times, which have come directly from community members, and, you know, and start making some changes.

I'm sure we're all getting emails. We're all getting correspondence from folks in the community who work in the care sector who are asking for this government to look at their funding and increase the wages of folks working in that care sector. I know our colleague the MLA for Notre Dame has done a tremendous amount of work in this area in particular.

* (10:40)

Again, this is an area where the government can make policy decisions which will improve the outcomes for folks in the Filipino community. So I wanted to make sure that I highlighted those points.

I also wanted to make sure that I put a couple of words on the record in regards to historical—not so historical—some very recent folks in Manitoba who were elected here.

Ted Marcelino is a prominent Filipino Manitoban who was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 2011 representing Tyndall Park. Ted is a lovely human being; did not have the pleasure of serving alongside him, but I've had the pleasure of having numerous conversations with him. He's a wonderful man, and very, very funny.

And Flor Marcelino—we all know who Flor Marcelino is: the first Filipino woman of colour to be elected to the Manitoba Assembly in 20-seven, served as interim leader of the NDP. Flor—another wonderful person. There's a number of Filipino folks who live in the constituency of Union Station.

Flor was very, very generous with her time when I was running and actually went out door knocking with me, and had a lovely time with her. She's set a very good example, strong example, of sound leadership in the community, something that people still speak very, very highly of.

And so I'm really proud to be part of a caucus that has a history of some trailblazing Filipino members. And I'm really, really proud to be in a caucus with a colleague, again, I've mentioned this person a few times now, who brought forward a bill, The Pay Transparency Act, Bill 222.

Here is an opportunity—I've listed a few other ways, but here's a great opportunity for this government to pass a piece of legislation that will support people across the board, but most definitely also support folks in the Filipino community, brought forward by a member of this House who has done the research, and has made sure that this bill is strong through and through. So I encourage this government

to get behind Bill 222 and pass it when we all have the opportunity.

Thank you.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Happy to get a chance to speak to Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act. I think, as we all know in this Chamber, and I hope those at home who are watching this and listening in, know about the history around why June is being proposed as Filipino heritage month. June 12 is Philippine Independence Day, and so that's fitting that we, you know, make efforts to celebrate June as Filipino heritage month.

We know—we obviously appreciate the vibrant Filipino heritage and culture that we all enjoy in our communities. The success, the strength, of the community is traditionally celebrated during June and it's something that we want to recognize in this House because it is already recognized across Canada, and celebrated by Filipino communities and by many—so many Manitobans and so many Canadians. And so it's very important that we understand why we're looking at June as the month for Filipino heritage month.

But when I think about that word heritage, and I know from my own experiences as a Black Canadian, I think about heritage and history in terms of the context of what we've experienced in the past. And I also think about it as—through the context of how does this history and heritage inform my present—my present decision-making? And how does this history and heritage impact my actions for the future?

And so when I look at it through that lens, I have to go through and question this government who's bringing forward a Filipino Heritage Month Act, but yet, in so many regards, fails to actually help the Filipino communities that are right here in Manitoba asking for help—quite frankly, demanding this government make their lives better, and having, sadly, a government that fails to providing assistance for them.

And I'd like to just highlight a few areas where we've seen, time and time again, this government put forward words like celebrating Filipino culture and heritage, but back that up with zero action. No support—no real support for the Filipino community.

We know in Manitoba that many Filipino people, especially women, work in the health-care sectors, work in areas such as housekeeping, health-care aides, nurses, home-care workers, personal-home-care workers. These are such critically important careers and jobs in our province, and we know many of those jobs are held by Filipino people—in particular, women.

Additionally, many Filipino people work in food manufacturing, in the service industry, in the transportation sector. And we know that many of the people working in that sector are earning minimum wage.

We think about our minimum wage here in Manitoba being at \$11.95, not even at the \$12 mark, and looking at our provincial counterparts across the country, having much, much higher minimum wages, we can't help but think about how the Filipino community in Manitoba is so much further behind than their counterparts across our country.

We look at the cost—the rising cost of living. We look at the rising cost of food, the rising cost of education, the rising cost of child care, the rising cost of gas and transportation in our province. What has gas gone up recently, Madam Speaker: what, 10 cents; no, 20 cents recently; no, I think maybe 30 cents? No, not even there—40-cents, 50-cents rise in gas at least. But what has the minimum wage gone up in this province? What has the minimum wage gone up recently? Five cents—5 cents.

When the transportation costs and gas has gone up 50 cents, 10 times, a tenfold increase in gas at least, but yet many Filipino people who work and earn the minimum wage only get a 5-cent increase from this government. A 5-cent increase? You've got to be kidding me. And you look at how this government claims to be working for the lives—the betterment of the lives of Filipino community, and you say, these things do not match. These things do not match. The government's actions and the government's words do not correlate.

And so I want to draw that attention to those facts as we discuss Filipino heritage and how that heritage—and how the history ought to inform the present and ought to inform the government's actions to help folks in the future.

Because imagine a—imagine our community and our province in 20, 30 years from now. In 20 or 30 years from now, they'll be looking at the actions of today as the heritage—as their heritage. They'll look back at the actions and the words said today and say, how is the heritage that I'm experiencing now and the history that I went through made better by this government? And they'll look, and they'll see that it wasn't.

We look at other areas where we know the Filipino community would benefit. We look at things like paid sick leave, and many of these industries that I've mentioned has a higher likelihood of contracting

coronavirus, COVID-19 cases spiking up in areas like food manufacturing, like as a health-care aide or as a personal-home-care worker.

And we think about the need to not only keep individuals safe, not only keep the Filipino community safer, but also keep all of us Manitobans safer. We could do that by implementing a paid sick leave program, and this government has failed to do so, failed to put in concrete action that would significantly and substantially help the Filipino community in Manitoba.

