



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Kevin Murphy

Published by Order of the Legislature by Hansard Reporting Services and printed by the Queen's Printer.

Available on INTERNET at <http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/proceedings/hansard/>

First Session

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018

Sixty-third General Assembly

First Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Mr. Chuck Porter, Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just before we begin with the daily routine, the topic for late debate tonight at the moment of interruption, as submitted by the honourable member for Dartmouth North is:

Therefore be it resolved that the Government of Nova Scotia and its Department of Community Services failed Abdoul Abdi by not assisting him in gaining Canadian citizenship while under their care and should, therefore, immediately enact policy to ensure the department seeks to obtain citizenship, in a timely fashion, for children in their care.

The late debate tonight, as submitted by the honourable member for Dartmouth North.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: On an introduction, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: On an introduction, permission granted.

MR. CHURCHILL: I very much would like to bring the attention of the House to the Speaker's Gallery where we are joined by a prestigious dignitary from our neighbouring province of New Brunswick.

I'd like to introduce the House to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development under the Government of Premier Brian Gallant, Brian Kenny, who is here today. If the House could join me in welcoming him it would be really appreciated. Good to see you, minister, thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We will begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, as the Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Law Amendments, I am directed to report that the committee has met and considered the following bills:

Bill No. 52 - Motor Vehicle Act.

Bill No. 66 - Volunteer Services Act.

and the committee recommends these bills to the favourable consideration of the House, with certain amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on Bills.

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 1004

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall:

(1) read and table the message from His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, transmitting the Estimates of Sums required for the Province of Nova Scotia for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, for the consideration of this House;

(2) table the Estimate Books;

(3) table the Government Business Plans;

(4) table the Crown Corporation Business Plans;

(5) table the Estimate and Crown Corporation Business Plans resolutions;

(6) deliver my Budget Speech; and

(7) move that the Estimates of Sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, being Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, and the Crown Corporation Business Plans be referred to the Committee of the Whole on Supply.

Mr. Speaker, for the information of the House, the budget will be presented on March 20, 2018.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury Board.

HON. KAREN CASEY: Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate - I don't have to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: You don't have to do that? Fair enough. (Laughter)

[The Estimates are tabled.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to direct the members' attention to the east gallery where we're joined today by a group of women who are indeed leaders in action here in Halifax. They are Diverse Voices for Change, Halifax. They have been working

with the Status of Women team on building a strong diversity focus for our upcoming Campaign School for Women.

I would ask the women to please stand when I mention their names: Lorraine Whitman, Nova Scotia Native Women's Association; Ann Divine, Black and Immigrant Women in Business Network; Rana Zaman, Immigrant/Migrant Women's Association of Halifax; Chanae Parsons, Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers; Huwaida Medani from HRM; Shelley Fashen, Department of Health and Wellness; Donna Standingready, the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre; and Joanne Bond, Pat Gorham, and Executive Director Stephanie MacInnis-Langley, from the Status of Women Office.

I would ask members of this House to give them a warm welcome. (Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Community Services.

RESOLUTION NO. 1005

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas 2018 marks the centenary of the beginning of women's enfranchisement in Nova Scotia, and International Women's Day on March 8th is a day to celebrate women's achievements and to take stock of our collective progress for women and girls in Nova Scotia; and

Whereas over the past century women have made significant gains in how we are able to shape our society - whether it be the struggle for the right to vote or striving for equal pay, women have fought hard to overcome adversity; and

Whereas women are making an impact as leaders in action in Nova Scotia, and there is still work to be done to move toward equality;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of the House of Assembly recognize International Women's Day tomorrow, on March 8, 2018, for the tremendous contributions women have made in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

RESOLUTION NO. 1006

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas March is Nutrition Month, a time for Nova Scotians to make informed decisions about their food choices; and

Whereas the food we eat prevents disease, heals us, brings us together, and fuels healthy communities; and

Whereas programs like Nourish Nova Scotia, the breakfast program, and the Mobile Food Market are working to bring good nutritious food to children, families, and seniors across Nova Scotia;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the House of Assembly show their support for Nutrition Month by encouraging their friends and family to make healthy food choices.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

RESOLUTION NO. 1007

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas *Bluenose II* Captain Phil Watson was presented with a 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award by Tall Ships America at the 45th Annual Conference of Sail Training and Tall Ships in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

Whereas the Lifetime Achievement Award is awarded to an individual who has dedicated their life's work to getting people to sea under sail, and who has worked to preserve the traditions and skills of sail training; and

Whereas Captain Watson has served as the captain of the *Bluenose II* for the past 16 years, which is a replica of the original *Bluenose*, the 1921 Grand Banks fishing schooner that won worldwide acclaim for its gracefulness and speed;

Therefore be it resolved that members of the House of Assembly congratulate Captain Phil Watson of the *Bluenose II* for receiving the Tall Ships America Lifetime Achievement Award for promoting a greater Nova Scotia, and for his contributions to the ship sailing community.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

[1:15 p.m.]

The honourable Minister of Immigration.

RESOLUTION NO. 1008

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas one year ago this week the Atlantic Immigration Pilot was launched, an innovative new program designed to help Nova Scotia employees fill persistent labour gaps and grow their businesses; and

Whereas immigration is one way we are growing our provincial population and helping Nova Scotia businesses succeed, which in turn is strengthening our economy; and

Whereas since the program launched, 324 Nova Scotia businesses have been designated to participate in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot and 325 potential employees have been endorsed, and 52 people and their families already have permanent residency through the pilot, and in the past two years we have welcomed 9,998 newcomers – the highest number in our province’s history;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this Legislature join me in helping to ensure that all Nova Scotian businesses are aware of the benefits of immigration and the various immigration streams, including the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, which they can use to help them fill persistent labour gaps - when our businesses succeed, we all succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I request waiver of notice and passage without debate.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 81 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990. The Children and Family Services Act. (Ms. Susan Leblanc)

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that this bill be read a second time on a future day.

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MACDONALD, AUSTIN: BANDOLERO CAR RACING CHAMPION - RECOGNIZE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, at 14 years old, Austin MacDonald of Braeshore is an accomplished amateur athlete in automobile racing who exemplifies dedication, professionalism, and fortitude. Since starting his career at 10 years old he has been the 2014 Scotia Speedworld Bandolero Rookie of the Year; the 2015 Canadian Inex

Bandit Bandolero Champion; the 2017 Canadian Inex Outlaw Bandolero Champion; and he finished fifth in a field of 127 cars, internationally.

Unfortunately, in 2016, Austin was sidelined with a traumatic brain injury; however, his passion for racing allowed him to return and win a Canadian Championship. He also recently received two awards in February at the Speedway Club in North Carolina.

Austin has all of Pictou West and his pit crew supporting him.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**MACLEOD, RENÉE:
HFX. WEST HS SPORTS PROMOTIONS COMM. - COMMEND**

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize one of the most dynamic students at Halifax West High School.

Reneé MacLeod is the executive liaison to the Sports Promotion Committee at Halifax West. She has encouraged students to get active by organizing a wide variety of activities each week, and I am pleased to report that participation has been at a record high.

Reneé has organized many intramural tournaments that take place in the gym and draw large crowds of spectators; she also organized Sports Week and other fun activities in the gym and in the cafeteria at lunch. In recognition of Women's Month, I would like to commend Reneé for helping to increase physical activity as part of health promotion at Halifax West. We should all be encouraged to make physical activity a part of our daily routine. Thank you Reneé.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

SABINSKI, MAT: RUNNER - ACKNOWLEDGE

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of local heroes today.

I would like to acknowledge Mat Sabinski. In 2012 Mat stood on the sidelines of the first Maritime Race Weekend in Eastern Passage. Two years later he ran the final three kilometres of his wife's half-marathon with her. This sparked an enthusiasm to do more for himself and our community.

Running for a reason was important to Mat so he started fundraising with Team in Training. This led to him starting a running club in Eastern Passage and then to become the race director for the 25,000 km Moose Run. Mat volunteers with Maritime Race Weekend and has completed both half marathon and marathon runs.

Most recently, Mat completed a 365-day running streak that was 2,946 km in total. The final was on a snowy day in Eastern Passage where he was joined by many runners who ran down the street with him so he could celebrate with his community. Mat described this achievement as the icing on the cake - probably that he didn't eat at the end of the run.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

ABDI, ABDOUL: STAY OF DEPORTATION - SUPPORT

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: I stand today in solidarity with Abdoul Abdi, who is currently facing a deportation order from the federal government.

Mr. Abdi came to Nova Scotia as a refugee from Somalia at the age of six. Shortly after, he was taken into the care of the province and over several years was placed in 31 different foster homes and group homes. While in care, he lost his language and culture. While the province acted as Mr. Abdi's legal guardian, the Department of Community Services failed to apply for and obtain Canadian citizenship for him and his sister Fatouma.

After he aged out of the child protection system, Abdi encountered issues with the law and was incarcerated. He has now paid his debt to society and is working in Toronto, but because he is not a Canadian citizen, he is now facing deportation to a country where he does not speak the language, has no family and, in fact, is deemed so unsafe that Canada advises that people do not travel there and if Canadians are there, they should leave immediately.

Abdoul Abdi is a victim of a serious failure of the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and I urge all members to support the stay of deportation and to act to ensure that this does not happen to anyone else.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**ACADIA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM:
AUS CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS - CONGRATS.**

MR. KEITH IRVING: I rise today to proudly acknowledge the outstanding performance of the Acadia Women's Basketball team at the recent Atlantic University Sport Championship tournament in Halifax. This exceptional team achieved a best-ever regular season record of 18 and two, and was consistently ranked among the very best in the country. They continued their winning ways in the AUS tournament, emerging victorious in both of their games including a solid 80-58 win over the University of P.E.I. in the finals to take home the championship banner for just the third time in 66 years.

I invite all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Acadia Women's Basketball team on winning the AUS Championship

and in wishing them well as they represent the region at the National Championships in Regina.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East on an introduction.

