

**Fourth Session – Forty-Second Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXXVI No. 70A - 10 a.m., Thursday, October 6, 2022**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, 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
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EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
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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
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JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
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LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
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NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
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WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Kirkfield Park	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 6, 2022

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** 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. Amen.

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, Denesule [*phonetic*], 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.

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

The honourable—[*interjection*—orders of the day, private members' business.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

## House Business

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** On House business, pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin). The title of the resolution is calling upon the provincial government to provide psychiatric assessments close to home for all Manitoba children.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It has been announced by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader that the resolution to be brought forward by—the next time resolutions are brought forward next Thursday is one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak. The title of the resolution is calling upon the provincial government to provide psychiatric—psychiatry assessments close to home for all Manitoba children.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Fontaine:** Will you call for second reading Bill 244, The Protecting Youth in Sports Act.

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

## Bill 244—The Protecting Youth in Sports Act

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Shall move to second reading of Bill 244, The Protecting Youth in Sports Act.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), that Bill 244, The Protecting Youth in Sports Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Moses:** I am very happy to be raising and bringing forward this bill in the House today, on behalf of so many community advocates who have raised their voices over the past several months about the importance of doing more, in fact, doing everything we can, to protect youth in sport. And so I'm very happy to be bringing forward and being at this stage where we can now debate this in this Legislature.

Community advocates raised their voices after hearing the disturbing stories of what happened at many—at Churchill High School, and what happened with their football team. And after hearing those stories, which of course is not limited to one high school, not limited to one sport, happens across the province, advocates took action. They contacted us, they raised their voices and they pushed us to ask ourselves, can we do more to protect youth in sports? And that's why we're here.

And I want to thank each and every one of those advocates who reached out to their MLA, reached out and made their stories public and motivated so many

legislators to take this issue more seriously. And that's why we're very happy to be bringing forward a bill that will take further steps to protect youth in sport.

Particularly, we want to thank Coach Geordie Wilson of the Winnipeg Rifles, who was very vocal about the importance of doing more, doing everything we can, to protect youth in sport.

I also want to thank the people that we spoke to in a variety of organizations and a variety of perspectives around how we best protect youth in sport. Those include groups like folks from the Sport Manitoba, including folks from Football Manitoba, Winnipeg High School Football League. Of course, we spoke to parents who were affected by this type of sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

And of course, we want to also make sure that this is centred around athletes, young athletes who are the ones who are affected and are victims by this, want to make sure that those voices are heard in this process. And we thank them for lifting up their voices, and we thank them for all the work they do to help push us to make safe-sport more safe.

I also want to thank my colleague, the MLA for St. James, for all the heavy lifting he's done for this bill. He's been an integral part of this progress. Quite frankly, the bill could be—he could be standing up here introducing this bill, but I'm glad to be part of a team and be the one today to move the ball forward on this, as part of our NDP team.

Now, I want to be clear that, while I hope that this sort of thing never happens again, I fear that it might. And it's that fear that's motivating me to do more to protect youth in sport.

And just like those advocates who talked to us, who called us, reached out, were in the media and pushed us to do everything we can to—did everything they could to protect youth in sports, I also, and our NDP team also, wants to do everything we can to protect youth in sport. And that's why we're here.

We know that some of the initiatives that the government has raised over the last few months have taken steps, but they have not gone far enough. They have not been enough to ensure that we're doing everything we can as legislators to protect youth in sport. So that's why we're here.

This bill that we're introducing today, Bill 244, aims to fill the gaps and strengthen what has already in—been in place, and keep our athletes as safe as possible.

\* (10:10)

Now, some of the things that this bill aims to fix and to strengthen is a requirement for coaches to take a training program that specifically would prevent sexual abuse, harassment, bullying and abuse in sport. It's also a requirement for coaches not to host young athletes in the coach's residence without prior permission.

This bill also has inclusions for parents, because we know that many times we have requirements for coaches but we also want to make parents aware of what grooming looks like, so that they can help to protect their own children in sports.

And so, this bill would have training programs available for parents of young athletes that would (a) be able to identify and help them identify inappropriate behaviour that the child or parent—parent or child may be exposed to while engaged in athletic activity, and (b) it also helps to make the parent aware of appropriate actions that they may take if their child may be or has been exposed to inappropriate behaviour.

This bill isn't also limited to coaches and parents but also extends to the young athletes themselves, and it makes training programs available for athletes at an age-appropriate level training, to help them identify what is inappropriate behaviour and also let them know the appropriate steps to take if they experience or see others involved in inappropriate behaviour.

Now, it's very important that those things happen, that we tackle both from the coaches themselves, make things available for parents and student athletes, so that everyone is aware of what inappropriate behaviour looks like, they have mechanisms to prevent and stop it if it happens.

And also, this bill also aims to increase reporting on this. Because, as stories like this happen more and more, there is an 'erosure' in confidence in our athletic systems. And by being transparent and being open about what kind of training is happening, it allows parents and athletes to feel more confident that they're going into an athletic activity that is as safe as possible.

Now, this is a private member's bill and it has a limited scope in what—in terms of what can be brought into it. It cannot include initiatives that would require funding, but there are many things that would protect youth in sport further if there were funding available.

And so, outside of the scope of this private member's bill, I would urge the government to take even more steps, strengthen even in more ways, how we protect youth in sport.

And those would include putting funding behind and supporting further the promotion and the use and awareness of that Safe Sport line that is available for young athletes, for parents or for other community members to call in tips of when they see inappropriate or what they think might be inappropriate behaviour—more funding for that Safe Sport line; more funding to investigate tips and issues that come as a result of calls to that Safe Sport line so that there are avenues where those people who do report can know that their cases will be investigated and looked at by the appropriate bodies; and also to make sure that there is funding and support available for victims and their families.

We want to make sure that whatever we're doing to keep kids safe in sports, that we ensure that we are helping to protect and helping to keep safe those who have already been traumatized, and make sure that they have the support they need to carry on. And that includes making sure that there are counselling services available for them and their family.

And so, I'll just conclude my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by just saying to anyone who's watching, again, that if you are experiencing a situation that you deem—you might think is inappropriate and you are not sure where to go, I encourage you to take the opportunity to call the Safe Sport line. And the number for that Safe Sport line is 1-833-656-7233. You can call that number and hopefully get the help that you need to ensure that your situation is as safe as possible, and any other student athlete that you know of is playing and participating in sport as safely as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very much.

### 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.

The floor is open for questions.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I guess I am the only one who has a question this morning.

My question is for the member from St. Vital. I want to thank him for bringing forward this bill this morning. In the spring he brought forward a piece of legislation, a resolution very similar to this bill, and in the resolution it talked about having a text line available.

Would there be a text line with this bill?

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I thank the member for the question.

I think in the bill, it's not appropriate to just prescribe the 'specificity' with how public can reach out. We want to make sure that there are avenues for people to reach out, whether that's a phone, a Safe Sport phone line—I think certainly a text line would be available—or whether it's an online portal.

I certainly urge and hope the minister takes the comments of the member to heart and makes a text line available, makes online portal available or phone line, whatever is the most convenient and accessible for youth, young athletes and their families to report any inappropriate behaviour.

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Does the member realize that what he's calling on is already required of all coaches in Manitoba?

Does the member have a problem with Respect in Sport—the Respect in Sport program, the way it's currently set up?

**Mr. Moses:** I appreciate the member's question, but the aim of this bill is not to repeat anything that's happening, but to strengthen it. It's to strengthen any gaps that are currently in our system. And presently, community members have said that there are gaps. And that's why we're bringing this bill forward.

This bill not only includes requirements for training for coaches, but it also makes training available for student athletes and their parents. And that's one of the avenues where this bill strengthens current legislation.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** I'd like to ask my colleague, why might youth be hesitant to come forward and report that they've been sexually assaulted?

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member very much for the question and I, again, want to reiterate my thanks and appreciation for all the work he did in this bill, as well.

It's—you know, sadly there's still a stigma around coming forward and putting your name behind the fact that you might've been a victim of sexual abuse or

sexual harassment. And, you know, that's one of the reasons why there is a Safe Sport line, so people have a safe way to report inappropriate behaviour.

We want to also make sure that when we encourage the government to provide counselling services, that there are mechanisms for people to report their—any inappropriate behaviour in a safe and inclusive manner.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** I thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for his work in bringing this bill forward.

I'm wondering if the member could share what groups he consulted with before bringing this bill forward?

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member for the question.