Not too long ago, Madam Speaker, I met with some internationally educated nurses who were trying to work and get their professional certification here in Manitoba. These workers from Filipino background were pleading and begging to get jobs in the health-care sector so that they could help the entire province through the COVID-19 pandemic. And this government put a barrier in front of them, slammed the door in their face and made it harder for them to get their professional certification and work in this province. And they were just saying, let me help Manitoba, the place that I want to call home, the place that I'm raising my family and that I want to stay in.

And this government that claims to be supporting a heritage bill, to support Filipino heritage month, is putting up roadblocks every step of the way for workers with Filipino background who want to work as internationally educated nurses. It's shameful, Madam Speaker. It's shameful that they can say one thing and do the next.

And so I want to call attention to that so that it is plain and clear for all Manitobans to see that we need to be doing more. We need to call this government to do so much more to help our Filipino communities in Manitoba.

* (10:50)

And I'll point to a few more things, Madam Speaker, in my remaining moments that I have to speak.

I'm going to point specifically to our immigration system and—that bring in many of the Filipino community members into our province—and looking specifically at the Provincial Nominee Program, a program which we know is a great asset to our province. Well, what has happened to that program since this PC government has been in charge in Manitoba? The fees to get into that program have gone up, a cost now—an additional barrier has been put into

place for Filipino communities to actually even get to Manitoba in the first place.

It's a head tax. Quite frankly, it's a head tax. It's a head tax that's put on place in terms of people trying to access the Provincial Nominee Program, Filipino people trying to access the nominee program to come here. A head tax is put on place that they have to experience and pay the cost of just to come here. And, yet, we welcome and celebrate their culture and heritage. Well, let's celebrate it by making it easier for them to come to Manitoba—more cost effective for them to come to Manitoba. Let's not forget about that.

And then the remaining time I want to—I do not want to forget to highlight and make sure the government knows that there are many international students here: university and college students, international students here from Filipino background who pay a higher rate—a Canadian average of five times higher for international students than domestic students—of higher tuition—five times higher is the Canadian average.

And that's acceptable to this government, for an international student of Filipino background to pay four or five times higher for their tuition than a domestic student? And that's not even including health care—the fact that this government gave up supporting health care for international students. It's shameful that they have to pay hundreds and hundreds and hundreds more dollars for health care in Manitoba because this government—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

I would just like to check to see whether the honourable member for St. Boniface was intending to speak.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): No, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: All right.

The honourable member for Concordia.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to speak here today—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —to Bill 205, an important bill and a bill I think you've heard from all members of the House that there is broad support for. I do think this is something that, you know, we support and we want to see move forward.

What I think is important, though, is to hear the nuanced debate that's happening, and, you know—look, it's important for us to talk about the community in broad strokes, talk about the great food and the great hospitality we know that the community—the Filipino community has shown many of us in this Chamber, but really to drill down and to talk about the shortcomings of this government and to talk about how we can actually in real terms support the Filipino communities. So I think that's the important conversation that members on this side of the House want to continue to have.

I also think it's important to recognize this in light of the fact that directly after this debate here this morning, Madam Speaker, we're going to be talking about the situation in Ukraine. And we're going to be talking about how we can support folks from Ukraine to come to Manitoba and we can show them, you know, how much we respect that community. I think it really highlights how there are so many communities here in Manitoba that have been asking for recognition, have been asking for some sort of assistant in making sure that more people can come to Manitoba.

In the case of the Filipino community, Madam Speaker, these are folks that are absolutely vital to economic recovery coming out of COVID. There's no question about this.

You know, members opposite talk about the service industry and all these different ways that the Filipino community has helped Manitoba build its strong economy to this point. Well, there—it's only going to become more and more important going forward as we come out of COVID and we look for our economic recovery.

So, I simply highlight those two—or juxtapose those two situations because our side has been calling for a removal of the \$500 head tax on those folks who are coming through the Provincial Nominee Program since it was introduced by this government, since it was callously put in place by this government.

We've been calling for support for international students.

We've been calling for a base higher minimum wage and more affordable life.

We've been calling every single day for training nurses from other countries who are otherwise qualified. We need them here in Manitoba. There are many in the Filipino community who want to get to

work to help us with our health-care crisis, and yet this government has ignored them over and over again.

So, I do think it is important that we remember when we're talking about whether it be the Ukrainian community, whether it be talking about the Afghani community, the Syrian community, that we recognize that, as Manitobans, we need to show that support to all communities.

And this is an important way that we can do that here today in this Chamber, Madam Speaker. We can recognize that the Filipino community has become as Manitoban—and they are as Manitoban—as any of the other previous waves of immigrants that have come to this province.

You know, I think I heard one of my colleagues say, you know, as much as farmer's sausage would be Manitoban, or—well, I think he said honey dill sauce. Whatever it is that you associate with Manitoba, I would suggest that it's pancit, I would suggest that it's Filipino food. I would suggest that every single Manitoban sees their Filipino neighbors and co-workers and family members, in many cases, as part of the fabric of what makes Manitoba great.

So, if we're talking about how we can enhance and we can encourage this community, I think this is an important bill and an important way that we can do that.

I understand that the proposal here in this bill is to make June the month that we celebrate Filipino heritage month. I think that's an important time to recognize the community. I think that fits very well with the celebrations that already exist within the community.

And I do hope that going forward, then, this Chamber, then, can continue to celebrate. This isn't just a one-time thing. We can make sure that, as legislators, we promote and we engage with the community, especially so during this month. So I think it's an important time to do that.

I do recognize, again, that there are many people that want to speak to this bill, but I do think that it's important that we get as many words on the record to show the level of understanding of the community and the support that each side of this House has for this community. So I encourage others to stand up, to put words on the record, and to continue to encourage this bill along.