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Seated in the gallery today, we have Mr. Paul Russell who is the president of the Sackville-Cobequid PC Association. Please stand up and receive the warm welcome of the House. He's a dedicated community volunteer and a faithful political watcher. Welcome, Paul. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

COIG: ECMA AND JUNO AWARD NOMINEES - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH BAIN: When someone has talent and a love of music and is able to pass these traits along to an appreciative audience, the efforts do not go unnoticed. Such is the case of Coig, a group consisting of Rachel Davis, Chrissy Crowley, Jason Roach, and Darren McMullen.

They have recently been honoured with a Juno Award nomination in the Traditional Roots Album of the Year category. Although the nomination has come as a surprise to the group, they are no strangers at being recognized for their accomplishments. They recently received a nomination in a similar category for the 2018 East Coast Music Awards.

I ask all members of the Legislature to congratulate Coig on their nomination for the Juno award and wish them the very best, both at the Junos and in all their future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

JUDICIAL APPTS.: EQUITY-SEEKING GRPS. - REPRESENTED

MS. LISA ROBERTS: I wish to acknowledge a real accomplishment of this government, one of which the Premier often boasts. In its appointments to the bench, the Liberal Government has made real strides toward gender parity, equity, and diversity, and it makes a difference. I happened to see a story about one afternoon in court this January. I'll table this story and encourage the Premier to read it in full.

It tells how a woman was sentenced by one of the government's new appointees, Judge Brinton. The writer, unnamed in the story, puts in brackets "a Black woman!!" Judge Brinton, in sentencing the woman who had experienced significant trauma in her life, told her she was like a diamond as everyone is - valuable inherently, and she said that when you take a diamond and put it in a box, no one knows what is inside as it gets battered and dusty, but it does not change the value of the diamond.

The writer who is not named, but was writing for Black Nova Scotian News, described this as a powerful, beautiful afternoon in court. To be continued.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**PIPPY, JONATHAN AND ROWSELL, ROBIN: EMERG. MED. SERV.
EXEMPLARY SERV. MEDALS (RECIPIENTS) - CONGRATS.**

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medals were handed out during a ceremony in November. Jonathan Pippy and Robin Roswell of Bridgewater, were on hand at the ceremony, honouring their years of service, their commitment to their profession, and the professionalism they bring to their field.

I worked for many years hand-in-hand with our amazing paramedics, and have witnessed first-hand how incredible this group of individuals are, to be able to perform their duties, and the ability to adapt and adjust as the situation requires.

I'd like to congratulate Jonathan Pippy and Robin Roswell, as well as all paramedics who received this amazing recognition, and thank them for the dedication to their profession, and safety of all Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

NINE LOCKS BREWERY: 2nd ANNIV. - BEST WISHES

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 2nd Anniversary of Dartmouth East's own Nine Locks Brewing Co. Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of touring this brewery and meeting the owners, Danny and Shaun O'Hearn.

Danny and Shaun have been making their mark in the Halifax business world for years, and I'm so glad they chose Dartmouth East as the location of Nine Locks. Danny and Shaun and the Nine Locks staff have contributed greatly to our community, and it is a welcome addition to the neighbourhood. Whether it's cold local craft beer, or a shirt with a good pun, Nine Locks has something for everyone.

I am pleased to wish Danny and Shaun O'Hearn, and Nine Locks a happy 2nd Anniversary, and wish them many more years of success ahead.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

JUDICIAL APPTS.: GENDER PARITY, EQUITY, DIVERSITY - IMPACTFUL

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the worthy accomplishment of a series of appointments to the bench from qualified candidates from equity-seeking groups of which the government is rightly proud, is very much a shared accomplishment.

Credit goes, in particular, to the late Rocky Jones, and his allies who first initiated a transition year program, and then the Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq Initiative at Dalhousie University in 1989.

Activists today who are pushing for an end to street checks, and who identify racism where it continues to exist in our province, are paving the way towards future accomplishments, of which governments will boast. There are many diamonds in our province, and too many are still in battered, dusty boxes.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

**CHISHOLM, BERNIE (ANTIGONISH)
- ST. F.X. COACH: RETIREMENT - RECOGNIZE**

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, after an incredible 32 seasons, Bernie Chisholm is retiring as the Head Coach of the St. Francis Xavier University X-Men and X-Women cross-country track and field teams.

Mr. Speaker, Bernie has been coaching runners since 1973, so, as one can imagine, his list of achievements is quite long. He has coached athletes at Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School in Antigonish, the Antigonish Track Club, and at St. Francis Xavier University. His head athletes represent Canada at world championships, Commonwealth Games, the Olympics, and some with less notable athletic accomplishments, but his influence was no less appreciated - and I can speak from experience.

Before his time at St. Francis Xavier University, Bernie coached the cross-country teams of Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School to 57 Provincial Titles. Since 2004, his St. Francis Xavier University cross-country teams have won 17 AUS Banners - eight for women and nine for men. There have been 11 runners to win 14 AUS titles, including Antigonish native and three-time-Olympian Eric Gillis.

Mr. Speaker, Bernie is a member of the St. Francis Xavier University Sport Hall of Fame, as well as the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame, having been inducted in 2004. The AUS has named their Men's Cross-Country Coach of the Year Award in Bernie's honour. It is a fitting tribute to honour Bernie's legacy, and contribution to the sport of running.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Bernie Chisholm for his contributions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**TEAM HICKS (SHELBURNE):
PROV. MASTERS CURLING CHAMPS - CONGRATS.**

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a curling foursome from Shelburne who came together back in the Fall solely because Shelburne was to play host to the Provincial Masters Curling Championship at the end of February 2018.

With only a few practice games under their belts, and no expectations of winning, they surprised themselves and competing teams from across the province. Focusing on one shot at a time, and with tremendous support from the community, skip Greg Hicks, third Clark Acker, second Peter McAfee, and lead Norm Walleth won the title.

This victory has earned them the opportunity to represent Nova Scotia at the National Masters Curling Championships this April in Surrey, British Columbia.

Congratulations on this fabulous achievement, Team Hicks, and the best wishes to all of you at Nationals.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

**DR. CHADWICK WILLIAMS (EAST PRESTON)
- GASTROENTEROLOGIST: COM. CARE - RECOGNIZE**

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Dr. Chadwick Williams of East Preston, who completed his medical degree at Dalhousie University in 2004, and continues studying internal medicine in Calgary, and gerontology in Los Angeles.

He returned to Nova Scotia with his family to practise at the Woodlawn Medical Clinic and the Dartmouth General Hospital. He provides compassionate care to area residents and understands that he is a role model to youth in his community.

Dr. Williams recognized that he had mentors in his community while he studied to be a doctor. While he'll be the first doctor from East Preston, he would rather be the 500th. I applaud and congratulate Dr. Chadwick Williams for his tremendous success and the contribution he makes to the well-being of many Nova Scotians.

[1:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

**TEAM FORBES (NEW GLASGOW)
- WHEELCHAIR CURLING SILVER MEDALLISTS - CONGRATS.**

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, in early February the Devin Forbes team competed in the 2018 Harding Medical Wheelchair Curling Championship. Although they lost 9 to 7 in their quest for the gold medal and a trip to Alberta in March for the national championship, they were very pleased with their strong performance and are already looking forward to next year's competition.

Coach John Marshall and team members Devin Forbes, Bill MacKenzie, Philip Sutherland, and Kathy McIsaac were delighted with the support of numerous volunteers who helped make this tournament, hosted by the Bluenose Curling Club of New Glasgow, a great success.

Good luck to this dynamic team as they continue to practise and prepare for competition in 2019.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member Hants East.

**DOUCETTE, MIA (LANTZ):
BREAKFAST CEREAL FOOD DRIVE - GRATITUDE**

HON. MARGARET MILLER: Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to speak about a little girl from Lantz who has a heart of gold. Seven-year-old Mia Doucette was made aware of the sad fact that some children go hungry, missing breakfast because there isn't enough food in their homes. Mia announced that she wanted to help by starting her own personal food drive for cereal. A quote from Mia sums up her motivation. She says, "When I'm hungry my belly hurts. I don't want people to feel that way all the time."

After Mia's mother posted her daughter's goal of collecting 20 boxes of cereal for the local food bank, the community responded in a major way. Mia now has over 100 boxes of cereal and she is not done yet. She has her sights and her very generous spirit set on collecting healthy recess snacks for those less fortunate.

I think we can all agree that Mia Doucette and her food drive efforts are very deserving of our gratitude and admiration.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

**O'HARA, CLAUDE (LOUISBOURG):
SENATE OF CAN. MEDAL - ACKNOWLEDGE**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Mr. Claude O'Hara from Louisbourg on recently being presented with a Senate of Canada medal.

Senator Michael MacDonald made the presentation to several veterans on this occasion, which was held at the Louisbourg Legion. Senator MacDonald spoke and thanked the veterans for their service to their community.

Claude O'Hara has spent his life in Louisbourg and has also been a very active member of his community. I stand today to thank Mr. O'Hara for his service to our country and to wish him many more active years to come.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

**DIGBY AREA WELCOMING COMM.:
MULTICULTURAL FEST. - CONGRATS.**

MR. GORDON WILSON: I'd like to congratulate the Digby Area Welcoming Committee and their chair Jill Balsler for hosting the 2nd Annual Multicultural Festival. The first festival, named A Taste of Multicultural Digby County, focused on showcasing the diversity and the cultures of Digby County. It allowed people to share their culture and to celebrate other people's culture.

This year's festival focuses on our heritage and the cultures that help shape it. Participants could go to a presentation of the area's native and indigenous plant species or the history of la Nouvelle France, as well as meet the Kanaan family, showcasing dishes from their native Syria.

This festival is an avenue to emphasize that everyone is part of our community. With the success of last year's festival, it was moved to the Digby Area Arena and a bigger venue, which has allowed the participation of more vendors. As expected, more people came out that time of day to go ahead with the festival, a trend that I believe will continue this year and beyond.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct the attention of the House to the west gallery, where we have my constituent Sharon Kehoe. Sharon has 11 members of her immediate family without a family doctor and has shown enormous courage in speaking out on this cause. I'd like to thank Sharon for being here. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**OLD WAREHOUSE CAFÉ (AMHERST):
SUPPORT CAMP TIDNISH - RECOGNIZE**

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Nancy LeBlanc and her team at the Old Warehouse Cafe in Amherst.