Yes, in my comments, I mentioned some groups that we were able to consult over the past few months. Those included groups like Sport Manitoba, like Football Manitoba, Canadian Centre for Child Protection. We also talked with a variety of coaches including Coach Wilson, parents who've been—their family members have been victims of harassment and of different levels of abuse.

And I think we were—you know, we also recognize that at the centre of this are student athletes themselves, right, who are the ones who are often—who are the victims of abuse in sport.

And so, we—these are the people that we consulted when we were crafting this bill.

**Mr. Sala:** I'd like to ask my colleague: what are the effects of youth being sexually abused by a coach or person of trust?

**Mr. Moses:** Yes, I thank that—I thank our member from St. James for that question.

\* (10:20)

It's a very serious—very serious—impact when you have been the victim. It not only scars your thought process and feelings around that sport that you've been involved with, it also really erodes your trust from many authority figures and other people who you ought to be able to trust in our society, and so it has a real damaging effect.

And that's one of the reasons why—we're not able to include it, because it's a private member's bill, in this legislation, but we are urging the government to provide additional counselling supports for victims of sexual abuse and their families.

**Mr. Khan:** After reading through the legislation, I noticed that the bill only extends to coaches' residences. We on this side of the Chamber are well aware that grooming takes place in a variety of different places.

Why does this bill fail to exclude places that grooming can take place such as hotels, amusement parks, restaurants, shopping malls, parking lots, vehicles, et cetera?

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member for that question.

Yes, I mean there's a variety of places where grooming or inappropriate behaviour can be taking. This bill chooses to take one step in that direction.

I urge the member to take the step with us today, support this bill, and if he wants to, at a later date, bring in even more—or another piece of legislation to strengthen it and encourage other places, I encourage him to do that as well.

But today we're taking one step in a positive direction and I hope the member and his colleagues can support the step that we're aiming to take today.

**Mr. Guenter:** This bill is a piece of provincial legislation and would not apply to any sports team that operates on a First Nation.

Has the member consulted with any First Nations about what this gap would mean for them and their athletes?

**Mr. Moses:** That's right. I thank the member for the question.

There are, you know, a variety of places where athletic activities take place, whether it's on a First Nation, whether it's in a city, whether it's in a rural area. Our aim is to take a step today to make sure that all kids, all youth in sport, stay safe, and we can look at other ways to make even more people in Manitoba safe.

I think if the member's serious about making sure that all Manitobans and youth in sport stay safe, we would take the step today and we would look again at how we can even strengthen further gaps in the future, which includes funding for counselling, it includes funding for promoting the tip line and making sure that we fund all areas where athletes are potentially in danger and keeping them as safe as possible.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other questions? The rules only allow for each independent member to have a single question, so—I know people are pointing.

**Mr. Sala:** The training this bill requires helps everyone involved in sports to identify inappropriate behaviour that we might otherwise miss.

Why is this training so important?

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member for the question.

And I think that training is important because many people don't know what inappropriate behaviour looks like. You—it might sound strange, but sometimes you don't realize when you're being groomed, right?

I think the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) mentioned in the comments when we debated the resolution this spring that he didn't know what grooming looked like. When I was a young athlete, I didn't know what grooming looked like and if I was being groomed or not.

And I think the point of this is to educate young people, athletes, so that they have their eyes open and they can protect themselves, to educate parents to know if their child are being groomed and to help coaches understand what is appropriate and what is inappropriate behaviour.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I know—and I want to thank the member for bringing this forward.

If—I was just wondering if he could explain: what is the—is there a current screening process in place for coaches or what is the process? Are there things like child-abuse registries and so on that have to be included?

If you could just explain that, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Moses:** I thank the member for St. Boniface for the question.

Obviously, Sport Manitoba has restrictions around training and checks, as well as a variety of school divisions. If you coach through a school, those 'thes' varies as well if you coach through a high school, or your school division might have—or requirements on the training and the security background and child-abuse checks that you might have. So I won't answer 'specificity,' but you can follow up with those organizations to get the details.

But I'll say that this bill has clear requirements on training that coaches would be required to take to make sure that they are aware of sexual abuse, sexual harassment and bullying, and they're not—hopefully, to

prevent those cases happening in all sporting activities.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Khan:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the member from St. Vital says, he realizes that this is just one step and many more steps can be taken forward to strengthen this bill.

My question for the member is that, if he realizes that these bills need to be strengthened, why did he not reach out to the Minister of Sport, the Minister of Education or I myself, who have mentioned numerous times to him that I'd be willing to work in a non-partisan way? *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Moses:** I appreciate the member's question because we did have a meeting with the minister, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Sport. We urged them to do more and since that time, that meeting over a month ago, we haven't seen the action.

And that's why we're bringing the bill forward, quite frankly, right; it's because the gaps still exist, because the government hasn't filled the gaps, that we're here today debating this bill.

And I urge them to support this, to do everything they can to support youth in sport.

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

### Debate

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

**Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today and put a few words on the record with respect to this proposed legislation.

I do thank the member opposite for introducing this. I think on this side of the House and perhaps, I'd say, on all sides of the House, we really do commend all the survivors who've come forward to share their experience in a very public way about maltreatment in sport.

I—not only does that help bring some of the perpetrators to justice, but it does also give courage and bravery to others who may have experience in very similar, to come out and share their stories as well. So I do commend the survivors for doing that, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I assure you that our government really supports them in their journey to healing and to pursue justice.

I know that it's been mentioned here in the House a few times about everyone's experience in their—in amateur sport, and I had experience in amateur sport as well. And knowing full well that, you know, twenty-some years ago, we probably wouldn't have had an idea what grooming was, or what it looked like, and we wouldn't recognize it. I myself used to compete in Olympic weightlifting with weightlifting Manitoba back in the early 2000s—I would have not recognized grooming myself.

So we as a society have come a long way, and I know that Sport Manitoba, as well, has come a long way over the last few years in addressing some of the issues that we see as maltreatment in sport.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to highlight some of the things that Sport Manitoba is currently doing and—in co-operation with some of its partners as well.

So, first of all there's Anti-Racism in Sport. The Anti-Racism in Sport Campaign is committed to address, disrupt and eliminate racism and discrimination in sport.

Commit to Kids: so, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection resources for sports organizations, coaches, officials, sport leaders, volunteers and parents are there to help kids safe in sport. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection also provides tools to parents and kids to understand and identify sexual abuse on their website. And they do have a website where you can visit and see what that—what kind of services are offered there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Rainbow Resource Centre: the Rainbow Resource Centre offers support to the 2-S-L-G-P-T-Q+ community in the form of counselling, education, programming for individuals ranging from children through to 55+. It also supports families, friends and employers of this community, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Sports Manitoba also provides preventative measures in encouraging safety in sports. Some of them include Respect in Sport. Sport Manitoba believes in being proactive, ensuring sport in our province is welcoming to all participants. Respect in Sport helps promote these values through a simple and convenient online-training course for coaches and sport leaders.

Responsible Coaching Movement, or the RCM, consists of three pillars: The Rule of Two, background screening and ethics training for coaches. They also provide resources and processes to follow for sport to

be safe, smart and secure for all. The Rule of Two, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one of the pillars of RCM.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sport Manitoba provides resources to take action with the Safe Sport line. It was mentioned earlier here today, but it's—call the confidential help line at 1-833-656-SAFE, or 7233, if you're experiencing or witnessing any misconduct in sport, including bullying, harassment, hazing or abuse.

\* (10:30)

Sport participants have a right to experience safe and welcoming sport environments. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do have a document here for the Rule of Two that Sport Manitoba uses. And I would like to table that here for the benefit of the House, showing just what some of the infographics that are used to help educate not only parents, coaches, athletes, but folks and bystanders in the sport community to understand what the Rule of Two is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was actually pleased to join my colleague, the Minister of Education, in June, I believe, of this year, when we announced more funding for safety in sport. Sport Manitoba provides \$160,000 each year to some of these initiatives, and this past year, this past spring, we increased that funding by \$250,000 for a total of \$410,000.

Working very closely with Sport Manitoba to make sure that as conditions change and as society certainly evolves, and we become more aware of what maltreatment looks like and some of the issues and conditions that lead up to maltreatment look like, that Sport Manitoba's able to stay on top of that and Manitoba is able—Sport Manitoba's able to serve and protect the very folks in the sporting community, particularly our young people.