We know, you know, as has been mentioned by many of our—my colleagues, the important contributions already in this place of our Filipino community and our Filipino friends. We know—has been mentioned a few times—Ted Marcelino, you know, good friend, and I did have the honour to serve with him. Of course, Flor Marcelino, an important milestone in our province's history, not only as the—as a minister, but as leader of our party. I was very proud to work with her and to serve with her.

I do think it's important that we recognize that history, but we also look at how we can enhance the participation—the political participation, of the Filipino community going forward. And what I really—what I took, a lesson that I learned from, in particular, Flor, but many folks within the Filipino community, is that they're not looking for just surface-level conversation. They're not looking for just words. They're looking for an actual conversation, for engagement—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —and they're actually very politically astute.

Now, I don't know the politics of the Philippines very well, but I do know that when they come to Manitoba, they're not just wanting to sort of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —slog in to one party or another party. In fact, they want to engage, and that's why the discussion and the debate that's happening here is important. Because we're not just saying the surface-level words, we're talking about the real struggles and the real concerns within that community.

And so that's why I think it's important that we all put the words on the records that aren't just the surface level, isn't just a banal appreciation of the community, but is an in-depth understanding of their concerns, and a party that's willing to bring those forward here in the House every single day, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have three minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 5—Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge, brought forward by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): Good morning, Madam Speaker, and I move, seconded by the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook),

WHEREAS on February 24th, 2022 the country of Ukraine was attacked with a full-scale military invasion by Russia; and

WHEREAS this conflict has displaced over a million Ukrainian people; and

WHEREAS the province of Manitoba has strong interpersonal, cultural, and historical connections with the country and people of Ukraine; and

WHEREAS Ukrainian immigrants have helped shape and build Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the province and good people of Manitoba are outraged at the conflict in Ukraine and wish to step up and assist Ukrainians in any way; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has provided financial support for humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress; and

WHEREAS immigration to Canada requires a coordination between Ukraine, Provincial, and Federal levels of Government in Canada; and

WHEREAS Manitoba continues to support the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to call on the provincial government to waive the fee for Ukrainians under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, in order to reduce barriers for Ukrainian citizens fleeing the conflict and to expedite their journey, and to collaborate with the federal government in assisting Ukrainians who seek safety and refuge in Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, for those who have been paying attention to the debates and the comments that have taken place here in this Chamber and on the

steps in front of the Manitoba Legislature since the unprovoked attack by Russia on a free, democratic and peace-loving people, Ukraine, if you notice, there's a pattern, and that is the connectivity that people have here in Manitoba to Ukraine.

I'm actually surprised hearing colleague after colleague on all sides of the House explaining that it was maybe a great-grandparent or a grandparent or even a parent, a loved one who was born in Ukraine, came from Ukrainian background, some far as back as the late 1800s, early 1900s, and explaining how, you know, they came here and they were seeking freedom; they were fleeing persecution. And it is very heartwarming to see how much connection we have as Manitobans to Ukraine.

Mr. Andrew Mickelfield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And Ukraine has struggled as a country to be free. I had the opportunity to be there twice as an election observer. As I've mentioned before, I had the opportunity to be back in a—they're called oblast, which means a province—Oblast Volyn, close to a town that is called Swojczowka, which is very close to the capital of Oblast Volyn, Lutsk, where my father was born.

Seventy-five years after having been driven out through the Hitler-Stalin Pact, I was the first of my family that got to go back and see where they would have been—where they would have lived, where my father would have been born. The Russians burnt the town down, and, at that moment, Ukraine also lost its independence again.

So we all seem to have some kind of a connection to Ukraine, and even on the front steps, hearing different people talking about their connection to Ukraine. And you have to wonder why is it that there's such a connection between people here in Canada and the Ukraine. And if you look on a map you see that whether it's Poland and Ukraine that tend to be the two countries that divide east and western Europe and Russia, or if you want to go a little bit further east, it's Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania.

But however you want to divide that line, Ukraine is a big part of that divide between east and west. So, if you will, if you want to go from east going to western Europe, basically you go through Ukraine, or usually it was armies wanted to go from western Europe heading to Russia, they would go through Ukraine. So Ukraine has always been a target.

But even more important, our beautiful and beloved Ukraine is known as the breadbasket of

Europe. I grew up as a son of immigrants, and I can remember we'd eat an apple and we'd say, oh, man, this is such a good apple, and we would hear that lecture. Well, you should have tasted the apples in Volyn, now those were good apples. Or, of course, cabbage was a big part of our diet, and we'd say, wow, that's a big head of cabbage. And they would say to us, well, you should see the cabbage in Volyn. And, actually, I did. I happened to be in Novohrad-Volynskiyi, and we went to a market, and they are just massive.

Ukraine is the breadbasket of Europe. It's got amazing fields; it's where a lot of the agriculture comes to feed Europe. As we know, hunger and starvation has always been a problem for east and western Europe and particular for Russia. In fact, the Holodomor was when Stalin stripped Ukraine of all its food so they could feed Russian cities. And they would literally go in and take the food away to force Ukrainians to starve to death, up to 10 million people.

So Ukraine has an incredible, strategic place in world history. It also has a very important economic or food source place.

So the fact that we all have connections, one way or another, is because somewhere along the line, whether it was us or our parents or foreparents, they would have travelled through and had some connection with Ukraine.

So it is very heart-wrenching to hear colleagues on all sides talk about their connections. We know that there were, besides Ukrainians—which, of course, living in Ukraine—a lot of Polish, a lot of German, a lot of Mennonites, and the list goes on and on who went to Ukraine.

I was always told growing up that as Germans who came from Bavaria—and we were Protestants, Bavaria was a little tougher on Protestants because it was Catholic—and they came to Ukraine, and the people were wonderful. The agriculture was beautiful. And they were the best years of our family's life, from having moved from Bavaria to Ukraine up until the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Those years were the best years of our family.