The Warehouse Warriors presented a cheque for more than \$7,500 to the Amherst Rotary Club in support of Camp Tidnish. This is on top of supporting three campers, bringing their total donations to more than \$9,500. This camp makes such a difference in the lives of children.

Not only has the Warehouse Café raised money for the camp, they have also offered up their time to help clean up the facilities. These team members have shown how much they value the children and the staff at the camp.

All children should have the option to attend a summer camp, and this team of Nancy and her Warehouse Café help to make that a reality.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

**TERNES, DR. MEG:
RESEARCH BENEFITS CRIM. JUSTICE SYS. - RECOGNIZE**

HON. LLOYD HINES: I would like to acknowledge a constituent from the Rogers family in Guysborough County whose work will give all members a reason to be excited. Her name is Dr. Meg Ternes, and she is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at Saint Mary's University.

She is currently researching the telltale signs of lying. Her area of interest is forensic psychology, and she hopes that her research will lend a helping hand to the justice system. Meg states that lawyers don't always have access to a polygraph, but they do have access to someone sitting in front of them. Knowing more about facial, verbal, and non-verbal cues could potentially give criminal justice lawyers and others an important new tool for uncovering the truth.

Dr. Meg is a brilliant young mind, and she deserves recognition for her commendable work. Her research could be a game-changer for our justice system, and I wish her many successful years in her field of study, from which we will all benefit.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Victoria-The Lakes.

URBANIAK, TOM: NEW PUBL. - RECOGNIZE

MR. KEITH BAIN: On February 15th, CBU political science professor Tom Urbaniak launched his book entitled *Dignity, Democracy, Development: A Citizen's Reader*, at the Beaton Institute of Cape Breton University.

Published by Ron Caplan of Breton Books, the book is the result of Mr. Urbaniak's desire for a resource that would be accessible and engaging and would touch on national and global trends from both a Cape Breton perspective and a citizen's perspective. Mr. Urbaniak is well respected within the community and beyond as he shares his views of politics and policy locally, provincially, federally, and globally.

I ask that all members of the Legislature join me in recognizing Tom Urbaniak on his new book, thank him for his political contributions and more, and wish him every future success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

ANTOJO: (MEXICAN) RESTAURANT OPENING - CONGRATS.

HON. LABI KOUSOULIS: Recently a new restaurant has opened in Halifax called Antojito, located on Argyle Street across the street from the new convention centre.

Antojito is a vibrant Mexican-inspired eatery serving artisan tacos, Mexican cocktails, and authentic cultural cuisine. Submersed in what is a self-described stunningly eclectic setting, Antojito offers a welcoming environment and laid-back atmosphere.

I would like to welcome Antojito to downtown Halifax and congratulate my friend Joe McGuinness and his business partners on opening another successful business in the downtown Halifax area.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MIC MAC BAR & GRILL: 50+ YEARS IN BUSINESS - THANKS

MR. TIM HALMAN: Today I recognize the biggest attraction in Dartmouth East, the star of the City of Lakes, a pillar of the community that needs no introduction, the Mic Mac Bar & Grill.

This family-owned business has been serving delicious food since 1963. My daughters and I are regular customers, and I know a number of my colleagues in this House are guilty of the same. For over 50 years, dignitaries, celebrities, councillors, MLAs, Speakers of the House of Assembly, MPs, professional athletes, and even the mayor have flocked to the Mic Mac tavern for the kind of meal that you can't get anywhere else.

I rise to thank the Mic Mac tavern for everything they do for Dartmouth East and to thank them for serving the best steak in Nova Scotia. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

**BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS GRP.:
OPPOSES TIRE BURNING - GOOD LUCK**

MS. LENORE ZANN: The lawyer for a residents' group that opposes Lafarge Canada's plan to burn discarded tires to fuel its cement kiln in Brookfield says ministerial approval of the pilot project was flawed.

The decision does not fall within a reasonable range of acceptable limits, lawyer William Mahody argued at a Nova Scotia Supreme Court judicial review in Halifax on Tuesday. The environmental assessment is based on research into something other than this whole tire-burning business.

The Environment Act of Nova Scotia specifies through the precautionary principle that decisions should not be made on an experimental basis. At day's end, Justice James Chipman said he would consider the arguments made Tuesday, as well as briefs submitted earlier, before delivering a written decision later this month. Good luck to the residents of Brookfield, Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

N.S. GOV'T.: PRE-PRIMARY PROG. - APPLAUD

HON. LENA DIAB: Monsieur le Président, today we announced phase two of the province's pre-Primary program for four-year-olds. It is exciting that pre-Primary will be coming this September to Ecole Chebucto Heights and Springvale Elementary Schools, both in Halifax Armdale. With this expansion, more than 100 new sites across the province will be offering this free, voluntary, play-based early learning program. I'm glad to see that families across my constituency will be able to take part, and I know it will make a big difference for our youngest learners.

Pre-Primary is a fantastic opportunity for children to learn, explore, and socialize in a comfortable and supportive setting, with the guidance of trained early childhood educators. The experience helps provide children from all backgrounds with the tools they need for future success in the classroom. I applaud the Premier and staff, and Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development for the vision and ambitious rollout plan.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

**PEACH, LEROY (PORT MORIEN):
POETRY BOOK PUBL. - CONGRATS.**

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge Mr. LeRoy Peach from Port Morien, who recently published his fourth poetry book entitled *Rhymes of a Grateful Caper*. LeRoy Peach may have retired almost 30 years ago, but that hasn't stopped the 84-year-old from publishing what he claims to be his last book of poetry. LeRoy is currently working on his memoirs.

In addition to writing, he also runs his own small press, the Peachtree Press publishes and distributes his work. I stand today to congratulate LeRoy Peach on his latest publication and thank Leroy for all his community involvement in the community of Port Morien.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

**GATES, MARGARET AND LINDSAY (TIMBERLEA):
DEATH OF - TRIBUTE**

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the sad passing of Margaret and Lindsay Gates of Greenwood Heights in Timberlea.

As long-time residents of Timberlea, Margaret and Lindsay Gates were both dedicated to the community, giving tirelessly of their time and talents to many local community organizations, a true power couple.

They both volunteered at St. Andrews Anglican Church, Margaret was a keen supporter of the Canadian Cancer Society, and Lindsay spent much of his time working, teaching, and mentoring others in anything automotive related.

Lindsay volunteered for Scouts Canada, he served on the community monitoring committee for Otter Lake, and was a passionate and active member of the BLT Rails to Trails Committee.

The couple enjoyed more than 60 years of marriage and they passed away within 10 days of each other, leaving the community to mourn. I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in remembering two champions of Beechville-Lakeside-Timberlea..

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre on an introduction.

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery, I would like to introduce two good friends of mine, Scott and Lorna Cameron from Pictou Centre, from Trenton. Scott was the former president of Pictou Centre Association and is presently a school teacher. I

would like to welcome both of them to the House and hope you enjoy the proceedings.
(Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**WARM HEARTS (WESTVILLE):
PANCAKE FUNDRAISER FOR REFUGEES - THANKS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, Lennie White of St. Andrews Church knows there was a different slant on Shrove Tuesday this year.

The pancake meal was served with the purpose of raising funds for integrating a new family into the community. This initiative is the brainchild of Warm Hearts, a group from the Westville area that is assisting refugees integrating into communities in Pictou County.

For the past two years, they've been working on bringing a Christian family from war-torn Mosul. This family is currently in Turkey awaiting clearance to come to Canada. Sincere thanks and best wishes to Warm Hearts and St. Andrews Church for their tireless efforts in bringing another refugee family to Pictou County.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

**N.S. GOV'T.: EXPANDING PRE-PRIMARY CLASSES
- ANNOUNCEMENT WELCOMED**

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to join my colleagues in welcoming the government's announcement today that we are expanding pre-Primary classes at 130 classes in schools throughout Nova Scotia. Included in today's announcement are three schools in beautiful Chester-St. Margaret's, East St. Margaret's Elementary in Indian Harbour, Aspotogan Consolidated in Mill Cove, and New Ross Consolidated in New Ross.

There is no question that pre-Primary provides children from all backgrounds with skills and tools to help them shape a successful future

Coupled with the announcement yesterday that government is funding \$2 million worth of renovations at child care centres, and \$6.9 million to increase subsidies and add 1,000 child care spaces in Nova Scotia, this is ample demonstration of the government's commitment to meeting our election campaign commitments.

Mr. Speaker, when we work with our children earlier, we can address socio-economic and behavioural issues more effectively, and help our classrooms become better learning environments.

[1:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

**DROP-IN PROG. (WESTVILLE):
PRESCHOOLERS AND CAREGIVERS - THANKS**

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, a drop-in program for preschoolers is a huge success. Kids First and the library, along with the support of Westville Recreation, offer a program on Wednesday afternoons from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. It's free of charge and transportation is available, if required. Debbie Turner helps run the program.

Running from January 17th to March 7th, the Westville gym provides a perfect space for burning energy and having fun. Visits to the library for story time are also an option.

Caregivers participate and have a chance to network with other adults. A break midweek, it's a wonderful social outing for tots and adults.

The proof is in the large numbers that regularly attend, Mr. Speaker. A huge thank you to all who make this possible.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

**N.S. GOV'T.: ADDITIONAL PRE-PRIMARY CLASSES
- PLEASED AND PROUD**

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, parents, educators and this government know that the early years are critical for development. I, too, believe this, so today I was pleased to host an announcement of the Early Years program at Harbour View Elementary School in Dartmouth.

Today, Premier McNeil and Minister Churchill announced the addition of 130 new pre-Primary classes in 87 school communities. As an early childhood educator and a grandmother, I am proud of this government's commitment to give four-year-olds in Nova Scotia a strong start.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

KIDNEY FOUNDATION (AMHERST CHAP.): COM. SERV. - RECOGNIZE

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the Amherst chapter of the Kidney Foundation. Their March drive will kick off money to be raised for research and to support local patients. The Amherst chapter covers half the county as well, from Pugwash to Apple River.