I know, like I said, many of us in this House have experience with sports, anywhere from professional to amateur. Myself, being from the amateur sport community, it was very—like I said earlier, it's—at the time, in the early 2000s, we were really not as aware as we are today of what maltreatment would look like and what would constitute maltreatment. And I'm just very glad to see that that has evolved and has changed, and that we've made tremendous strides in that arena, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, I do thank the member opposite for introducing this legislation, and I believe that we on this side of the House support the essence of the bill. We do believe that there is room for some improvement,



and perhaps at a later committee stage, that can be addressed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But, again, I want to say thank you to the member opposite, and I know that we on this side of the House, particularly myself and the Minister of Education, have worked very closely together on making sure that there's safety in sport—not only in amateur sport, but amateur sport within the education system as well.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know that often maltreatment doesn't know any boundaries, and that's why I want to make sure that this is a whole-of-government approach in addressing this very issue. And beyond the sporting community, beyond the education community, we know that maltreatment happens in all aspects of peoples' lives. And our government certainly condemns maltreatment in any sphere of someone's life, and also commends, though, the survivors in coming forward with their stories.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while it may happen in different venues to different folks of different backgrounds, athletic backgrounds and different interests in life, at the end of the day, nobody supports maltreatment of anyone for any reason.

So just with that, I put a few words on the record here as to what's been done, and I think that there's always more work to do with respect to this evolving situation. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that working closely with my colleague, the Minister of Education, and Sport Manitoba, a lot of work has been done. And we look forward to working together with all organizations to ensure that maltreatment becomes something of the past.

And with that, thank you so much, to have put a few words of—on the record here with respect to maltreatment in sport.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** It gives me great pleasure to stand here in the House in support of The Protecting Youth in Sports Act, Bill 244, introduced by my colleague from St. Vital. I'd also like to start out just by thanking him for all his work and leadership in bringing this bill forward, and his partnership in developing it together.

It goes without saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when our kids sign up to play in sports, whether that's in a community sports team or whether that's in a school sports at any level, they should be safe from sexual abuse of any kind. That goes without saying.

But what we've seen over the last eight months, and we've seen with some of the revelations that have

been brought forward here in Manitoba, is that—and thanks to the bravery of victims and the families of victims who've come forward with their stories, and thanks to the work of advocates—is that we have a lot more work to do to help protect young athletes from harm here in Manitoba; not just in one sport, but in all sports, whether athletes are playing with community clubs or through their schools.

And that's why we're here today. We're bringing forward this bill and encouraging this government, and specifically the Minister responsible for Sport, cultural—Culture and Heritage as well as the Minister responsible for Education and Early Childhood Learning, to listen to the victims of sexual abuse in sport, to listen to the families of those who've been abused and sexually abused in sport and to listen to the coaches and athletes and sports organizations that are coming forward with solutions; who have come forward with a clear message, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need more action to make sports as safe as possible for everybody.

Manitobans want to ensure that, here in this province, we're doing everything we can to prevent sexual abuse and abuse of young athletes; that we're doing what's needed to support those who've been victimized as a result of their involvement in sport; that we're working to ensure those who are responsible for victimizing young athletes are caught and held accountable as early as possible.

Our communities want action and they want to see all of us in this House working together to do what's needed to protect our kids and make sports as safe as possible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, about eight months ago we heard from a St. James community business owner and head coach of the Winnipeg Rifles, Geordie Wilson, who reached out to express his concern about the revelations of sexual abuse and abuse that had taken place at Vincent Massey High school within their football program.

And Geordie's words to me were: enough is enough, we got to do something. And what Geordie helped me to understand was that we have some pretty big gaps in our current system when it comes to protecting young athletes from sexual abuse, and he challenged us to do something about this and to work together with this government to make something happen.

And this conversation led me to connect, along with my colleague, MLA for St. Vital, to dig deep into

the issue; to engage in a lot of conversations with a wide range of people, many of whom my colleague for St. Vital has already mentioned here, to learn more about the risk to young athletes and what we can do about them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've spoken to a number of coaches, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, the CEO of Sport Manitoba and we've spoken to the families and the parents of victims at Vincent Massey. And those conversations, which I'm just incredibly grateful for, were eye-opening. And they were very disturbing as well.

What we've learned is that, while the risk of sexual abuse and abuse in sports remain very low, there are a number of important things this government can do to keep our young athletes as safe as possible.

But before discussing responses to those gaps, it's important to ask how widespread this issue is. And I'd like to mention here a study that I reviewed in preparing for this debate, that found that somewhere between 2 to 8 per cent of minor-age athletes—2 to 8 per cent—are victims of abuse or sexual abuse within the context of playing sports. I think that number is a lot higher than maybe many of us would expect it to be. And in 98 per cent of these cases, the perpetrators were either coaches, teachers or instructors, people in positions of authority for those young athletes.

And that same study showed that the more elite the level of play, the greater the risk to athletes. It also noted that the majority of abuse takes place where sports activities take place or in the home of the abuser, which this bill, I think, speaks to, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, as we can see, the issue is not as isolated as some might think and in recent years, thanks to the bravery of victims who've come forward and the work of many advocates, we've seen more and more being done to protect athletes in other jurisdictions.

We've seen legislation brought forward at a federal level in the US with their protecting young athletes from sexual abuse and safe sports act that was passed a few years ago. And our own federal government here in Canada recently committed to funding a third-party reporting mechanism that would allow individuals playing national-level sports to report incidences of abuse and sexual abuse.

And so the question for us here as legislators in Manitoba is: What is our role in helping to make sport safer for our kids? What do we need to do?

And I'm happy to share that in researching the issue, having spoken with Sports Manitoba, doing the work, of course with my colleague for St. Vital and others, we've learned that we do have some of the right building blocks here in place in Manitoba.

Those building blocks include a tip line, which we don't think is widely known enough or that we haven't done enough to market or to make young athletes aware of that or families aware of that tip line, but it is there. And there are some mechanisms in place to trigger third-party investigations; again, not enough awareness is in place about that, the ability to access that support, but it is there.

And I was also happy to see that after we brought forward our PMR—our opposition caucus brought forward a PMR in the House last spring, and after victims' families showed up here at the Legislature, that the government did take some steps in the right direction.

But there are still gaps. There are still some gaps, and this bill seeks to fill those gaps. And it's my hope that today this government will join us in working to fill those gaps.

\* (10:40)

Firstly, we need to ensure that all coaches in Manitoba, whether it's in community or school-based sports, receive mandatory training that will help them to prevent sexual abuse. The requirement for this training should be enshrined in legislation.

Many instances of sexual abuse of athletes have also been found to occur in the homes of coaches, and for this reason we should also be legislating a requirement that requires, in those instances where coaches want to have an athlete in their home, that they obtain the permission from the parent, or in the case of school sports, of the principal.

Building on that need for education, we also need to ensure that young athletes are offered training to understand what grooming looks like and what constitutes inappropriate behaviour from a coach. And I know we touched on this a bit—my colleague from St. Vital touched on this a little bit, but in speaking with some of the parents of victims at Vincent Massey, one of the things we learned or that was clear was that young athletes in some cases weren't really even able to recognize that the behaviours that their coaches were putting forward were inappropriate.

They didn't see, like—they didn't have the ability to identify that it was grooming behaviour. They

couldn't see, necessarily, with clarity, that their behaviour was inappropriate. So we need to make sure that young athletes have that opportunity to learn about what's appropriate, what's inappropriate from—what they can expect from a coach, and that they're able to identify those behaviours.

We should also be offering education to parents. This bill, again, would ensure—to ensure that they know what to look for, and they know how to identify grooming behaviours from the coaches in their kids' sports teams.

There are unfortunately some things we do not have in place which could not be included in the scope of this bill, such as the need to ensure that youth who've been sexually abused in sport, as well as their family members, can access appropriate counselling. That's something that's incredibly important that I think we need to ensure is put in place in this province, that I know as of yet we haven't seen investments in that. That's incredibly important.

And we know from speaking with families that that's something that's missing, and that they would really like to see from this province that that is on offer. Unfortunately, again, that could not be included within the scope of this bill, but that is something that we do need to see, and that we strongly encourage this government to consider investing in.

This private member's bill, introduced by the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses), offers this government an opportunity. It offers them an opportunity to work together with us to better protect young athletes in Manitoba. No child should feel powerless against harassment and abuse from their coaches, and we are bringing forward a well-thought-out plan here in the form of a bill that can help to put a stop to a lot of sexual abuse towards our young athletes.

These are solutions that have come forward from many conversations with people in community. They've come from the community. And we're asking for this government to support this bill today.