So I always grew up—incredibly warm feelings towards Ukraine—which brings us to the unprovoked attack that we have seen, the horrendous pictures, where we are seeing unprovoked attacking of hospitals and medical institutions and apartment blocks and buildings. Clearly, the president of Russia, Putin, has decided he's going to invade Ukraine the

traditional way because the first few days he got his backside whupped—different term for it, but I don't think I'm allowed to use that in this Chamber. He is taking a beating on behalf—from the Ukrainians. So now he is moving to the terrible approach where he is going to shell and destroy cities, and he's doing it by and large by air and then moving in with his troops.

That has forced a lot of people to flee, not because they're fleeing for economic reasons or out of fear; it's—their cities are being destroyed. He is systematically going in and levelling cities, and he is making it uninhabitable for Ukrainians to live in those cities.

And for those of you who are on Facebook, for those of you who are on Twitter and you can see individuals sending photos saying this used to be our home; this used to be our apartment block. This is where we used to live. They are becoming absolutely and completely uninhabitable. We understand at this point in time there are over 3 million refugees.

So our government, I would suggest, previously, had put in a \$500 fee to clean up the Provincial Nominee Program, a program that, I might add, started under one Bonnie Mitchelson, and that was in 1998. And, you know, under the Doer government, they viewed this as being a very good program. They gave recognition to the Conservatives for having negotiated this. In fact, the provincial Filmon Conservatives negotiated that deal under two different ministers, and they got it through. And as of, I believe it was last year, there were 6,300 applications.

So I would point out to the House, the \$500 fee was to clean it up. Under the NDP, there was an over three-year wait, and the numbers were crushing the program. Since we became government, it is now a wait of less than three months, which is substantial. That is what you want to do. You want to get applications in, and you want to get some kind of an answer quickly.

* (11:10)

So now that we've got the program in hand and there is great need for 'humanitarian' relief, again, I would like to point out to members opposite—not that we want to make this too political—that the refugees come under a federal program and are not part of the PNP and also not part of the \$500 fee.

So we have no jurisdiction as a Legislature to confer or to tell the federal government how they should be taking the refugees. That is a federal government responsibility, and we are hoping that we will get a lot of those refugees coming to Manitoba.

However, under the PNP program, this resolution calls for the removal of the \$500 fee for all of those that are fleeing Ukraine and the tyranny.

And as mentioned, many of have a connection to Ukraine. Many of us have great stories to tell about Ukraine. Perhaps now it's time that we stand again united as a province and welcome another wave of immigration from Ukraine—not because any fault of their own, but simply because that Vladimir Putin and the Russians are systematically destroying their homes and their cities and their villages and their towns. The Russians are making their communities uninhabitable.

Manitoba will stand with arms wide open. We recommend the removal of the \$500 fee.

Thank you.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party, any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties, each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I'm wondering if the member can let us know why his government has left this matter to a resolution of the House when it simply could have done this weeks ago, and why doesn't the immigration minister simply just waive the fee today?

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): Well, I think there is a time and a place for this Legislative Assembly to also have their opportunity to speak to this. I think this is a very compelling place to have debates. It is the floor of the Manitoba Legislature. Member opposite has asked for a hands-across-the-aisle. This is a great opportunity for us to extend hands across the aisle and do this together as a unified Legislature.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): I'd like to thank the member for Springfield-Ritchot for bringing this important resolution forward.

If the member could please tell us why it is important to eliminate the fee for Ukrainians seeking entry into Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, the individuals that are fleeing Ukraine are fleeing with their lives, many

of them barely are fleeing with their lives. They are not coming with any financial means. Their accounts, by and large, are back home, lots of them are frozen because the banking system has collapsed in Ukraine. They don't have the means to pay it, so we would suggest, on a 'humanitarian' basis, we would waive that fee.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member for bringing this resolution forward.

My question is: Is the government going to be matching humanitarian aid dollar for dollar?

Mr. Schuler: I'd first of all like to thank that member for the question, and I'd like to thank her family for the kind of stand they have taken over the years. They are a family that's always stood up for immigrants and immigration, and I want to thank her family for that.

And insofar as that question concerned, that is at best question a question that would be posed to the minister. Today we're talking about removing the \$500 fee. I hope we get unanimity, and we do that here today.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker—and I, again, I also want to thank the member from Springfield-Ritchot for bringing forward this resolution regarding waiving the fees.

We talked about the provincial nomination program and how this can help in—under the circumstances.

Can the member speak to how important it is to reduce wait times for the Manitoba provincial nominee applicants?

Mr. Schuler: I would like to thank the member from Dauphin—which is home to one of the largest Ukrainian communities—for that question.

And what's important right now is that we fixed the mess that the PNP was in. It's down to a three-month waiting period so we can actually take on a larger amount of individuals. And, right now, I think what we need because we are facing a 'humatarian' crisis with over three million individuals fleeing a war zone not because of by choice, but because their homes are being destroyed by an invading Russian army. It's important that the wait times are down. We're ready to accept these nominations and we'll proceed with them.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Just wondering why this government created this barrier in the first place when they admit that this is a barrier.

Mr. Schuler: The reason why the \$500 fee was originally instituted is because the member of Burrows and all the NDP members—who actually broke a really good PNP system to the point where there was more than a three-year waiting period—that is not—that is not a program that is working efficiently and the reason why it was brought in was to fix it. It is. We're down to a three-month waiting period. Now we're ready to take on the 'humanitarian' crisis facing the world and it's time to bring in the Ukrainian individuals, those fleeing that under the PNP program without the \$500 fee.

Mr. Wasyliw: We've also been calling for additional resources to settle Ukrainians in Manitoba. Does the member support our call?

Mr. Schuler: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for that.