Some of their members, like Sharon Gould, have been working hard at this for over 30 years. The Amherst chapter helps patients in Cumberland County, providing gas and lodging when necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Sharon Gould and all of the members of the Amherst chapter of the Kidney Foundation for their dedication to our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

**ROCKINGHAM S. SUBDIVISION:
STREET NAMES HONOUR CDN. WOMEN - APPLAUD**

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate International Women's Day tomorrow, I would like to recognize a new area in my riding that commemorates prominent women in our province's history. Wadih M. Fares, the President of W.M. Fares Group, announced that he will name five streets in the new Rockingham South, a subdivision in my riding, in honour of five accomplished women.

The women selected include: Marie Marguerite Rose, a West African who lived and served at the Fortress of Louisbourg in the 18th Century; Carrie Best, Nova Scotia's first Black Canadian newspaper owner; Eliza Ritchie, the first Canadian woman to earn a Ph.D.; Theresa McNeil, the first female high sheriff in Canada; and Ruth Goldbloom, the driving force behind the establishment of Pier 21 Immigration Museum.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this House of Assembly to join me in applauding Mr. Fares for his tribute to five women who achieved progress in Nova Scotia, despite the odds stacked against them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

**BALISH, SHEA - WINNER:
1st AND FUTURE PITCH COMPETITION - CONGRATS.**

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, Lockeport native Shea Balish won big on February 3rd in the 3rd Annual National Football League First and Future Pitch competition. That's a mouthful.

This competition is designed to stimulate new technologies that promote athletic performance and safety in sport. His entry earned him a cash prize of \$50,000 and tickets to the Super Bowl.

A graduate of Lockeport Regional High School, the 31-year-old has earned a Master of Kinesiology in Health Studies, a Ph.D. in the field of Study, Sports and Exercise, and is a Banting Fellow at the University of Toronto. He is also co-founder and CEO of

Curv.ai, and is considered to be one of the top three experts in artificial intelligence in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate and recognize Shea's hard work and tremendous accomplishments so far.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hammonds Plains-Lucasville.

**MARCHAND, BRAD (BOSTON BRUINS):
OVERTIME WINNER - CONGRATS.**

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, after Saturday's overtime win over the Montreal Canadiens, last eve I tuned in at the end of the first period of play between the Detroit Red Wings and the Boston Bruins. By the end of the first, the Bruins were leading the Wings by a score of 3-2.

Mr. Speaker, a certain Hammonds Plains native and TASA Minor Hockey boy, had tallied two assists. I awoke this morning to admire the box score, indicating that the Bruins had gone on to win the game again in overtime by a score of 6-5.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the House, I would also like to note that that same HP native and TASA boy went on to score a hat trick, including the overtime winner, making his game good for five points.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite all members of this House to join me in congratulating Brad Marchand on leading his team to victory, and becoming the Bruin's all-time leader for overtime winners.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

**HORTON HS JR. VARSITY GIRLS' BASKETBALL:
PROV. CHAMPS. - CONGRATS.**

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the exceptional performance by the Horton High School Junior Varsity girls basketball team at the recent Provincial Championship Tournament.

The team had a 17-14 record in regular season and were not considered favourites going into the tournament; however, through excellent coaching and tough defence they were able to win all three of their games, including a hard-fought victory in the championship game against C.P. Allen, a team that they were not able to beat during the regular season.

This provincial championship is the result of a tremendous amount of hard work, dedication, and natural talent, and all members of the team can take great pride in this accomplishment. I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating the Horton Junior Varsity Girls team on their well-earned provincial title.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Chester-St. Margaret's.

JABBOUR, NIKI: 3rd BOOK PUBL. - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate author Niki Jabbour on the recent publication of her third book, *Veggie Garden Remix*.

Niki's book was inspired by her Lebanese-Canadian mother-in-law, and explores the impact that immigrants from around the world are having on the Canadian vegetable garden. In addition to her book publications, Niki writes regularly for *Horticulture* magazine, and has had a popular weekly radio program, *Weekend Gardener*, for over 10 years.

Niki received the American Horticultural Society's 2012 Book Award, and is a busy and popular speaker at many venues. I invite the members of this House to join me in congratulating Niki Jabbour on her newest publication, and to wish her well in her future endeavours.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Armdale.

**AFRICAN N.S. HISTORY CHALLENGES AWARDS:
STUDENT SUBMISSIONS - CELEBRATE**

HON. LENA DIAB: Mr. Speaker, last month schools across Nova Scotia marked African Heritage Month, highlighting and celebrating the contributions that generations of African Nova Scotians have made to our culture, history, and communities.

Yesterday, it was my privilege to attend Chebucto Heights Elementary School, where the African Nova Scotian History Challenges Award Ceremony was held. These awards, conferred by the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute, were given to students in recognition of the quality in submissions they made in response to one of several history challenges related to African Nova Scotians.

I was so proud and honoured to join and present the awards, with teachers, administrators, and parents from across the province, and witness the accomplishments of so many, particularly in honour of a gentleman Delmore "Buddy" Daye, who was an iconic staple in this Legislature, and whom I had the privilege of being a Page at the time that he was here.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

CDN. PROGRESS CLUB: NEW CHAP. - GOOD LUCK

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Canadian Progress Club on starting a new chapter in suburban Halifax.

CPC Nova is a women's club that will cover the Bedford, Sackville, Fall River, and Hammonds Plains areas. They recently held their first event in February, in Bedford. I'm delighted to see this club get under way. Our metro region already has two Progress Clubs that raise money to assist women and children in need, as well as adults with intellectual challenges.

CPC Nova will be a welcome addition to the clubs already in existence, and I want to wish the members much luck with their endeavours in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

LYGHTESSOME GALLERY (ANTIGONISH): RETAIL CLOSURE - THANKS

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Lyghtesome Gallery in Antigonish ended its time in retail at the end of 2017.

Its doors were first opened in Spring 1975 by Jeff and Beth Parker. Lyghtesome Gallery was open for 43 years and has supported local artists. The gallery originally opened on College Street, sharing the building with another business. In 1984, the gallery moved to its current location on Main Street. Even with the retail end closing, the gallery will remain open.

Jeff and Beth have artists who have worked with them since they first opened. Lyghtesome Gallery is one of the oldest commercial galleries in the province. While the gallery remained small, it held a loyal customer base, high-quality products, and a reputation. The Parkers have enjoyed their daily interactions with the public and relationships with the artists.

As the retail chapter of the business has come to an end, I would like to offer my congratulations to Jeff and Beth for their success over the years and say thanks for all they have contributed to Antigonish.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston-Dartmouth.

SIMMONDS, TYLER: YOUTH ADVOCATE (MENTAL ILLNESS) - APPLAUD

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Tyler Simmons for his work as a tireless advocate for youth suffering from mental illness.

He openly discusses his own personal struggle with depression and anxiety as a means to encourage young people with similar health issues to get treatment. He spoke at the WE Day event in September 2017, which was held to celebrate youth doing good work in the community and individually.

I applaud and congratulate Tyler Simmons for his dedication to improving the lives of young people suffering from mental illness in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

**SENIORS WINTER RECREATION (DIGBY AND CLARE):
ALTERNATIVES - RECOGNIZE**

MR. GORDON WILSON: Despite the winter weather, it's important that everyone try to continue to be active during the winter months. For many, especially our older residents, this can be particularly difficult. It is cold, and the routes people usually walk may be snow-covered and icy.

In our area, the Digby Area Recreation Commission and the Clare Recreation Department have organized alternatives to allow people to continue their exercise regimen. Both have organized nights each week where people can go to St. Mary's Bay Academy, the Digby Regional High School, or École secondaire de Clare to walk. In the evenings, the schools are open. Friends can meet up in the schools, chat, and walk for an hour or so without worrying about slipping on ice.

I want to recognize the efforts of the Digby Area Recreation Commission and the Clare Recreation Department for everything they do to promote an active lifestyle, especially keeping us active during winter months.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie.

**GRANT, GEORGE (GUYSBOROUGH):
BLUEGRASS MUSICIAN - CONGRATS.**

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of George Grant, a lifelong resident of Guysborough.

George is now retired, but that has not slowed him down one bit. He is a very active Dobro player in the bluegrass community. George travels all over Nova Scotia, sharing his musical abilities with many audiences. He has played alongside many esteemed musicians, including Ian and Sylvia Tyson, Mac Wiseman, and Sonny Osborne, to name a few.

Recently, George received his Masters as Dobro Player of the Year at the Eastern Canada Bluegrass Awards, held annually in Truro. This is no small feat.

I would like to congratulate George on his musical accomplishments and thank him for his dedication to the bluegrass community.

These music networks that George plays a role in are the heart and soul of Nova Scotia's long-held tradition of sharing our heritage through song. It's talents like his that inspire youth to pick up an instrument and continue this important cultural way of life.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

RACISM IN N.S. SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BUSES - ELIMINATE

MS. LENORE ZANN: It's with dismay that I read the newspaper today to find out that there were several incidents of racism across Nova Scotia and also in New Brunswick with schools and school buses.

As one of the few Black students at her school, Sarah Walters doesn't feel like she belongs at *Madeline Symonds* Middle School in Hammonds Plains. The 14-year-old Grade 9 student says she's often called the N-word at a school that is ironically named after the first Black woman to graduate from the provincial Teachers College in 1928.

She is hardly alone, Mr. Speaker. Over a two-year period, officials at Nova Scotia's eight school boards recorded a total number of 1,611 discriminatory incidents - 53 per cent of them involving racism.

Mr. Speaker, surely it is time to end racism in our schools now.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those members' statements. We'll now get ready to move on to Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM.: CHILDREN IN CARE - COMPASSIONATE PROTOCOL

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Premier. (Interruption) I know. That's what I said. It would get mouldy.

In February 2016, media reported that a 16-year-old girl in care had died. Her mother said she found out about this tragedy through the news media. The Minister of Community Services said it was the responsibility of the police to contact the next of kin. The police agreed and they took that responsibility and they contacted the child's legal guardian, the province. All of us can imagine how painful it would be to hear this kind of tragic news on the news from a reporter.