In closing, I'd like to again thank my colleague from St. Vital for the opportunity to work together with him, alongside him, in developing this bill. And I'd, of course, like to thank Geordie Wilson for his work in pushing this issue forward, as well as all the community advocates who've done so much work in fighting for changes to better protect our youth in sport.

And I'd also like to acknowledge all those who've come forward with their own stories of abuse in sport

here in Manitoba for their bravery. Their bravery has generated a huge amount of new momentum for change in this province, and I'm hopeful that we'll see all members of this House support this bill, and that this provincial government will commit to the requests being made by community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you. This gives me great pleasure to be able to stand up and put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 244, brought forward by the member for St. Vital, The Protecting Youth in Sports Act.

We've heard a couple speakers from the opposition side talk about working together and collaboratively and that but, unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're not really seeing the actions or the words that are—that they are saying.

But on our side of the House, we have been working with many Manitobans—and not only Manitobans, but Canadians, on this issue. We know that this is something that has been going on for quite some time, and it's taken our government to move many initiatives forward in order to try to protect our youth, and to bring and to shine a light on various different topics around abuse, sexual abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse, throughout not only sport but also the education system, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Bill 244—and I appreciate the fact that both the member for St. Vital and the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), both basically said how this bill has room for improvements and has gaps, because it does.

We have been working quite closely with a lot of our education partners and stakeholders all across this great province of ours, as I've said already. Matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have actually sent out a letter, some direction, from the Education Department to our school boards, superintendents, secretary treasurers, school division principals and funded independent schools on some directives.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to table that letter for today because it seems that, once again, the NDP, instead of wanting to actually work together, they want to go on this partisan bent. That's okay. That's what they want to do.

We are not going to do that. We are going to be working together as we move forward to try to protect our youth, not only in sport but within education.

It doesn't take me long to get to this bill, which is fairly thin. But that being said, that just, you know, there's—as the member said himself, there are some gaps and there's definitely can be improvements to this bill.

So, under the explanatory note, it says teachers are exempt from these requirements when teaching the curriculum. I don't even understand what he means by that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have safety in regards to students embedded in the curriculum in the K-to-12 system.

Plus, as the letter that I've tabled absolutely is requiring all school staff—all school staff—not only coaches but all school staff, bus drivers, to take the Respect in School program by February of 2023.

Another point that both members failed to bring up. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot of good—great initiatives that have happened since we formed government in regards to this avenue in protecting youth, not only in sports but in education. It's unfortunate that a lot of these things had happened under the previous government's reign, and will continue to happen under different political stripes reigns in far as governments.

But what we're trying to do is empower the bystanders. We're trying to educate the youth. We're trying to educate coaches. Respect in Sport is mandatory through Sport Manitoba, and in schools we have Respect in Schools as mandated, and also Respect in Sport is mandated for school coaches as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm not sure if the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) is going to get up and share a few words that they would like to put on the record, but I'm sure they will have that opportunity in the future. Again, we're partnering, working together with our education stakeholders. I know that since the directive that the department sent out on May 11th, which I tabled the letter, the Manitoba School Boards Association has also strengthened that directive, and that comes with really good partnering and working together with people of—with some common goals.

And I know that the members opposite, deep down I know that kids' safety is at the basis of all this; I do know that. But the fact that they stand in their place today and talk about partnership and working together and all these types of great things, words. Their actions don't show it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm going to prove that once again.

So they forwarded a letter in regards to requesting a meeting—and this was after the resolution. This was after the letter had gone out to school divisions.

I actually think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this piece of legislation was written around the same time that resolution was, because they failed to mention all the good things that are happening within our school system and within our province.

\* (10:50)

Just recently, we announced we continued making investments in the education world. We provided \$150,000 for the Kids Help Phone line and a 24-7 mental health professional e-counselling and crisis-support program for youth, accessible by phone, chat and texting from any part of the province with services in English, French, Ukrainian, Russian, Pashto, Dari, Mandarin and Arabic.

Did any one of those two members ever say that? No. Because they did not necessarily consult with either myself or the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, which have been great partners working forward.

Matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in regards to the meeting that we had with the opposition on August 30th, the initial letters—and they know that where I'm going with this—the initial letters that they had provided to the Education Department and Sport, Culture and Heritage did not even include the critic, the MLA for Transcona, who is an educator like myself and—an added bonus—he was an administrator in the school system.

I don't see any conversation within their so-called team on the opposition side. I don't see the collaboration happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but you know what, myself as an educator, knowing that I need to work—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —together, non-partisan on this topic, I—myself and the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —took it upon ourselves to actually invite the Education critic, the MLA for Transcona, to our meeting on August 30th, plus—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:**—the response that we had—I know that member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) is having difficulty this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know what, she will have an opportunity to get up and put a few words on the record as far as their inaction and their lack of—non-collaboration over on the NDP side. But—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order.

I'm more than willing to accommodate the occasional heckle, the occasional comment, but to sit in one's seat and speak your own speech while someone else has the floor takes it too far.

The Minister of Education has the floor. I recognize the minister, and you have a minute and 20 left.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your interaction with the members here, and it's unfortunate that the member for St. Johns actually wasted 25, 30 seconds of my time. She will have the opportunity to stand up and put a few words on the record if she'd like.

But I'd like to just repeat that the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage and our colleagues on our side of the House, including the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), has been instrumental in moving various different things forward in regards to sport and protecting our youth in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** I know, again, that the member for St. Johns—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:**—just can't help herself. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

I'm drawing attention to the opposition benches. I'm asking if those voices on the opposition side could show some respect, please. And if the clerks could add 15 seconds, I'd be grateful for that—one five—thank you.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now I truly feel that we are talking about sport because you've now added additional time to my clock.

This is not a comical issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is so important. We value the fact that victims and survivors have come forward and shared their stories, because that's how we get to improve things here in the government and make laws and protections for our youth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've done a lot so far since we've taken government. There's more work to do. I look forward to carrying this bill forward.

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

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'm happy to rise this morning and speak to Bill 244, Protecting Youth in Sports Act, and I will keep my remarks very short, as I would like to see this bill go to the committee stage so we have the opportunity to hear from presenters and what they have to say about the legislation.

Just a few thoughts: I do believe that as legislatures—legislators, we have a responsibility and a role to play in protecting youth from vulnerable situations, and I believe that this legislation can play a positive role towards that.

I actually, really—I commend the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for bringing forward this legislation, and I would encourage him to think about even combining it with the resolution that he brought forward in the spring, or consider amendments towards the bill. Regardless, I think the bill should move forward in itself, though, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Couple thoughts that come to mind are the topic of boundaries. It's been said this morning, but there should be clear and defined boundaries between coaches and between students, as there should be between teachers and students.

Anyone who is in a higher position than someone, or who is in a training position than someone, there should be boundaries, clear boundaries. There should be training to go along with these boundaries, and I know we have training through Respect in Sport, and I'd be curious to learn a little bit more about what they have in place.

I know recently, Sport Manitoba and their sport framework talks about including a support line for youth at risk of abuse, harassment, bullying and hazing. I think that we need to make sure that this information is widespread, people are aware of it and know how to access it.

My colleagues have spoken about the Rule of Two and, again, there's always room for improvement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know I've also—at every opportunity I get, I try to bring up the idea of regulating therapy here in the province of Manitoba. I think that this could be a great resource, whether it be for students, or players, for

coaches, for teachers, anyone who may need those extra resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

All in all, I think that this is a positive step. It works towards protecting all parties involved, again, whether that's coaches, teachers, school divisions and students and players of course.

And happy to see it go to committee and hear from the public on it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other speakers?

The House is ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 244, The Protecting Youth in Sports Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

I declare the motion carried.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Acting Opposition House Leader):** Would you canvass the House to see if there's will to call it 11 o'clock?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call at 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

That means that this morning, then, we will recess at 11:58 a.m. We will call at 12 o'clock at 11:58, so a couple of minutes early.

## RESOLUTIONS

### **Res. 22—Condemning the Provincial Government for Failing to Make Life More Affordable for Manitobans**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The time then being 11, we will move along to private members' resolutions, and the resolution before the House is resolution 22, Condemning the Provincial Government for Failing to Make Life More Affordable for Manitobans.