Our government now has increased our commitment over \$650,000. I would suggest to him in the 17 years that he was a government here in Manitoba to the entire Mайдan crisis and everything that was going on in Ukraine, there was no such relief that was given. I know I was here. There was no joint parliamentary committee. No, none of that was ever done. We are actually working today in this Chamber to reach across the aisle—let's pass this resolution, move the \$500 fee—\$650,000 has already been granted, and, as the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) says, there will be more to come as the need grows.

Mr. Smook: Can the member speak to how Ukrainians enrich Manitoba and how they continue to do so?

Mr. Schuler: If anybody was watching the hockey game a couple weeks ago when Hoosli Ukrainian men's choir sang the Canadian national anthem, I don't know how you can watch that without having tears in your eyes. It was so beautiful and, yes, the Ukrainian community has so enriched our society, whether it's in the arts or culture or medicine or business and it goes on and on and on.

We so much thank the Ukrainians who still hold near and dear to their culture with those beautiful churches, the beautiful domed churches that we have throughout our city and our province.

And I—you know, again, it's time for us to put aside partisanship. Let's remove the \$500 fee and let's

start welcoming these individuals who need to flee not by choice, but because their homes and the life is being destroyed by invading Russian army.

Mr. Brar: I just wanted to share that wait times are still long, which is years for skilled professionals overseas, and that's a fact.

The Provincial Nominee Program doesn't have the necessary staffing to deal with the demand.

Will the member support our call to staff up?

Mr. Schuler: The member from Burrows is absolutely correct that before 2016 there was a terribly long wait of over three years; now it's down to three months.

* (11:20)

So I would like to bring them into the modern era. We've got the program organized. It is efficient, and it is ready to take on the extra workload of bringing in extra Ukrainians through the PNP program. Let's waive the \$500 fee, and let's start bringing them in. They are smart, intelligent, hard-working, good people who have lost all their businesses, who have lost their homes, have lost all their money, all their wealth—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Michaleski: I want to just thank, again, the member from Springfield-Ritchot for speaking just so passionately about Manitoba and about the great province we have, the great people, the volunteers we have, and their affinity and their love for the Ukraine.

Can the member speak to how Ukrainian organizations and groups in Manitoba are stepping up to support Ukrainians who want to reside in Manitoba temporarily or permanently?

Mr. Schuler: I won't list them all individual, but I know, for instance, there's the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and there are many others that are now involved with collecting the money. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, I was there with two former presidents, Oksana Bondarchuk and Myroslava Pidhirnyj, and their love and their desire to do what's right for Ukraine.

In fact, under the previous NDP government, they even took old, retired ambulances, which there were just fantastic, and they sent them to Ukraine. And yes, the NDP government did support that, as we did as an opposition at that time. And those ambulances went to help the war effort, so the Ukrainian organizations are

doing an amazing job to help out now in this war effort.

Mr. Wasyliw: I wonder if the member can explain in what ways does his government plan to assist in resettling Ukrainian immigrants in Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, those conversations are taking place currently with our government and the federal government to see what kind of needs there are going to be. We don't know quite yet the mechanics of how the federal government will help to move individuals out of neighbouring countries.

For instance, Poland is bearing the brunt of it right now. They have instituted a complete open border concept. In fact, all of Europe, if you're a Ukrainian refugee, you can get onto a train free; you just have to show your ID.

So, as soon as the federal government, the Province, has got that worked out, I know that we'll be making that public for this Legislature and all Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And at this moment in time I wish to draw our attention to the gallery where we have guests from HMCS Winnipeg based in Esquimalt—I hope I'm saying that correctly—we have Commander Doug Layton; Lieutenant Jason Wychopen; Master Seaman Curry from the Portage-Neepawa area; sailor 3, Woodfield, from the St. James area. They are the guests of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson).

We welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's now day 20 of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Over 3 million, mostly women and children, have fled the Ukraine. Neighbouring countries like Poland are reaching their capacity limits to absorb these refugees.

We are seeing daily horrors, atrocities and war crimes being committed on Ukrainian civilians. We are seeing indiscriminate carpet bombing and heavy shelling on non-military targets. Schools, hospitals, civilian infrastructure have been deliberately targeted. Humanitarian quarters to evacuate civilians have been

bombed and shelled, deliberately targeting desperate people who are fleeing the war. Journalists have been shot and killed and deliberately targeted. Weapons of mass destruction, some of which have been banned by international treaty, are being used on civilian targets. Women, children and non-combatants have been slaughtered now in the thousands, and that number grows daily.

We are hearing stories of racialized students being abused. We are hearing stories of widespread sexual violence perpetuated against women and girls, and we know that the situation deteriorates by the day. Manitobans are watching this in horror and outrage. They feel helpless. They want and need to do their part to help.

But we are not helpless in this Chamber. Mr. We are not disinterested observers of events that are going on. Many of us have relatives and deep connections with Ukraine, and many Manitobans have come to Manitoba in previous chapters of conflict and stayed here and built a life. Manitoba has always been a safe harbour for those escaping conflict, and Manitobans are once again being called upon to act. We have a duty to act, and we are uniquely positioned to help. We can take in tens of thousands of refugees, and Manitobans expect this government to do so and to do so now.

Again, it's day 20 of this invasion, and where is the Stefanson government? There have been no announcements, no money pledged, no plan in place.

What Manitobans have gotten are hollow words, thoughts and prayers and virtue-signalling. What they haven't got is real action. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has petitioned this government to act and they did so days after the invasion. At this point, the Stefanson government is deliberately ignoring their pleas. It is clear to the Ukrainian community here in Manitoba that they do not have the voice of this government, and this government has chosen not to act. This government has shown by their inaction that they're—do not stand with Ukraine.

And sure, we are subjected to, you know, long speeches about how they enjoy their baba's perogies or how they had a great gigi. But what they haven't done, what they haven't said and what they haven't shown is any leadership on this issue. They just seem to want this to go away—or they want to blame the federal government and wait for them to act. But Ukrainians and Manitobans can't wait.