Can the Premier confirm that a compassionate protocol has been established to spare families this sort of pain in the event of a death of another child?

HON. STEPHEN MCNEIL (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I don't know the specifics of this particular case, but I can assure this member and all members of the House and, indeed, all Nova Scotians that when a child comes into care in our province, our first priority is to reunite that child with their own family or find another family unit that will be able to nurture that child as they grow into adulthood.

At times, for those children that is impossible for all kinds of reasons, some of which are speakable and some, quite frankly, are not. None of us would understand the connections that happen in the breakdown in some family units. The fact of the matter is when children come into our care, we do become the guardian. We do everything we can to act as their parent and try to provide them a loving environment.

Let me say this to the people who work in our Department of Community Services who on a daily basis deal with not only children, but families in challenging circumstances. I want to thank them on behalf of all of us for the work that they do not only in our constituencies but in central office to ensure that we do everything we can to provide them with a caring and loving environment.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier for that response and this is difficult for me to say, but the department failed this family. Let me continue.

Earlier this week, the aunt of the young woman who died said two years later the family is still fighting to learn how the girl died - and I will table that report. They are looking for simply a meeting, a phone call, or some kind of acknowledgement from the department that took her into their care. The death triggered a critical incident review within the department but, after two years, the report is still not complete - two years later.

Does the Premier believe a family should wait two years to find out how their loved one died while in the care of the province?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Minister of Community Services to respond.

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question and I want to assure her while I cannot speak to individual cases, any time there is the death of a child who is in care of the province, a report would in fact be published if the death was the result of any abuse or neglect while the child was in the care of the province. There is also a procedure there if there is a sudden injury or an unexpected death as well.

MS. MACFARLANE: I think we can all sit here and imagine what it would be like if it was one of our loved ones - two years without any type of dialogue or contact. At the Standing Committee on Community Services in January, staff in the Department of Community Services said the department has been considering establishing an office of child and youth advocate - kind of on and off, they said they'd been "considering" it the last few years. Child advocates in some parts of the province want the government to establish a child advocate to speak out and advocate on behalf of our young people, and now the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers also wants Nova Scotia to have a child and youth advocate.

So, my question to the Premier is, will he confirm that there is going to be money in this upcoming budget to establish an independent child and youth advocate office?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I will let our budget speak for itself. I'm looking forward to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board standing in this House to table her budget. But I want to assure the honourable member and all members of this House that when a child comes into care to the province, that we know that they were in permanent care, we do everything we can to provide them a nurturing and loving environment to support them the best we can.

In many ways, there are very tragic circumstances some of these children are brought into our care for - some of them circumstances that no member in this House would think even possible that some children are born into. All of us, most of us, have come from a nurturing, loving environment. We become that as parents to provide the support we can. We face the reality that in some cases there are children who have not experienced that and we need to do our best to ensure that the system is there to respond to those children as they continue to go forward.

That is one of the things that we continue to do as a government - not just this government, but every government in the history of this province has attempted to respond to the many challenges that are facing us. Let me again say to you, there are front-line men and women in this province, day in and day out, who take heartache stories home with them to try to respond to the needs of these children. We are doing all we can, as every government has, to ensure that we support them.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

PREM. - LONG-TERM CARE: WAITING LIST - EXPLAIN

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is about long-term care. According to data obtained by our caucus, over the course of the last five years, 1,877 patients who were admitted to hospital awaiting transfer to long-term care, passed away while waiting for a nursing home bed in Nova Scotia.

Can the Premier explain why so many people have had to wait so long in hospital for placement in a nursing home that they have passed away before they got there?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I am not going to question his statistics. We know that there are many people in this province who have told us they continue to want to remain in their homes for as long as possible, which is why we continue to invest in home care and support, and why we have those supports in and around individuals to be able to stay in the home for as long as possible.

We know at some point that people will transition into long-term care, and we want to thank those who partner with us to make sure we continue to provide that opportunity. Over the last number of years, we have seen the wait-list continue to drop. We will continue to work to ensure that everyone is placed in a nursing home bed as quickly as possible, but at the same time, we are going to respond to what most Nova Scotians tell us, and that is the fact that they want to stay at home for as long as possible. We are going to continue to invest in home care.

MR. BURRILL: In 2013, when the Liberal Government took office, they did not proceed with the NDP plan at the time to build 350 additional nursing home beds. Five years later, we have 1,128 people on the waiting list for nursing home placements. What does the Premier say to those 1,128 people waiting for nursing home beds in our province?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. What I'm going to say to those people is that when we came in in 2013, the wait-list under that government was over 2,000 people.

We know that 1,000 is too many. We are going to continue to work with those families to ensure that they have access to long-term care, but one of the things we have heard in every corner of this province is that people want to stay at home for as long as possible. We are going to continue to work with home care providers to ensure that we continue to provide that support inside of the system.

We are working with families on the Caregiver Benefit to make sure their loved ones are provided that support at home for as long as possible. At the same time, we know

that at some point people will transition into long-term care. We want to make sure they have that opportunity.

MR. BURRILL: Over the past five years, 718,230 bed days in our hospitals were used for people who were not hospital patients at all, but rather those waiting for placements in nursing homes. The obvious result is a shortage of available acute care spaces.

I ask the Premier if he will commit to opening the new long-term care beds that the previous NDP Government had planned to open before he came to power?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. It is unfortunate, in many ways, the question coming from the New Democratic Party, who ended up putting this province in such a desperate financial state at the time. We are continuing to do our best - continue to make sure that we continue to respond to the long-term care needs of Nova Scotians. We continue to respond to ensure that the issues facing Nova Scotians when it comes to home care - we've heard from them (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: We continue to respond to the needs of Nova Scotians who tell us they want to stay at home for as long as possible. We will continue to make that investment in home care. We will continue to ensure that we support families with the Caregiver Benefit, and find ways to actually respond to what Nova Scotians want, which is to be able to stay at home for as long as possible, surrounded by their loved ones.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

EECD - COURTESY BUS STOPS: REMOVAL - APPROPRIATE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education and Early Child Development. Yesterday, we learned that after March Break, the Halifax Regional School Board will be eliminating a series of courtesy bus stops that were addressing some unintended gaps under the province's 3.6 km guidelines.

One family had actually made arrangements for their child to attend after-school care but had relied on these courtesy stops to deliver their child safely to that after-school care. Without the stop, this five-year-old will now have to walk two kilometres on a route with no sidewalks.

Is the minister of the opinion that a five-year-old walking two kilometres without sidewalks is safe and appropriate?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: In fact, that is one of the inconsistencies that we want to address by unifying the system because we do have different transportation policies from one region to the next in the province.

As the member stated, this was a decision made by the school board. Of course when the governance structure of the system changes, transportation policies will be a focus of ours in terms of ensuring that we are doing our very best to get our kids to and from school safely.

MS. MACFARLANE: The minister cannot continue to keep hiding behind the school boards in this province, but we know that will change. Mr. Speaker, this House has been debating a substantial piece of legislation designed to change the way our schools are administered. It is the belief of the government that local elected school boards are not necessary and that the best thing for the education system is to centralize the decision making. It is what the government wants and it seems, though, that they may just get what they want this time around.

My question for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development is, once Bill No. 72 receives Royal Assent, will he commit to using his new centralized powers to immediately reinstate the courtesy bus stops cancelled by the HRM school board?

MR. CHURCHILL: Of course student safety, getting to and from school safely is an absolute priority for us. The member has made the case that there are variances in how our transportation policy is being implemented, from one region to the next. This is one of the challenges we are looking to address with these changes, with modernizing our education system and unifying it.

I do want to clarify something for the member, though. There are also elements of decentralization happening to ensure there is more site management happening with principals, with VPs, more decision making authority that is actually given back to communities. Mr. Speaker, that along with having consistent best practices applied from one end of this province to the next will better improve the situation for our kids.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

EECD: PROV. ADVISORY COMM. - SECRET MEETINGS

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. This government is poised to eliminate democratically elected school boards with the stroke of a pen. Also concerning is the fact that the Provincial Advisory Committee, meant to advise the minister on matters related to education, will be meeting in secret. School board meetings are open to the public but that will not be the case for this advisory body of political appointees.

We've seen how well this has served the public interest in health and I question why we'd be making the same mistake in education. Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain how closed door meetings by appointed representatives are in the best interests of our children.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: As is consistent with any advice that is given to Cabinet, this has been consistent with every single Party that has served on government benches. Advice to Cabinet is considered confidential. That is consistent in the Westminster system and the reason for that is so that people giving advice can do so forthrightly, speak frankly and openly in providing that advice and to protect them, so this is consistent with the Westminster parliamentary system across the Commonwealth and has been consistent practised with every single government that has served on these benches.

MS. CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I am heartened by the commitment of the people across the aisle to democracy and the Westminster system.

Mr. Speaker, over and over again our caucus has raised concerns about the diverse local voices being silenced by this government's education reforms. It is our understanding that the transition team established by the minister will include the school board chairs and the chair of the Council on African Canadian Education.

However, African Nova Scotian school board caucus, the seven members elected by the African Nova Scotians of this province, were not included on the list of those who were asked to put forward designates for this transition team.

[2:15 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, the Halifax Regional School Board African Nova Scotian member Archy Beals has said that the caucus independently put forward a list of names to the minister anyway but they have heard no response. Can the minister explain why the elected African Nova Scotian School Board caucus was excluded from the transition team, and will he contact Mr. Beals to address his concern?

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the transition team has not been put together yet. In speaking with the board chairs, they are interested in assisting with the transition, but that of course, won't happen until after the law is passed, and we are entering into the period of transition.

I know that the African Nova Scotian School Board caucus has submitted three names for that transition team, all three of those members will be on the transition team once that transition team is established.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

TIR - EAST CHEZZETCOOK: SEA BREACH - ACTION

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Stormy weather over the last few weeks has shown Nova Scotia the strength of Mother Nature. High seas closed Route 207 at Lawrencetown Beach, but a little farther east, in East Chezzetcook, local residents are concerned because the sea breached a berm for the second time this year. Residents say that this week's breach was significant and allowed salt water to fill a freshwater lake. They believe that the minister's department should've acted last month, when the first breach occurred.