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** Therefore—I move, seconded by the member from the Point Douglas, that,

*WHEREAS the rising cost of living is making life unaffordable for many Manitobans and making it harder for families to make ends meet; and*

*WHEREAS the increasingly high cost of living has resulted in higher numbers of people accessing food banks and other supports just to get by; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has failed to provide adequate relief to Manitobans who need it*

*most and has actually made their lives more expensive; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has instead chosen to provide relief for massive out of province corporations and billionaires rather than helping those who are most in need; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has hiked Manitoba Hydro rates every year since it took office, which has cost the average Manitoban hundreds of dollars more per year; and*

*WHEREAS this Provincial Government has introduced Bill 36 which will allow Cabinet to effectively set hydro rates at the Cabinet table and will increase hydro rates by up to 5% every year, making life even more expensive for Manitobans; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government froze the wages of thousands of workers for five years and refused to bargain in good faith, which means that they're not keeping pace with high levels of inflation; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government's mismanagement and interference in the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has cost each Manitoban hundreds of dollars; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has made the largest cuts to post-secondary funding in the country while increasing post-secondary tuition by thousands of dollars and cutting other supports for students; and*

*WHEREAS the Premier has refused to work together in a bipartisan manner to address the issue of rising grocery costs; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government's privatization of Provincial Park services has cost Manitobans more money; and*

*WHEREAS this Provincial Government has raised taxes on renters and seniors by hundreds of dollars per year.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for making life more expensive for the average Manitoban.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The motion is in order.

**Mr. Sandhu:** When Manitobans elect someone to represent them in the—in this House, they have expectations that MLAs in this House will be working for every Manitoban.

\* (11:00)

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Stefanson government is working for only a select few per cent of the people. During the summer break, I had a chance to meet people in my constituency, The Maples, and the community events throughout Manitoba. They have lots of concerns.

I do like to highlight a few of them, which I will start with the health care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, people are waiting much longer in ERs to see doctors because of this PC government's cuts.

Health-care workers are being mandated with overtime. Mr. Deputy Speaker. Recently, while door-knocking, I had a chance to meet a few of the retired nurses. They're willing to work in the health care again. The question is, will they be mandated to work 16, 18, 20 hours? They are willing to put, probably, eight hours, six hours of their time. Because of the mandated, they don't want to work.

People are waiting far too longer to get necessary surgeries. I recently met, on Neville Street, one of my constituents, who was waiting for two years to get the surgeries. Well, his surgery was last month, and then got putted on—putted off again because there was no nurses.

Short of nurses. Matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, province-wide health care is short of 2,400 nurses. The PC government is spending millions of dollars on for-profit private agency nurses instead of investing in making public health care a stronger and better place for nurses to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in The Maples, they closed Seven Oaks ER. In Concordia, they closed Seven Oaks—Concordia ER. They fired nurses. They left those nurses to go into the private agencies. Why would anybody will come into the public system when you are mandating someone to work 18 hours if they are urgent people? They will not going to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people are waiting for months for a health-care card. This is another issue that I have seen when I go door-knocking people are talking about. People are waiting for the birth certificate for months, marriage certificate, death certificate because of this PC's cuts to the civil servants.

Another issue is affordability. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba NDP offered the Stefanson government to work in a bipartisan manner to address the issue of rising grocery costs, but the Premier

(Mrs. Stefanson) said, she said no. She doesn't want to work with the opposition.

Actually, I—even in my caucus I said, even places like in India, when there is an emergency or when is—there is something serious comes up, there is meetings between the government and the oppositions. How come it's not happening here?

During the COVID-19, nothing was shared with the oppositions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, transportation costs is up 15.9 per cent in Manitoba, compared to 13–10.3 per cent nationally from last year. Price of gas is up 28.8 per cent in Manitoba. This is not considering the recent 20-cent increase that has went into it. Price of groceries up 10.8 per cent. Is hard for people on minimum wages making life meet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Residential Renters Tax Credit reduced from \$700 to \$525 by this PC government. On the other hand, you can see this is another \$175—a tax on those seniors.

PC government has hiked Manitoba Hydro rates every year since they took office. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do like to highlight what per cent is the hike every year: in 2016, they increased by 3.3 per cent; in 2017, they 'increused'—increased by 3.36 per cent. So this has gone on every single year since 2016 up to 20.88 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, recently we have seen that they have put in a new affordability package, but the problem is there's so many people are missing in that affordability package. Students: they're missing in there. Single families: there's nothing for them either.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, like, even people coming into, like, say, from out of—like, in province to Brandon University or into Winnipeg, those students are renting places. They lost on that tax credit. That's \$175. On the other hand, this is pretty much a \$175 tax on those students.

Recently, I also have received a few emails that Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program applications are not being processed on time. There are between six months to a year to process the applications. Those are in-province, in-country applications. These are not even out-of-the-country applications.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are the second lowest minimum wages in the country. That is only \$13.50 per hour. In recent committee meetings, we asked the—our critic from Finance asked if that will be going up. The Finance Minister's response was: this is only for

two times only; after that they will revert back to the previous programs.

So, living wage right now in Manitoba, in the city of the Winnipeg—city of Winnipeg, is around \$18.34 an hour. So, next year it's going to be \$15, so they will not—people don't have to rely on food—like, they can't even afford the food on this, with the—this price. They don't have to live in poverty when they are working full time with minimum wages. A living wage is \$18.34 at this moment.

I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am running out of time. I hope even the members from the other side, they can see it; they are hearing it from every single day. I am receiving the emails; I'm sure they are probably receiving the same emails too.

Hopefully, they are also going out into the community and listening to their constituents, what they want. What they want right now is the government that will work for everyday Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

### 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.

\* (11:10)

The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** The NDP bringing forward this resolution this morning—if the NDP is concerned about cost of living, perhaps the member could explain why the former NDP raised the provincial sales tax from 7 to 8 per cent, which affects low-income workers, low-income Manitobans, the hardest.

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** What we are talking about the resolution—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

I—*[interjection]* Order, please. I just want to encourage members not to heckle their own members.

**Mr. Sandhu:** What I want to talk about today is how, during these tough times—when our Manitobans elect us to send us to this House, 57 members to this House, we should be working for every single one of them.

Right now, the affordability is in crisis, so we have to work for all Manitobans—

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

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I want to thank the member from Maples for bringing this forward, and for listening to Manitobans, listening to those people who are emailing him.

Because I'm also getting the same emails. I'm also getting people visiting my office that are struggling every day to make ends meet, that have become homeless because they can't make ends meet, they can't pay their rent, they've been evicted. They can't keep their lights on and winter's coming.

We know that people are going to be in the bus shelters again and does this government have a plan for that? I don't think so.

But I'd like to ask the member: Why is it important to prevent Manitoba Hydro from being privatized?

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you for that excellent question.

Manitoba Hydro needs to remain publicly owned by Manitobans. This will ensure the hydro rates will stay low for consumers compared to the other provinces. Low hydro rates for households means more affordability bills for families.

Low hydro rates for businesses means competitive advantages for businesses to locate into Manitoba and stay in Manitoba. Public ownership means profit for Manitoba go to Manitobans.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I do want to just note that, with a few changes, all of these could have been written by the PC when they were in opposition describing what the NDP did when they were in government.

But I have to ask, if we're talking about affordability, why is there no mention whatsoever of people on EIA? There are over 70,000 people in this province who are living in dire poverty who have barely seen an increase in EIA since 1986.

Why, if the NDP is concerned about affordability, is there no mention whatsoever of the 70,000 people who have been living in poverty with barely a raise in over 30 years?

**Mr. Sandhu:** As probably the member from St. Boniface knows, as I—in my remarks I said, when



we send to this House, we should be working for every Manitoban. This includes people on EIA.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** The member opposite knows that I respect him as a legislator and I want him to be able to use his voice in this Chamber, but now I suspect I respect him maybe more than some of his colleagues seem to. Perhaps he should consider coming on over.

But, I'm glad he's been allowed to present this resolution today in the Chamber, but I am saddened to see a resolution that is completely incongruent with reality and has zero credibility.

The reality is that thanks to our government Manitobans pay hundreds, if not thousands of dollars less in taxes each year. So my question for the member is. Who in the NDP caucus would think so little of him to have him bring a resolution this detached from reality forward?

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Sandhu:** —thank you for the question.

Well, only thing is—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Sandhu:** —what we are seeing from this provincial government so far—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I repeat my earlier admonition that members should not heckle while their own members are talking.