And this is similar to their plan with the COVID recession. It's—appears that it's a response also with the Ukrainian crisis, it's been very disappointing. We've seen the Province of Alberta has stepped up. They have provided \$10 million in humanitarian aid—and let's just recall what the Stefanson government's approach was: Manitoba initial response was only \$150,000. It took sustained pressure by, you know, the official opposition and Manitobans, that on day 15 of the invasion—day 15—let's think about that. Two weeks into the slaughter, this government reluctantly agreed to provide \$500,000 more. Compare that to Alberta's response: should be ashamed of themselves. That is not enough.

We heard at the rally for Ukraine on Sunday that the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has called out this government and said they are not doing enough on humanitarian aid. They are not doing enough on resettlement, and we, certainly, on this side of the House, echo those concerns.

There is—shameful that no new money or assistance was announced when this government had the perfect opportunity and platform to do so. Instead, they offered up more thoughts and prayers. We need to do more here in Manitoba.

Saskatchewan also announced, a day later, that they were providing \$365,000 in funds specifically for resettlement services. So they're acting and they're acting in relation to refugees. Now, again, day 20, nothing from this government. They brought this PMR for the stated purpose of working across the aisle. Well, there's nothing really being offered across the aisle.

Yes, you're now agreeing with us that the Provincial Nominee Program should not have \$500 fees. Thank you. Thank you for that. That is progress and you should be acknowledged for that. I would remind the government that we do not believe in head taxes, that we have been calling since the—this government has instituted head tax on immigrants to take that \$500 off.

So this crisis, hopefully, will come and go. We will still have a head tax on immigrants. That needs to go permanently. But this is a step, this is a step in the right direction and it should be applauded by this government. But that does not absolve this government of a duty to act. That doesn't mean that you can sort of, you know, wipe your hands and go, I think we're finished here. There is so much more to be done.

We can take the example of Alberta. We can take the example of Saskatchewan and actually send dedicated funds to Ukrainian Canadian Congress to hire full-time resettlement service workers.

* (11:30)

Now, since the invasion has occurred, Manitoba NDP has called for these dedicated funds to hire full-time professional resettlement co-ordinators to integrate the coming refugees. They had to turn away Manitobans from Ukrainian Canadian Congress who wanted to help, because they didn't have the staff or the capacity to do it. We are actually preventing ourselves from actually having a robust response because we are not funding that response.

So, the Manitoba NDP has also called for immediate ramping up of staff in the Provincial Nominee Program. We are told by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress there's literally two people working in that program. There's a director and the person that actually processes the application.

And I'll say that again. There was two people for an entire province that brings in anywhere from 10 to 15,000 provincial nominees every year, and no wonder we have a backlog.

So, we are calling on this government immediately to staff up the Provincial Nominee Program so that we can absorb thousands of provincial nominees.

This is only causing unnecessary hardship to families. It hurts our economy, and we cannot respond quickly or urgently for this refugee crisis and the next. And this is not going to be the last international crisis, and we need to be able to collectively act in these circumstances, and we have dismantled in Manitoba, thanks to this government, the infrastructure to do that.

Manitoba NDP is calling for the removal of barriers to immigration into Manitoba, and not just this head tax. And again, we appreciate this step forward, but there are other barriers, including there's a requirement to be—have English language proficiency. Right now, that requirement should be suspended. That will unnecessarily block many candidates from coming here.

There's also numerous actions the Province can take in relation to the federal government. This is a joint federal-provincial responsibility, as the MLA from Springfield-Ritchot has pointed out. The Province can also lobby Ottawa on behalf of Manitobans that the Ukrainian community is seeking

that the federal government waive any visa requirements to enter Canada. It's another bureaucratic, unnecessary barrier keeping Ukrainian refugees out.

And to the federal government's credit, they have stated that they will allow every Ukrainian refugee who wants to come to Canada to come. They're not placing any artificial limits on the number of refugees. That should be applauded.

I now turn to this provincial government: will you do the same? Will you make that same commitment today to allow as many people under the Provincial Nominee Program to come in as who would like? And will this government stand up today and make that commitment?

So, this is a good start. This certainly isn't working across the aisle. This is damage control by this government. And so I ask you to actually, you know, say and act with one, you know, voice, and actually bring in an all-party committee of the Legislature so that we can, together, in a non-partisan way, be a leader in Canada for how provincial governments respond to a crisis like this.

So, I want to thank everyone for your attention, and I appreciate the MLA from Ritchot—sorry, Springfield-Ritchot bringing this forward.

Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): I would like to thank the member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler) for bringing forward this important resolution.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba calls on the provincial government to waive the fee for Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program to create less barriers to expedite Ukrainian citizens fleeing from the conflict, and to assist the work of the federal government as we work together in assisting Ukrainians who seek safety and refuge in Manitoba.

Since Putin's forces attacked Ukraine on February 24, the situation in Ukraine has been deteriorating on a daily basis. Putin has been reckless in his actions, with no concern for human life: bombing a children's hospital in Mariupol, leaving it in rubble. Women and children have been killed in this conflict.

The woman and her baby that were seriously injured in the bombing of the hospital in Mariupol have died. And Putin is calling this fake news. Residential areas, homes, apartment blocks, grocery stores

have been targeted and destroyed. The Western world has condemned Putin for his actions. Many countries are sending military equipment and humanitarian aid to help Ukraine in this—in its time of need.

Official talks are ongoing. Unfortunately, Putin is talking but not listening. He is doing everything in his power to destroy Ukraine's people, its infrastructure and its democratic government.

Since the start of this war, close to 3 million Ukrainians have fled their country, and that number grows daily. They need help and somewhere to go until this conflict can be resolved. We must continue with humanitarian aid to help these refugees survive. I know that Manitoba has pledged \$650,000 to date, but this war is far from being over and more will be needed.