Mr. Speaker, my question is - I understand staff from their department surveyed the berm very recently - why did it take so long for the department to act when the first breach occurred in January?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, let me say that the department is constantly dealing with the issues of coastal erosion along our coast. As I've mentioned previously, because of the nature of the way the roads have evolved in Nova Scotia, many of our roads are right at sea level, because that was the easiest way to build them 100 years ago when they were being established.

The primary department that is actually dealing with that is my colleague at Department of Natural Resources, and we have been attending the meetings both at Chezzetcook and Route 207 to add what we can, when it becomes our turn to act.

MR. MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the fact that the roads have been built 100 years ago, it's just nice if they'd get some action in the meantime, because it's been 100 years since you did anything to them.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

I'd like to remind the honourable member not to address fellow members directly.

The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg.

MR. MACLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm listening carefully, by the way. (Laughter)

MR. MACLEOD: Residents of East Chezzetcook worry every time there is stormy weather in the forecast. They are concerned that each storm puts the lake, the beach, and indeed their properties in jeopardy. Worried residents believe that the department dragged its feet on finding a solution to this problem.

So, my question for the minister is simple. Will the minister commit today to giving residents of East Chezzetcook some peace of mind, and tell them when the berm will be repaired?

MR. HINES: Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the member for that area who has sprung to action and coordinated an extensive meeting of all the parties concerned associated with that, including our department. The matter is well in hand. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

Let the honourable member speak. (Laughter)

The honourable Minister of Transportation Infrastructure Renewal.

MR. HINES: With a breach, which is quite a distance away from the road, we are actually reviewing a significant culvert that's there, that may require some resizing. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm a little dismayed recently that the member opposite has spurned my invitation to come down and visit with him, by putting conditions on the travel that we would be involved with in his area, and I'm reconsidering that invitation that I sent to go down there, because I need a guide, and he seems to be saying he's not going to help me. (Laughter)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens-Shelburne.

TIR - WEST. HEAD MERCY POINT LOOP: REPAIRS - COMMITMENT

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

When travelling the Western Head Mercy Point Loop, there's a section of road in Scots Bay that has been compromised for quite some time, and since the storm surge this past weekend, it has become even worse.

At this spot, the shoulder has sustained serious erosion and it appears to be so unsafe that residents are asking for an engineer to comment on the current road condition. School buses travel along this road, but it has become so dangerous that one resident drives her child to school in fear that the bus will slip off the road.

My question is, will the minister commit to the constituents of Queens-Shelburne to have this dangerous section of road repaired before this erosion causes a tragedy?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we are certainly cognizant of the threat that the recent storm surges have caused in the province, and our

team is out there working diligently to assess these situations and to prioritize them and to take corrective action.

MS. MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, as the minister was told last year during Estimates, the causeway at Western Head has required attention for quite some time now. During a large storm several years ago the roadway washed out and TIR's solution was to build a large cement block seawall. Approximately two years ago during a significant storm the new seawall was breached and last December the roadway and asphalt sustained further damage resulting in the causeway being closed.

Unfortunately, due to high winds and storm surges this past weekend, the roadway has sustained even further damage making the situation more dangerous. My question is, can the minister guarantee that this issue that has been ongoing far too long will be addressed and rectified no later than June so residents and tourists can use this area without fear of encountering this dangerous section of highway?

MR. HINES: Mr. Speaker, one of the advantages that we have in Nova Scotia is that we are a virtual island and we are on all sides subject to the ebb and flow of the tides, as it were, and the storms. In managing that, as I mentioned before, with all our coastal highways we're constantly reviewing our priorities and where we will act. I'll undertake to the member that we will take a look at the Western Head causeway and see if it has moved up the priority list.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

H&W - HOME CARE PROVIDERS: SERVICE HOURS - VERIFICATION

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, it was revealed that this government is falling down on the job when it comes to monitoring home care service providers. In his report in November 2017, the Auditor General sharply criticized the Department of Health and Wellness and the Nova Scotia Health Authority for failing to verify service hours billed by home care providers. The Auditor General found that the accuracy of hours was verified by neither the Department of Health and Wellness nor the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

He identified that because there is no basic oversight, this represents a high risk of fraud. This was originally raised with the department in 2016, but as of November 2017, the problem still had not been fixed. I will table that document. My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness is, can he provide a progress update on the necessary controls to assess hours billed by health care providers?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, since we formed government in 2013, we have recognized that Nova Scotians' priority for care has been care at home when possible. We've made significant investments there, we've virtually

eliminated wait-lists in many parts of the province, and with respect to the recommendations of the Auditor General, we continue to work to make progress towards those recommendations in all aspects.

MS. SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, this is about accountability and setting up processes so that we know what's being billed is what's being paid. Because there is no process in place, we don't know if it's accurate. For example, I had someone tell me last week that it's very common for providers to call and say they're not showing up that day. My question would be, is that provider still being paid, because right now there's no process for us to know that?

The other thing to identify is that the process is different if the business is for-profit or if it's not-for-profit. Even the processes are different: one puts their bills into the Department of Health and Wellness, and one puts them into the Nova Scotia Health Authority. My question to the minister is, can he confirm that steps have been taken since the Auditor General's Report to ensure taxpayers' money is being wisely spent?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity to highlight that, in fact, many steps have been taken to move forward and improve the delivery of data collection and support in our home care service providers. This will help us in responding to the Auditor General's recommendations.

The member opposite did make reference to a lot of the variances that take place in this area, in this field. That's because this service has evolved over many years, and we're trying to pull it together so that we do get standard services and practices right across this province.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

STATUS OF WOMEN: SCH. BOARD REMOVAL - DISENFRANCHISING

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. This government has been told again and again that the elimination of elected school boards is a setback for women's participation in politics.

Only 17 of the 50 members of this House are women; that's 34 per cent. In the government's Cabinet, only five of 17 ministers are women; that's 29 per cent. Nova Scotia has 11 federal Members of Parliament and only one of them is a woman; that's 9 per cent.

These are troubling numbers, Mr. Speaker. In contrast, 55 per cent of Nova Scotian women make up school boards. My question for the minister is, isn't she concerned that eliminating elected school boards further disenfranchises women in Nova Scotia?

HON. KELLY REGAN: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I do want to point out that in fact this Premier has appointed the most women ever to the Executive Council of any Premier of all times, Mr. Speaker.

I would also note, Mr. Speaker, that we do have a campaign college coming up very soon. I spoke about this earlier today, there is a campaign college for women who are interested in running for office. I would urge all members of this House, if they know of a woman who might want to run for office or who might to manage a campaign, come out to this campaign college. It is, bar none, the best campaign college I've ever been to.

MS. ZANN: Well unfortunately that college won't help school board members. When the Premier is asked why he supports removing the 57 elected women from their roles, he says he's proud of his record of supporting women. Yet over and over again women have been the most negatively impacted by this government's actions.

Government bills have attacked home support workers, community and health workers, nurses and the lowest-paid front-line workers. Over 90 per cent of the thousands of Nova Scotians attacked by these laws are women and now the government is attacking teachers and school board officials, also the majority of whom are women. Perhaps the Premier is a little confused about his record because he is not aware that women are actually much more than just mothers and daughters.

My question for the Minister of the Status of Women is, does the minister really agree with the Premier that the elimination of 57 elected women is just nothing to be concerned about?

MS. REGAN: I would point out to my colleague that while she does sniff at the 34 per cent that women now occupy of the seats here in this House, it is in fact the highest number of women ever elected here in Nova Scotia. I would say that the Advisory Council on the Status of Women campaign college helped women get into this Chamber and we know there are because they are sitting here today.

I would also point out that this Premier appointed the first female Deputy Premier, the second woman Deputy Premier, the first female or woman Attorney General, the second female Attorney General and we finally have gender parity on the bench because of the work done by this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

EECD - IAN FORSYTH SCHOOL: POOR AIR QUALITY - CONCERN

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, last night I was troubled to learn that parents of Ian Forsyth Elementary School students were informed through a Facebook group that

the school had failed air quality checks in February. Several staff and students have gotten ill from unsafe levels of benzene in the air, a known carcinogen.

HRSB staff is currently stating the air is safe yet students and staff are sick. This morning I visited the school. It is the responsibility of the school and school boards to update parents on situations like these so they can make informed decisions on the safety of their children.

My office has contacted the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the superintendent of the HRSB, Chair of HRSB, the HRSB African Nova Scotian representative and the NSTU. Action needs to be taken immediately to determine the cause of this, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Education provide the House and parents of Dartmouth East an update on the status of Ian Forsyth Elementary School?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I did receive these reports as well. According to the regional office, the air quality is safe. However, I do know that they are conducting further sample testing today and of course myself, the regional office and the public need to have the best information possible so we know what the risks are so we can act. At this particular point in time, the best information is telling us that the air quality is safe.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. HALMAN: I appreciate the Education and Early Childhood Development Minister's response; however, my office is still receiving calls from parents that their children are sick. We know many children and staff are sick right now, and we don't know how many more may come down with symptoms until we get to the bottom of this situation.

Given that there is a family doctor crisis in our province, and our walk-in clinics in Dartmouth East are often at capacity, will the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development commit today to working with public health officials to investigate and offer health care supports directly to the families impacted by this?

MR. CHURCHILL: As I mentioned in my previous response, there is further sample testing happening today. Obviously, the evidence, the science, the facts of the air quality are of paramount interest for us to make sure that that air quality is safe. Student safety is the absolute priority for each and every single person in the education system. In this particular case, I believe the proper steps are being taken to ensure that kids at Ian Forsyth are well protected.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

EECD - 2015 ACTION PLAN: GAELIC EDUCATION - SUPPORT

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: My question is for the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. In the midst of all this confusion this government has ignited over education, it has forgotten to include Nova Scotia Gaels.

In the 2015 Action Plan for Education, there was an emphasis placed on improving curriculum to reflect the distinct culture and history of this province's Acadians, Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, and Gaels. But in the Raise the Bar report, there was not a single instance of the words "Gaelic" or "Gaels." In the education reforms that we see this government putting forward, there is nothing either.