**Mr. Sandhu:** As I was saying, we are talking about the provincial government that is not helping anyone at this moment. They are only working people—landlords that not in—located in—even in Manitoba. Polo Park is not owned by Manitobans. There's other places such as MTS, those are big—

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

**Mrs. Smith:** I just want to say, on this side of the House, we want to feed children in schools. We want to ensure that kids are getting the proper supports—educational supports—in school, and we want to ensure that people are housed in this province, and that they're getting proper mental health and addictions support, unlike members opposite.

So I'd like to ask the member, the NDP has called for a living wage for Manitobans, because no one who works full time should live in poverty, but that's what's happening right now under this PC government, under the Pallister-Stefanson government.

Why is it so important to have a living wage here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Sandhu:** Another excellent question by the member from Point Douglas.

The NDP believe that anyone who works full time should be able to afford to pay for a place to live, and put food on the table and have money for transportation and necessities of life for themselves and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So if the NDP's concerned about the cost of living, why then did they oppose and vote against raising the basic personal exemption, which helps especially low-income Manitobans?

**Mr. Sandhu:** As I said, I think, in my remarks, the NDP was willing to work with the PC government to set up a committee for bipartisan to resolve the issues, or even to see how we can help. Other provinces have helped by lowering the gas taxes. We were willing to help, but the PC wasn't on the table. They didn't want to get help from the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mrs. Smith:** This government has a track record of freezing wages for workers. They've been taken to court over freezing wages for government. They don't think it's—that they deserve to have these wages, especially our front-line working nurses, who have been working night and day to ensure that Manitobans are getting the health care they need.

So I'll ask the member, why is it important that this government not stand in the way of bargaining and making sure that workers get the proper wages that they need, and bargaining in good faith?

**Mr. Sandhu:** Workers deserve fair wages. Workers have the right, by law, to bargain collectively.

Manitobans feel that the PC government doesn't care about them, doesn't care about their health care, doesn't care about the roads, doesn't care about the kids, about our schools. Manitobans feel we are on our own.

In fact, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) said that, during the Omicron wave of the pandemic, Manitobans

have to learn to take care of themselves. So, the Premier wasn't there for us then. She was not there for us today.

Thank you.

**Mr. Teitsma:** You know, I'll remind the member that it's our government that took 35,000 children out of poverty, not theirs. It's our government that's sending cheques to families, that are making sure that families with children have—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —the money that they need at this time while they're facing rising prices.

Once again, I guess my question for the member is, you know, how does he think—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —the Manitoba public will believe him, when an NDP government raised taxes in every single budget 17 years in a row, but today they have a government that's lowered taxes every single budget we've ever delivered?

\* (11:20)

**Mr. Sandhu:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm just trying to take those—look at the notes here that I have written, and I'm sure since they took office in 2016, they have raised Manitoba Hydro rates every single year. That's 20.88 per cent. Every single year, every single year.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The time for questions is over.

### Debate

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

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I am looking very forward to the discussion today in the House based on this resolution.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this gives the opposition an opportunity to finally bring forward their solutions and their plans. So, we're very much—we are—you know what, we're very much looking for the speakers for the opposition not to just get up there and fear monger and do what they traditionally do, but to actually come up and tell this House what their solutions are, what their plans are. *[interjection]* So, you know what, I certainly appreciate that enthusiasm coming from the other side, and we can look forward to hearing some really constructive solutions from the other side.

Obviously, if history holds, we won't hear anything but fear mongering, we won't hear anything but other criticism, no solutions, no plan. But they'll have the opportunity to actually put something forward that can actually be scrutinized. So, look forward to that.

So, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this resolution. Affordability has been top of the mind of our government and always will be, and as we know that as a government we need to find solutions to support the people of Manitoba, which our government continues to do. We need to make the decisions necessary to ensure the protection and sustainability, quality service of all Manitobans, which we are doing and have done.

Our government has begun the hard work required to repair the damage that the NDP has created over their terms of government. 'Bankrupts'—almost bankruptcy, the golden goose of Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro. Unbelievable that they talk about affordability, and yet in their government, what did they do? They raised the PST. Our government, fortunately, had the wisdom to drop the PST. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Johnston:** Our government, Madam—Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on fixing the finances, repairing the services and rebuilding the economy as we've tried to do time and time again.

COVID-19 pandemic created more financial burdens with rising inflation, interest-rate hikes and other financial challenges Manitobans are feeling due to the stress of the rising cost of living. During COVID-19 pandemic of—the Province extended to \$45 million in direct financial support to Manitoba seniors. Through the seniors economic recovery tax credit, we delivered a \$200 cheque to each recipient and that was appreciated by the seniors of Manitoba.

Our government made it a priority to make life more affordable for Manitobans. That is why our Premier as well as my colleagues continue to advocate for federal action to ease financial burdens.

This resolution is a great opportunity to remind the House and members opposite that our party—that their party voted against affordability a short time ago.

Madam Speaker, my department coming forward with over \$50 million to support seniors; \$32 million for these implementation of the Stevenson review. Creating services for seniors; \$20 million to support

the seniors strategy, to ensure seniors' needs are fulfilled. And what did the opposition do?

They voted against it. They voted against it. Over \$50 million towards seniors, the opposition voted against it. Unbelievable. Unbelievable. And they claim that they want to support seniors and they want to support services for seniors; \$50 million, and they voted against it—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Johnston:** Unbelievable.

I am pleased to put some words on the record to our government's past and present initiatives to make life more affordable for Manitobans. An example of this is when our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) joined premiers of Alberta and Saskatchewan to call on the federal government to suspend the carbon tax temporarily. As well, our government introduced—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Johnston:**—Bill 36, so that Manitobans can have a stable and affordable hydro rate.

I find it quite ironic that the members opposite mentioned seniors in this resolution. As I indicated, they voted against the services that we're trying to provide for seniors.

I would like to remind the government—or, the government, that seniors have a situation where medication is a priority of this government to ensure that our seniors are always taken care of and serviced.

I would like to remind the House of the numerous tax hikes that the members opposite initiated when they were in power, and yet they continue to say they're worried about affordability for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker—or Mr. Speaker, we have removed retail sales tax on home insurance, personal services, preparing wills and preparing personal income tax returns. And in 2017, Manitoba introduced indexation of personal income taxes, and those savings are worth \$162 million.

I'm pleased that our government took swift action this summer to find ways to ease the financial burden of Manitobans who are facing high 'inflesh' rates.

Our government introduced \$86-million family affordability package, and we will continue to introduce different services to help the people of Manitoba afford in today's difficult climate.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** It gives me great, well I want to say great pleasure to speak to the resolution that is brought forward today, but unfortunately the content of the resolution and the reason for it is somewhat disturbing.

It's interesting that the Minister responsible for Seniors was the first one to kind of speak to the resolution, when his government has made life less affordable and more expensive on seniors here in the province of Manitoba. Including in his words, in his preamble, to be able to say and reference the \$200 cheque that I think for the most part was just missing the love Brian Pallister at the bottom of it.

And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a number of seniors that took that cheque and that payment—which was buying them off with their own money, by the way—took that money and just had to endorse the back and sign it over because their hydro bill was increased.

\* (11:30)

So it really did not have a net effect in a positive way on their cost of living and the affordability issues that they have.

And the other word—and the member opposite had also referred to the fact that, you know, this is—affordability is an issue in their caucus. But it's just not an important issue in their caucus. It may be on the wall, it may be a dry erase marker that maybe they erase once in a while and it's a buzzword they want to throw out once in a while, but the other word that they need to put in there is crisis.

Because there is an affordability crisis here in Manitoba due to the impacts of this government and decisions they're making, decisions they're not making and supports they're not providing. And that's clearly an out-of-touch way of dealing with the crisis, and it is clearly a crisis.

We have a crisis in health care which they would not recognize. We have a crisis with the cost of living that they will not recognize. And they will not even use that word, but it is. It is simply there and that's the reality for Manitobans.

That's not the reality for the top percentage that this government is representing when it comes time to their decisions and their so-called incentives and affordability issues and policies that they bring forward. It's not reaching everyday Manitobans and they're just simply not listening to that.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker when you see those—the—and they keep calling them the affordability payments, affordability cheques. That's a band-aid solution, a one-time, one-day-out-of-the-entire-year solution. In my constituency, affordability has been a crisis for years and years and decades and this government is doing nothing to help with that.

So these \$200 payments that they gave to the seniors, these \$200 affordability or \$300, whatever that's going to be depending on your family, these affordability payments that they're sending out as a one-time band-aid solution are not going to help. It's not going to help in the big picture, because you're simply—most people are just going to have to sign that cheque over to pay for their increased hydro rates due to this government, the increased cost of food due to decisions and non-supports from this government.