I know that both Canada and Manitoba are opening their doors for both immigration and refugees. We can expect that many Ukrainians will be looking at Canada and Manitoba as a safe place to come. Ukrainians have been immigrating to Canada since the late 1800s, and, through the years, there have been many waves of Ukrainians coming to Canada. My father's parents came to Manitoba in 1896 and settled between Vita and Stuartburn in southeastern Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Ukrainians have become an important part of Canada's rich culture and history. They have contributed much to Manitoba's success. They have helped shape and build Manitoba. There are 180,000 Manitobans that identify as having a Ukrainian heritage. Manitobans are a caring and giving people and are standing in support of Ukraine. They have given much for humanitarian aid and are willing to open their doors for families so they would have a place to stay should they come to Manitoba.

I have been at two rallies—two of the rallies held at the Legislative grounds, here. At the first, over 5,000 people attended and the support shown was incredible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since Putin invaded Ukraine, we in this House have condemned his actions, and I have listened to many speeches about the situation in Ukraine and what should be done. I have heard members opposite, on more than one occasion, ask the government to waive the fee for Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program to create less barriers for Ukrainians wanting to come here.

It's time to act. I am asking members opposite to stand with us in support of this resolution, and truly

support Ukrainians wanting to come to Canada and Manitoba.

Thank you. Dyakuyu. Slava Ukraini. [*Glory to Ukraine.*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My list indicates that it is actually the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) next. Did that member wish to speak at this time? [*interjection*]

I read the wrong list. My apologies, it is the member for Burrows, and I was incorrect. Thank you, clerks, for that adjustment.

The member for Burrows, please go ahead. You have the floor.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Today we are talking about the crisis in Ukraine and how we as legislators get together and help our friends who are suffering these days.

The situation is very painful. Hospitals are being attacked. Children are being killed. So this is the time when all of us get together, rise above the party lines and do something for those who actually need our support.

And this resolution, entitled Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge, this resolution proposes that the fee for Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, which is \$500, should be removed. That would mean removing a barrier in the immigration process for Ukrainian applicants.

* (11:40)

It is a barrier. This government is admitting that this is a barrier. So who created this barrier? This government created this barrier themselves. For example, my intention is to speak to everybody who is listening, and I intentionally cover my mic. That's a barrier. That would not let the people who want to listen listen to what I say.

And then I ask one of my colleagues to spend time to draft a resolution asking me to remove my hand from the mic so that you can listen. This is ridiculous. Why didn't this government simply remove this fee that we have been asking them to remove for long? It's not just during this crisis that NDP has been asking to remove this fee.

And this fee is not a little fee. People coming from overseas—if you can work the currencies—for some people, it would be equal or more than their full month's salary. Just imagine, think how much you

earn every month, and you want to apply for something, and it requires a fee equal to your one-month earnings. How would that feel to you? It's huge. It's a barrier.

And if we try to understand this immigration process, why we are calling immigrants in Canada, why we are calling—in-iting immigrants to Manitoba? Because we need them. We need them.

When I applied for Canadian immigration, I was working as a university professor in India, one of the leading agricultural universities in India. And when anybody used to ask me, why are you moving to Canada, I used to say, because Canada needs me. This is the fact. We need immigrants.

In March 2015, I was driving to Arborg. I was working with Manitoba Agriculture at that time. Last week of March, I remember, my car slipped—I was in a ditch. Some kind person came in to help me. I was thankful because I needed help. Just imagine a situation if I ask that gentleman to pay me \$500 to help me. How would that sound?

We need immigrants. We are not doing any favour to our Ukrainian friends. We need them. They have skills. And the people of Ukrainian heritage, they have proved over hundreds of years that they have those skills; they have that experience; they have that passion to work in the fields, to clear the fields and produce food for us as they used to produce food in Ukraine, which is called breadbasket of Europe.

They have done that here in Manitoba. I have talked to people around Beausejour when I was working in Beausejour area in Manitoba Agriculture. People around Dauphin, they are into agriculture. Contributions of immigrants to our economy is huge: in the health department, in the education department, agriculture, farming, construction. We need to recognize that.

It would have been better if this government listened to members on this side of the House to remove this fee without this exercise. But, even then, we are thankful that at least they brought forward this resolution. We support this because we want to remove barriers that this government created not just in immigration process, but in other fields, as well.

When I think about Tevin Obiga, who died of blastomycosis recently, he was an international student, and due to the barrier created in that international students health coverage, his family during the grieving times got a bill over \$500,000 for his stay

in the hospital before his death. This is another barrier that this government created.

Then, you talk about internationally educated nurses. Their certification process is so slow that it's a big barrier in their settlement. We have a health system that needs professionals. We have professionals available in this town, in this province. They are willing to work as nurses, but they have to work on other jobs. They're underemployed just because the process of certification is slow. And this government keeps making false claims about the process which is great—it's not.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those Manitobans who are willing to host our friends from Ukraine. They're offering space to them. They're offering their homes to them. I got a chance to visit Millennium Villa, where people of Ukrainian origin, mostly old-age people, live. I talked to them. That organization is raising funds and that organization is willing to provide space for the people who are coming from Ukraine.

I would urge everybody to think of donating to that organization or providing—so that they can provide space to the people who are coming.

Regarding this resolution, we support this resolution. It's late, but it's never too late.

Thanks for bringing forward this resolution. Let's work together to support our friends of Ukrainian heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): You know, all over the world and here in Manitoba people have demonstrated their support for Ukraine in many, many different ways, and I do think it's something we should be proud of, but it's something we need to do way, way more of. We're just starting to scratch the surface.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here in Manitoba, we have over 180,000 Manitobans with Ukrainian heritage, and it is—it's overwhelmingly abundant and it's—we can tell that the support is there. I'm proud of our country and I'm proud of our province.