Have centuries of ethnic cleansing worked? Does the minister believe that Gaels have been assimilated? Is this why Gaels appear to be so irrelevant in these discussions?

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I thank the member for the question. I know that this issue is an ongoing concern and priority for him and his community.

I did receive notification from the Gaels that they did not feel that they were properly consulted, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the recommendations that came forward in Dr. Glaze's report. I think we need to make sure we have an open line of communication with that community and see what they need. I know that they do benefit from the Gaelic College in Inverness County.

If there are additions that we need to look at in terms of making sure that we have a curriculum that is fully sensitive to the cultures in this province, I'm very happy to hear recommendations.

MR. MACMASTER: I feel like I have just swung my claymore in the general direction of the minister, and it's not my intention to injure him. I appreciate his comments, but I hope I have made my point.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that there are thousands of young Nova Scotians who want to learn Gaelic and who want to learn their history. They're from Mabou right to Citadel High here in Halifax. Those people need the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and they need the support of this government.

Can the minister advise how the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will work with the Gaelic community to ensure that our culture and language continue to play an important part in the inclusive nature of education in our province?

MR. CHURCHILL: Of course, I think the best way we can accomplish that is through our curriculum, enhancing our curriculum. We have done a lot of work in relation

to the various cultures and traditions that we have in the province, but of course we need to continue to make sure that we enhance our curriculum to best reflect the great diversity and experiences that people in this province have had.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

H&W: PALLIATIVE CARE - ADEQUATE SUPPORT

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I introduced my constituent Sharon Kehoe. She and her husband and nine members of her extended family are among the thousands in the Valley without a family doctor. They are all on the doctor registry.

About a year ago, she was fortunate to have her family doctor's practice taken over by a young doctor new to our area, only to have that doctor return to Newfoundland and Labrador after six months because he could earn more money. Meanwhile, Sharon's husband has high blood pressure, which they endeavour to get treated using clinics. However, clinics are not permitted to order tests, which makes treatment complicated.

My question for the Minister of Health and Wellness, when can Sharon and her husband and her family, and thousands of others like her in the Annapolis Valley, expect to be able to get a family doctor?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising the question. As the member knows, the province, with our partners at the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK, has been working diligently on recruiting health care professionals across the province. Those efforts include consideration of the remuneration and incentive packages. We've made changes based upon the feedback that we've received from people on the front lines as to what may support and help facilitate their decisions to move and stay here in Nova Scotia.

Examples include progress around our tuition rebates and the work that we're doing in partnership with my colleague the Minister of Immigration around a stream for physician immigrants. We're doing a lot of work to try to recruit and bring primary care to all Nova Scotians.

MR. LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for the answer. Sharon also recently provided palliative care for her uncle living in Cape Breton, who wanted to die at home. She stated that the support system is awful. There is no nursing support other than a visit from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There's no doctor care normally, other than once every two weeks. They were fortunate to have access to Dr. Bob Martell, but they had to administer and make decisions about when to give morphine. Worst of all for her uncle, she stated, was having his nieces hold him up, pull down his pants, and clean him; a person should be able to die with a little more dignity than that.

My question for the minister is this: when will this government provide adequate palliative care with supports for those who wish to die at home, rather than relying on family to do the heavy lifting?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising the question. Work around hospice access and palliative care supports is ongoing in the province. Under my predecessor - the former Minister of Health and Wellness, and current Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage - they developed a framework for hospice facilities for communities that wish to pursue that as an option.

For those who wish to receive palliative supports in their home, there are a number of options. Sometimes they are with nurses or physicians, but we also have paramedics throughout the province who provide palliative care services. There are a wide variety of supports available to people looking for those services.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

ENERGY: FRACKING BAN - PROCLAIM

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Last week the minister repeated that the fracking moratorium continues, but at the same time, fracking is still an option. This government's attempt to have it both ways is sowing divisions in communities desperate for a clearer path toward economic development.

Community members in Guysborough have had to organize themselves to make it abundantly clear once again that fracking is a dead end. In the words of one young woman from Guysborough, "We do not need a boom and bust economy, we need jobs to sustain us for generations to come." I'll table that.

Will the minister stand with Nova Scotians across the province and clearly state that fracking is not a road this province is going to go down?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I didn't attempt to be unclear last week. The status quo is in effect. The moratorium remains in place. We made the commitment when we brought the moratorium in in 2014 that we would do an onshore atlas to understand where these pockets may be, in what regions, and to what effect. We did that.

What we said was that if industry, if communities, feel that there is a different conversation because of technology changes, if there's somehow a change in social licence and people support fracking, that they would come forward with some idea of how they would want to get there, to do some kind of testing.

We haven't opened it up. One letter from a municipality doesn't constitute opening up the moratorium. I haven't received any information from the group that the member has suggested, so if there's something that she could bring forward, we'd certainly be willing to take a look at that. But as we said: status quo. The moratorium on fracking is in place in Nova Scotia.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the moratorium may be in place on paper, but the government has still not proclaimed it. That is one of the reasons why members of communities across Nova Scotia are wondering if this government really wants a moratorium. Jim Guy, professor emeritus at Cape Breton University, suggests that the government is deliberately foot-dragging on making a legal definition of fracking so that they can have a back-door option to bypass the moratorium. I'll table that.

Will the government tell this House when the government will finish the regulations for the fracking moratorium and proclaim the ban on fracking?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again, the regulations around fracking - the reason why they've taken as long as they have is because we had to do a jurisdictional scan and understand that if there was some kind of regulatory piece around the testing, and some kind of research related to fracking, that we would allow that to happen.

So for all intents and purposes, the proclamation of that legislation will take place. There is a ban on fracking. There's no doubt about it. I don't understand why, for some people, there has to be a question of this information. There has to be a challenge for the fracking moratorium that's in place. It's banned. There's new information that comes forward, then we'll obviously consider that but, at this point, we haven't changed our position on this, Mr. Speaker. There's information around fracking. There's information around the onshore atlas, and we shouldn't be afraid of information.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton-Richmond.

BUSINESS: CELLULAR SERV. - PROVIDE

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, there's a pressing need in Cape Breton-Richmond that leaves the residents struggling to earn a living. I speak of the lack of reliable cellphone service and, when I say lacking, I really mean that there's no cellphone service in a lot of the communities - specifically in Forchu, Framboise, Grand River, and Dundee.

I've received numerous letters from business owners in these areas about this issue. One business owner operates a local seafood company that operates a fleet of vehicles and fishing vessels. I would ask everyone in this Chamber to consider how much our jobs have changed since smartphones have become a part of our everyday lives.

My question to the minister would be, does he believe that functioning, reliable cellphone service is critical to the operation of a modern business?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I thank the member for the question. I absolutely do believe that. That is the case. Broadband and Internet connectivity for Nova Scotians has been a priority for us. We've carried a heavy load in relation to other provinces, with respect to our investment in broadband, and we're working on a significant plan for broadband that we will share in the coming weeks as part of the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board's budget and we're looking forward to the long-term, positive impact that will have on many people in Nova Scotia.

MS. PAON: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his response regarding broadband service, but my question is regarding cellphone service.

Sitting here in the centre of our provincial capital, I think we've become somewhat - well, we take cellular coverage for granted here in an urban environment. It's how we communicate with our families, our friends, our colleagues, and our employers and our employees. Cellular service keeps track of our schedules, provides us with GPS, and is a key conduit to vast information that has become essential to everyday life.

Does the minister agree that those business owners who have contacted me need unified cellular service in this province? We need cellular service in these communities. Will the minister please provide cellular service in these communities?

MR. MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, again I thank the member. Obviously, the cellphone service and having that coverage is part of the broadband conversation and all the Connecting Canadians budgetary allotments that are coming from the federal government and, of course, in conjunction with the heavy investment that we'll make as a province. My colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs is very much engaged from the perspective of Emergency Management Office, and having emergency service and access to cellphone coverage for many of the areas in this province.

There's no doubt about it, I'll tell the honourable member and her constituents. We've got to do better at coverage for cellphones not only for, of course, the growth of our economy, and allowing rural areas to drum up business and build business but it's important for safety and security. We will continue to make those investments and we do appreciate the question.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

TIR: HWY. NO. 289 MAINTENANCE - FUNDING

MR. LARRY HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Highway No. 289 is a very important

transportation link in my constituency. However, with all the traffic on this route, the asphalt is showing its age and it's crumbling under the current traffic. Without proper maintenance, the shoulders of the road are no longer supporting the edges of the highway, and it's making for unsafe travel.

Can the minister assist the drivers of Highway No. 289 by allocating necessary funds, needed this year, to make this transportation route safe again?

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I would draw the member's attention to the RIM budget and I hope he's had an opportunity to input on that. This government has increased the RIM funding, which had been cut by the previous government significantly, some time ago, and this is the money that goes towards shouldering. Shouldering is very important for us because it has a safety consideration and I'll check to see if the shouldering for Route 289 is in the RIM budget, and the member can do that also.

[2:45 p.m.]

MR. HARRISON: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer because the shoulders are really creating the problem because of the size of the trucks and it's in a rural area. Besides, the tractor wheels are so wide that the road cannot handle that kind of traffic.

The minister already answered my next question that he will look at the shoulders on Route 289 and make an assessment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**H&W: ABERDEEN HOSP. (PICTOU CO.): PSYCHIATRIC SERV. -
SHORTAGE**

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. All too often we talk about mental health in this Chamber. I know that recently we lost a psychiatrist at the Aberdeen Hospital and were left with one psychiatrist at that time. We also know we lost our short stay unit three years ago which, by the way, was supposed to be temporary. We were always told a new model has been put in place and that it's working well.

Change is absolutely about belief. I'd like to know, does the minister believe that the new model is working for 46,000 people in Pictou County?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the concerns that the member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, brings forward. I don't think anybody in this Legislature questions her commitment to the area of mental health and advocating on behalf of her constituents and Nova Scotians in that regard.