In one of my northern communities, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I've sat with families and they talked about going to the grocery store with one bag, just a simple white T-shirt bag and coming home with that one bag not even full, maybe three quarters full of groceries; \$250, that's how much that costs. One bag of one groceries to feed a family of maybe four or five or even bigger than that.

So I ask you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, how is that helping? How is that \$200 payment here going to help? How is that going to help that family pass that one hour or even that one meal? It's just simply not.

So this government needs to have a strategy brought forward that helps alleviate that crisis, alleviate that affordability crisis and that struggle that people are going through every day. But instead, the policies and the issues brought forward by this government are just reflective of helping the few, helping the rich few that in some cases, and in most cases, for that matter, don't even have ties to Manitoba but will take that money out of Manitoba at the expense and on the backs of Manitobans and at the sacrifice of Manitobans.

Manitobans have been asked for a long time now, especially over the course of the pandemic, to make sacrifices. And they have. Manitobans have stepped up and made sacrifices. But now it's time for this government to step up and help Manitobans, and they're just simply not doing that and that's just simply out of touch with the realities of what Manitobans are going through.

When you talk about affordability, it's not simply a matter of even just your paycheque, the living wage

that has been called for for a long time that this government just seems to ignore. It's about being able to now have that affordability across all aspects of your life and all aspects of your family: going to the grocery store, also going and cashing your paycheque, but also being able to pay your bills and to be able to afford to pay your bills. Manitobans simply just can't do that under the non-supports and the non-commitments from this government. It's very difficult to do.

And I realize members opposite are so out of touch with that because they're—they just cater to the privileged, cater to the few that have the means and have the wherewithal to be able to afford things in their life. But the simple matter, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, is most Manitobans are not that percentage.

Most Manitobans cannot afford to simply just pick up and go to the grocery store because they feel like getting something because, you know what, I'm out of whatever it may be in your cupboard food wise. Most Manitobans can open their cupboard, and maybe a lot of those cupboards are bare, because they simply can't afford food.

They simply can't afford clothing because this government has made life more expensive. More expensive across a whole gamut: health care, education, hydro, MPI, everything. So when this government sits there and touts the announcements and the payoffs that are given out, Manitobans can see through that.

Manitobans are very smart, very intelligent, and they see what that is. They see attempts by this government to pay them off with their own money and they see through that. And you'll clearly see that when Manitobans come forth, they speak their minds, they bring their concerns. And members on this side, in our caucus, in our reality that we have over here, not the fantasy world that the PCs live in where they think everything is great because their groups or their consultants tell them that it's so.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, is the reality for Manitobans, and I've used this term often—everyday Manitobans—is it's a struggle and it's a crisis, and it's a crisis every day, and there is little to no help.

There is band-aid solutions from this government that are not addressing the root causes of why affordability crisis exists today, and that's what it is. I know this government hates to use that word crisis, but that's exactly what we're in.

Affordability crisis, health crisis, they'll conveniently blame the pandemic when it comes time to

having to address and answer these issues, with phrases like, did you not know we were in a world-wide pandemic? Well, did you not know, would be my question to that.

You can't conveniently use that excuse to not support Manitobans, but at the same time flip that around and then shame Manitobans for asking those questions, shame Manitobans for bringing forth their concerns, shame Manitobans for not taking care of their families because they simply can't afford to; and they can't afford to because the affordability crisis that this government is forcing upon all of us.

There is no assistance, there is no programs out there. They're hoping that, you know what, we're just going to ride this out, it's going to go away, the price of gas will drop, the price of groceries will drop, the price of hydro will drop. They're not dropping anything.

They're not helping with anything. So, last—under the dark days of Brian Pallister you've seen: oh, here's a cheque; I'm going to ride off into the sunset; I'm going to write a cheque for \$200 to all our seniors and say, there you go; love Brian; postmark Costa Rica.

And the fact of the matter is, that did not really do anything for Manitobans. Manitobans looked at that and they said, what is this? What is this going to do? I'm just going to sign this over and mail it back to Manitoba Hydro because my rates have gone up, too, because of this government.

So this, I can't even take this to the bank. It's not even worth taking that step to deposit at the bank, because I can't go buy groceries with this, I can't go buy clothes with this. I just have to go back and pay higher bills—higher bills that are put forth by this government. So we have to go there and say this affordability crisis is a reality for all Manitobans—

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

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** You know, I thank the—my colleagues here for their support. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** I think they're expecting some kind of a show, but the reality is that, you know, my comments directed to the member were sincere.

I really do think that, you know, he has a lot to offer this Chamber, more than he's been allowed to

offer under his current leadership, and so I want to make sure—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —that his front bench knows that, and that they actually show him the respect that he deserves as an MLA in this House, because I do believe that he has respect, and I think that he should be respected.

\* (11:40)

And I also believe that, you know, during our questions and answers, he answered well. And I want to compliment—he had some good responses and showed some real strength.

Now, I also want to be fair to the members opposite. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** The opposition benches, they do sometimes come up with good ideas. They do. And it does happen. I would say that it happens more with the three independent members, in my experience, than it does with the 19 or thereabouts, you know, members of the NDP.

But what happens—what happens when a good idea, in genuine concern—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —is brought forward to this House? I could tell you, because we're a government that listens. We're a government that listens. And when we hear a good idea, we know it.

And guess what we do with it? We say, you know what, that's a good idea. I think we're going to do that. So that's why, for example, we're moving on our way to a \$15 minimum wage. Members opposite asked for it, now we're having it.

You know, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), was a long advocate for, you know, moving on catalytic converter theft; I thank him for his advocacy. That's why we brought forward legislation. I credit him for that; I've credited him publicly in a newspaper for that. And guess what? Now we have a 90 per cent reduction in catalytic converter theft. That was a good idea. We heard it, we put it into place, and now we have the benefits.

So I do, I really am grateful for the good ideas that occasionally come from the members opposite. They are, you know, a group that we can listen to in addition to all the Manitobans that we do hear from. And I

respect the member opposite when he's listening to Manitobans. You know, he's hearing a lot of the same messages that I'm hearing. There's no surprise there, right? We speak to a broad swath of people in our community. It's no surprise that we're going to hear similar concerns.

But the question is, what's the solution to those concerns? And I can tell you that the solution to those concerns is not NDP policy. No it is not. And, so I just want to say that when I, when you look at those members opposite and you see that whatever good ideas that they've had our government's acted on, or is in the current works of acting on, what does that leave them with? What does that leave them with? Bad ideas. That's all they have left.

Now, you know, the first member, the member for—the honourable Minister for Seniors and Long-Term Care, he was asking about the plan of the NDP and, you know, sometimes I want to encourage my own colleagues here to say, you don't have to have it drawn out in every single letter. I know that the NDP likely won't spell it out letter by letter as to what their plan is, but you can hear it in the questions they ask.

Yesterday, for example, very direct question asked by the Leader of the NDP. And what did that question clearly say to all Manitobans? If you would elect an NDP government, you can kiss your education property tax rebates goodbye.

There you go: \$500 off the table of Manitobans, into the pockets—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —that's their plan. That's their plan. Actually, I think, I wrote in my notes here, they have a three-part plan, and we can see what this—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —three-part plan is: it's raising taxes—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —raising taxes and raising taxes.*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Okay, order please.

The level of boisterousness is getting out of hand. The member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) has the floor.

**Mr. Teitsma:** I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for attempting to maintain some level of decorum in this plan—or sorry, in this Chamber.

Now, property tax rebates, I think we all understand the NDP plan is to take those away. To raise your taxes. The PST, well, we'll see if they actually are honest about what their plans are. I know that in the past when I've kind of costed out some of the suggestions that they've made, some of them quite ludicrous, I think the NDP might stand for nearly doubling the PST. Because that's probably what it would cost to afford all these kinds of things.

Now, the members opposite talk about Hydro, and I do want to take a moment, I want to take a moment to talk about Hydro. Because he's right that hydro rates, you know, slowly increase with inflation, and we want to make sure that Hydro stays as much of a Crown jewel as it possibly can.

But I tell you, the NDP government did more to desecrate that jewel than any government in the history of Manitoba. They did that by wasting, wasting billions of dollars.

Now, I'm a businessman, many of you know this. I understand the difference between investment and waste. So I will credit the NDP. For example, they built Keeyask, and Keeyask can generate revenue; that's all true.