Our federal government needs to, however, do way more. They need to send more non-lethal weapons and fuel. They need to place sanctions on a wider circle of Russian elite. They need to develop a special relationship with NATO. They need to continue to expedite refugee Ukrainians coming to Canada. And they need to look at making changes

to immigration standards and continue to donate more to humanitarian aid.

* (11:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here on a—at a provincial level, in Manitoba, we need to match funds for additional humanitarian aid. It's one thing that we can be doing that we're seeing in other parts of Canada, and, quite frankly, it's shameful that we haven't yet begun to do that.

It's my understanding that we should be hiring additional staff to help process and handle anticipated applications for family reunification under the Provincial Nominee Program.

Most of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba needs to work on settlement plans. Many who are displaced and coming to Manitoba need help beyond arriving. We need supports in place to assist with documentation. We need supports in place to assist with accommodations and food and community, a sense of safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All of the basics and necessities: a place to sleep, a roof over our head.

These are fundamental human rights here in Canada, and we need to be doing our part to assist with these rights in any way that we can.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's safe to say that all of us here in the House agree that we need to reduce barriers for displaced people from Ukraine seeking refuge, and we will be supporting this resolution. But it's important to state that removing the \$500 head tax that this government actually brought in shouldn't even be a question as it should never have been implemented in the first place.

And, you know, because the provincial nominee—we know that the Provincial Nominee Program ran very successfully in the past. There was no \$500 head tax, so there's no justification for it. And we know the history of the program, and we know, quite frankly, who destroyed the program, and that's a debate for another day, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But there is zero justification for this \$500 head tax. It should never have been implemented. It should not be here right now. It should be removed, not only for people who are coming from Ukraine, but for all provincial-nominee-accepted applicants.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another thing that we could be doing a lot better at is ensuring that information is clear. The other day I actually had someone call me, and they were asking, Cindy, is it okay if I go to Poland, because I have friends from Ukraine, I meet

them in Poland, and I fly back with them to Winnipeg, here? And I'm thinking, yes, I think that should be okay.

But the truth of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't know the details. If my friend goes to Poland, picks up his loved ones, his friends, who crossed the border into Poland, are these displaced people from Ukraine allowed to stay in Winnipeg? Are they allowed to stay in his home, if he's willing to put up the accommodations and the food?

This information needs to be way clearer, and we should have a direct way that people can, in fact, come into Winnipeg, come into Manitoba, the entire country. And all three levels of government, the federal government, provincial government and municipal government, have a role to play in ensuring that we can, in fact, do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another thing I want to speak to is, I actually have a friend who immigrated here from Ukraine. I met her back in 2014 when I was in Ukraine, few years later she ended up coming here, and her mom and her grandma are still in Ukraine.

And it's heartbreaking, because her grandma lives in the equivalent of an apartment complex, and she's not mobile. So she is stuck living in this apartment complex. She cannot flee, even if she wanted to flee. And when she looks outside her window, she sees people actually spray-painting the street signs to, hopefully, turn around and get the Russian military confused so they don't know where they're going in Ukraine.

Can you imagine living in a society like that, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Note, just before wrapping up, because I do want to ensure this resolution passes this morning. I want to say thank you to the constituents of Tyndall Park. My office held a drive for donations for the Ukrainian National Federation, and our entire board table was filled with medical supplies and necessities that is being sent down to Poland through a long-haul truck, Mr. Deputy Speaker—or to Toronto, then to Poland.

And I really think it was phenomenal to be able to be part of and witness the community come together and show the support and the love to Ukraine the way that it has.

So, ultimately, we are happy to support this resolution, and I hope that the government continues to do more.

Thank you.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Again, I'd like to thank the member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler) for bringing forward this really important resolution regarding waiving the fees under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. It's an important program that can help right now.

I know our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Ukraine and Manitobans with Ukrainian families and friends. And our government most certainly condemns the actions of Russia, and respects the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine. I know our government has done a lot to—already, as much as we can do.

This—it's been mentioned a few times that the federal government is the lead role here but, you know, modifying and getting the application times down from three years to less than six months in the Provincial Nominee Program will help, under the circumstances.

Our government has also given \$650,000 in humanitarian aid already. You know, there's been some, I would say, fast-tracking to ensure the Ukrainian, under the circumstances, are being recognized in the program. And I know our government has fully supported the actions of the federal government on the efforts that they're taking towards—to have—towards helping this humanitarian crisis, really.

So, I would say our government is—again, the government has done a lot. I do support this resolution, waiving the fee. And—a den—I, you know, coming out of COVID, you know, we've had two years of that, and now to come into this situation—I appreciate the government's guidance and actions to date, and also the commitment that they've shown under this Ukraine-Russia situation.

Once again, we condemn Russia on their aggression, and we stand with Ukraine today and every day.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? *[interjection]*

Oh—the honourable member for St. James.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I'll be quite brief, here, but I am really happy to have an opportunity to speak

to this resolution that's come forward from the member for Springfield-Ritchot.

Really good to see that the government and—or a member of this government has recognized the importance of taking more action here, of removing the \$500 head tax, as it's been called here today. Good to know that they've been listening to us and are willing to take action. And it is good to see members of this House come together around taking action to do more to support Ukrainian families, especially those who have been displaced and are fleeing from this horrifying war that's been caused by, of course, President Putin.

The time for action is now. We're—unfortunately, we've seen very little from this government in the way of action. We've seen, you know, peanuts in terms of financial contributions to supporting Ukrainian families. There's so much more, so much more we can be doing.

But, you know, namely, here, we're here to debate a resolution. This government has the ability to take action today if they want to have their Minister responsible for Immigration waive the \$500 fee, to eliminate it. And we should not only be eliminating it, of course, for Ukrainian families, but we should be eliminating it for all families, as we've called for for much time.

So, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the resolution. We support it.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, is it the desire of the House to have the resolution read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution? *[Agreed]*

I declare the resolution carried.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

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