And so, the question is: Did you build Keeyask for the price that it should have been built for or did you waste money? And the answer is, you wasted money; over \$2 billion of waste was identified. I can hardly think about how much actual waste—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —occurred.

And guess who has to pay for the \$2 billion in waste? Manitoba ratepayers have to pay.

And so it's understandable—and I think Manitobans understand that when you have such a significant waste of money, any other business—a privately held business would be struggling, struggling to survive. They would have to 'waive' prices. Why is it a surprise that Hydro asks to raise rates? They have to, because they have a massive amount of debt.

And now we're in an environment where interest rates are rising and we have members opposite who indignantly ask us what's going on when they are the

ones who saddled Manitoba Hydro with billions of dollars of unnecessary debt. Not to mention billions of dollars of, perhaps, you know, investment.

Those billions of dollars of investment—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —never received the scrutiny required by the PUB. We got a bill before the House—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

Enthusiasm is good, craziness is not so good.

The member for Radisson has the floor.

**Mr. Teitsma:** We have a bill before this Legislature right now that would require projects like the NDP went forward with to receive PUB scrutiny.

My question for the members would—do they support that measure? Do they at least support that measure that they couldn't execute on another wasteful, another wasteful project? *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** Sticking the bipole down the wrong side of the lake, wasted money building Keeyask, poorly—poor management. This is the legacy of the NDP and Manitobans remember it. They know it.

They know that they cannot put their hope and faith and trust in the members opposite. It will cost them. It will cost them dearly on every single table—kitchen table in this province. Money that is currently in the pockets of Manitobans is going to come right back out and go right into the hands of these New Democratic members if they ever formed government, and it's our duty on this side of the House to do whatever we can to prevent that from happening. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** Well, the members opposite—I wonder what their strategy is, because we've seen—we have seen over and over again, them attempt to mislead Manitobans. And they attempt—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —frequently in this House to mislead this House, to mislead Manitobans. This is their modus operandi.

And it's surprising, we—that the whole—they had the whole summer to get ready. They had the whole

summer to get ready, and even opinions polls would suggest that they should be, you know, ready.

And instead, they come into this House, they come into this House, and the words out of their mouth—how detached from the truth I cannot imagine. The premises that they start their arguments with completely devoid of logic and reason.

I believe that Manitoba voters know better. I believe that Manitoba voters will see through the NDP, that Manitoba's voters will know who to vote for in the next election.

I thank, once again—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —the Liberal members for their contributions. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** I've thanked them publicly, I've thanked them on my Facebook page. That's what good opposition looks like and you, on the other side of the House—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Teitsma:** —better remember that.

Thank you. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses)—my mistake. I apologize to all members.

The honourable member for St. Boniface. It's been a rowdy hour.

\* (11:50)

The honourable member for St. Boniface, you have the floor.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying something anyway.

Okay, so, now that that is over, it is a pleasure to put some facts on the record. I do want to just—one of which is apparently the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) has bought into some propaganda from the opposition that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was entirely responsible for the scrap metal bill, when in fact they—I brought mine in in 2020, fully six months before anyone else, so. *[interjection]* No, no we shouldn't—look I know, I know this is difficult—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** –I know this is difficult, because this–  
[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** –is not a place that usually lets facts get in the way of debate.

But on a more serious–but on a much more serious–[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** On a more serious note–[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** –this–the other thing about it–  
[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order please. I need to be able to hear the member; I can't hear the member.

The honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) has the floor.

**Mr. Lamont:** On a much more serious note, as I mentioned, this does not–we're talking about affordability–this makes no mention whatsoever of people who are on EIA. And I did a quick look–the fact is that with a couple of very small changes there–first they're all–over 70,000 people living on EIA in Manitoba.

That number has been going up since 2008. I talked to an advocate who said his first case was in 1999 because he was advocating for an individual who had been told that they would have their rotten tooth pulled. That procedure would be paid for, but the anaesthetic, the freezing, wouldn't be, and that to me sort of sums up the sadism of the EIA system in Manitoba.

But for one–for an individual with a disability, the provincial monthly amount is \$1,068. For an individual, a general assistance recipient, the provincial funding is \$771, and for non-disabled-single parents it is \$1,363, and for the most part this is not–what happened is that in 1992 these were rolled back to 1986 levels where they were frozen, and they've stayed frozen, mostly, for 36 years.

So this is why we have incredible–the depth of poverty we have in Manitoba, it's absolutely disgraceful that it's been allowed to carry on because I know that there is–that there are MLA expenses which cover more in groceries per month than what a single person on EIA is eligible for, for their entire life, for their rent, their cellphone, and everything else.

The other thing about it is that most of these, most with a few small details, almost all of these were done by the NDP as well. That, contrary to what–the PCs have this great myth that the NDP actually were spending money and part of the reason that they ran deficits was because they were cutting taxes for the highest income earners, just as this government has.

When you cut–which is exactly the same thing happened when they changed the basic personal exemption. They changed the basic personal exemption and the biggest savings were at the top; the biggest savings and the cheques.

When it comes to property taxes, there was an individual with a condo in Point Douglas who got \$8, but somebody in Tuxedo's getting \$8,000 or \$6,000. It's fundamentally unjust. This–honestly, this kind of–the fiscal management, run by this government, is the sort of thing that nearly tanked the UK because they said they were going to go forward with a massive tax cut and the IMF nearly had to step in because it destroyed their–nearly destroyed their currency.

This is the kind of fiscal responsibility we're seeing from this government, and it's shameful, and there's much, much more can be done. But there's no question that neither this government, nor the ones preceding it, have done anything for affordability because people have been struggling for so long.

Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you for trying to keep some semblance of order here this morning. I–

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** You're welcome.

**Mr. Pedersen:** –it's been a little difficult but you're doing a great job.

And first of all, there's not a tax that the NDP doesn't like and won't impose. We've seen this from history. They have–they increased the provincial sales tax from 7 per cent to 8 per cent. That came at a direct cost, especially on low-income Manitobans.

They bring forward a resolution that talks about the cost of living, but yet they voted against every tax measure that we've given to help low-income Manitobans. They voted against the basic personal exemption, which helps low-income Manitobans the most.

They're in lockstep with that costly coalition in Ottawa for a \$300-per-ton carbon tax. That will be–  
[interjection]



**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pedersen:** —the NDP is on record as supporting—the provincial NDP is on record as supporting a \$300-carbon tax. That will directly affect food prices, the grocery price that you pay at the store because that will have—it's just an impact on every facet of production of food that comes through, and we cannot afford this.

**An Honourable Member:** What are you doing to help? Nothing. People are homeless in this province.

**Mr. Pedersen:** The member next to me, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), just confirmed that they will get rid of the education property tax rebate. That goes—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pedersen:** —I'm sure that that will be part of their campaign slogan, too; taking money out of pockets of Manitobans, that's what the former NDP government did. They took money out of Manitoban's pockets to put in their own pockets, and this NDP opposition is headed the same way. They have no compassion at all for the taxes that Manitobans pay.

They like to talk about Hydro. However, they forget to talk about the \$4-billion overrun on bipole and Keeyask. With rising interest rates, that debt has to be paid. The NDP doesn't worry about debt, but Manitoba Hydro does have to deal with the debt that they've been given.

And with rising interest rates, it is going to be even more difficult for them to repay that capital cost—

those capital-cost overruns that the NDP oversaw because they did not go to the Public Utilities Board, they did not go to the Clean Environment Commission for Keeyask, for bipole, they rammed it through and sent a hydro line around the province.

If only the NDP would get outside the Perimeter and see the stupidity of Bipole III, the route of that, when they could have had a much more direct route and saving billions of dollars.

I was in the House, I saw the Finance minister Rosann Wowchuk stand and say Bipole III will not cost Manitobans one penny. And if you don't believe me, go back and look in Hansard because it's there. It's going to cost Manitobans a lot of billions and billions of dollars in order to pay for that lie. And yet, the NDP does not want to own up to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's not a tax that the NDP doesn't like. They are going to raise taxes on Manitobans if they ever get the chance. It's the reason we coined them as the spendDP, and it holds true now.

But they're not being honest with Manitobans and they need to be honest with Manitobans.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) will have six minutes remaining.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, October 6, 2022**

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Moses	3009	Sandhu	3020
Questions		Questions	
Lamoureux	3011	Pedersen	3022
Moses	3011	Sandhu	3022
Khan	3011	B. Smith	3022
Sala	3011	Lamont	3022
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**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**