What I can say is that we recognize as a government the need to do more around mental health. That's why we continue to invest with a disproportionate amount of new investment going towards our youth, partnering with our school system to expand our SchoolsPlus, to get the health centres in place and provide those clinicians close to students. We know that young Nova Scotians, in young people is when mental health conditions first expose themselves and getting treatment and diagnosis early is better for the long-term care of these individuals.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his thoughtful response. I did hear the word "invest" - we lost our unit, we were down to one psychiatrist in a population of 46,000 people. We know that the crisis has been brought to a new level with regard to mental health. We have lost, as of today, our one and only psychiatrist for the next - well, we don't know, they're off. I'd like the minister to stand up please and promise the Pictou County residents that he will invest in at least a locum to come in and serve that time that we have no psychiatrist.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, again, I do appreciate the concern being raised by the member opposite, the interim Leader of the Official Opposition. While I do appreciate the concerns and the challenges presented for her constituents and those in the area when you have a psychiatrist, a specialist who leaves. Unfortunately, the situation there is not limited to the people of Pictou County. The Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK are working diligently to attempt to recruit psychiatrists for vacant positions throughout the province. They're going to fill those positions as soon as they can, and they're making every effort to do so, but there is a shortage right across this country.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Environment who began to answer it yesterday but ran out of time, so I'm sure he'd enjoy continuing it. Halifax is sending bags to landfills and other towns' bags are piling up - plastic bags. Nova Scotians are calling for a ban on plastics. In fact, they're saying that the province needs to act. China gave us six months' warning that they would no longer recycle our bags and it has become clear the government must have missed the memo. If the government had planned ahead, we could have had a solution by now.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The time allotted for Oral Questions Put by Members to Ministers has expired.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Private Members' Public Bills for Second Reading

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill No. 77.

Bill No. 77 - Frankie's Law.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured and pleased to be able to rise in my place and speak on this bill that I introduced yesterday.

I first want to say thank you to the Premier, to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, to the Minister of Justice, to the Minister of Natural Resources, and to all members who actually joined me and my guests who were here yesterday in the Speaker's Gallery, over in the Red Room. I really appreciate everyone coming over and welcoming them and, more important, thanking them for the great work they do, thanking them for, really, when they go out to do their work they are risking their lives.

We all know that our first responders leave their homes, leave their families daily to risk their lives, and save our lives. It's often said - and the first time I heard it was actually from my daughter. We were having a debate over an issue and she said to me, if it matters to you, you'll find a way and, if not, you'll find an excuse. I hope we don't leave here today finding an excuse not to put forth this bill that is ultimately, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, a safety issue.

I want to take an opportunity and thank Corporal Greg Daigle at the Pictou RCMP Detachment who was able to connect me with Savannah Deschênes and who was able to allow me to understand a little bit more about what their job is out on the highways every day, protecting us and, ultimately, at the end of the day when we know of the tragic accident that Frankie Deschênes was involved in, we know that he was stopping to help a couple change a tire.

This would probably be a good opportunity to speak a little bit about Frankie. I did not know Frankie personally, but I certainly have had lots of conversations now with his widow Savannah, and learned a lot about Frankie and I feel like I know him. What we know is that Frankie radiated goodness and compassion and strength and worthiness. Frankie was innately a good person. He helped whenever he could with anyone, whether

he was on duty or off duty. I really believe it's our duty to honour the sacrifice that Frankie made that day. He is worthy of this bill.

Ultimately, I would like to see the move-over law changed to Frankie's law, but my understanding is that we cannot name a bill by someone's first name - although we have - but I have received information that I can't with regard to this bill. I need clarification on why we allowed it for others and not this one, but I was in agreement that that's fine. If we can't name it Frankie's law, why can't we, it was suggested to me by one of the ministers, we could name it Deschênes? That's great, the last name would be perfectly fine, but then we learned today at Law Amendments Committee that we can't do that either.

I am going to request that we do a little bit of further investigation into why we can't because this is really what it was about, is taking September 12th as a day to recognize and bring awareness to road safety and, in particular, to the move-over law. I hope that later this afternoon we can get a clear understanding, through legal counsel, as to why we cannot use Frankie's last name on this bill.

I do want to thank the government for putting forth and recognizing that September 12th will move forward as a day to recognize and bring awareness to this bill.

One of the things I had in the bill that was not accepted was that I felt we needed to put up road signs indicating the importance of slowing down and pulling over to the other lane when you see any type of vehicle pulled over, particularly our first responders, as well as tow trucks.

We understand they are not ready to put up signage, but I feel that although it is an expense maybe what we can do is take baby steps with it. Maybe what we can do is find the money to put up signs at our entry points coming into the province, perhaps in Amherst, in Caribou when you get off the ferry, and in Sydney at the airport.

I think that when, especially for our tourists - we all know that different transportation rules and regulations, even going throughout Canada as well as the U.S., that things change from state to state, province to province. In some states, you don't need car insurance, sometimes you don't have to wear helmets, and sometimes you don't have to wear seatbelts. I think that if this is part of our law, it is extremely important that there be signage for our motorists to understand what the rules and regulations are when driving on our 100-Series Highways.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can further continue the dialogue with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and anyone else who would like to become collectively part of this bill moving forward, to discuss what those signs can look like and where they can go.

Yesterday one RCMP officer mentioned to me that right before coming into, I guess it would be Cumberland South, where the tolls are, they have digital signage and they can type in from a keyboard what is to go in there. They suggested that this is something that could happen on a regular basis, especially in the summer months when traffic is so much higher, that they could have that up on their digital boards.

Again, I cannot stress enough the importance of having proper billboards or signage to ensure everyone understands the importance of moving over and having respect for those who in that moment are just pulled over to help someone, whether it's a paramedic, or an RCMP officer or a tow truck - whether it's anyone who is pulled over for whatever reason.

We all know that sometimes we have young children while driving, and we are pulling over so they can use the washroom. It is interesting that such a bill could actually save many lives.

On Sunday evening, I was taking my son for the first time to his driver's education course, and I was telling him what I was doing this week - that I was going to be introducing this bill - and he asked me what it was about. I started to tell him and he was like, well duh, that's just common sense, isn't it, that you should slow down and pull over? Obviously, I was happy to hear that this is the way he thinks and that he would slow down and pull over, but there are a number of individuals who really have no idea what this law does.

My bill, in its full request, would absolutely ensure more safety on our highways. I really don't believe it is too much to ask to begin - if the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal could go back and cost out what it would take to have a few signs erected at our entry points into this province. I know that it would make a difference, Mr. Speaker.

[3:00 p.m.]

If we don't do this - I think it's a calculated risk if we don't. We know what's going to happen. We're going to see more accidents. In my constituency in 2010 or 2011, we had a terrible accident over Mount Thom. I'm sure anyone who has driven over Mount Thom can appreciate how bad that area is, especially in winter, but any time of the year. This was wintertime, and a car had gone off the road, and we had an RCMP cruiser pull up to help them, and a car literally came behind, smashed the cruiser, and just missed the officer.

I think that we all have stories similar to mine, in our own constituency, where we know that people who are out protecting us are putting themselves in danger every day. If we can make that difference through this bill, I really believe that we should.

Again, I'm really pleased that the government is considering some of these requests that I have put in my bill. I hope that we'll have an opportunity to speak further to them.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think I will take my seat. I hope that we can have a conversation later with regard to this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare-Digby.

MR. GORDON WILSON: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to rise today to speak to the Private Member's Bill. I do commend her immediately. Any time we have discussion in this House about a topic, regardless of whether we put up signs or pass a bill or anything, we're raising awareness. Raising awareness is sometimes more of an opportunity than anything.

Just to start with, Mr. Speaker, I would ask for a bit of clarification. Being a past Deputy Speaker, I don't want to break the Rules of this House, but we currently have two bills before the House that are very similar. I just want to make sure - in my speaking, am I allowed to refer to another bill, in this instance, that is going through the House at this time?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much for your patience, honourable member. You can certainly speak to this bill, and the bill that is before us on the order paper. It is in fact on the order paper, according to the Clerk in my consultation with her. Feel free to carry on with your discussion on Bill No. 77.

MR. GORDON WILSON: I was more questioning whether I could speak to another bill that's before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Only when it is called on the order paper. You are free to speak to Bill No. 77.

MR. GORDON WILSON: I will try to be vague. Again, to start off, thank you to our member for Pictou West. This is very important. Her comments around Savannah Deschênes - I obviously didn't know them, but yes, it was important to have her in the House here, and all first responders, as we have - how could anybody stand up here and not mention that?

When I mention first responders, I think I would be remiss not to mention the assistance that the Minister of Municipal Affairs provides to that group, one of the most important groups of volunteers that we have in our communities. I would also like to make mention of our member for Sackville-Cobequid, who also brings this to the House and to the conversation.

I think that what's confusing for me, and I think difficult to stand here and speak of, is that we very rarely see multiple bills on the floor of the House at the same time with a common interest, and a common goal of all of us to do the same thing. I think that's to be commended. The path forward is the one that we need to find.

In saying that, also, it's important to note that we also support road safety. Road safety is probably paramount and that's what we're here to talk about. Knowing the fact that last Spring \$390 million was again put into our capital program for major construction, twinning - some of the serious things that happen on our highway are hopefully going to be addressed there. Our five-year plan - we're investing \$285 million in highways and bridges \$60 million more than we did last year. Again, we're here to talk about safety.

Twinning is also an interesting one, and I'll bring a personal note. Our area of Nova Scotia, on Highway No. 101, we just want to see our 100-Series Highway completed. I commend this government for again, the starting work that we have on doing the work from Weymouth to Digby, to get our 100-Series Highway done. More importantly, what's interesting is part of that discussion we had down there, on getting that project off the ground again, there was a serious safety audit done of that area of the road. Even though we're not going to get it all done tomorrow, as far as that 100-Series Highway, there is some serious audit work that was done on that road - curbs, guardrails, sighting distances, clearing back intersections, which was very important, so I commend that kind of work.

Safety is going to be part of my discussion, but I want to break the bill down. The bill basically has four components. It talks about the First Responders Road Safety Awareness Day, which I think we all accept and I think we all feel is a great addition to this province to have. I do feel there is a path forward for that.

I also feel the importance of the second aspect of this bill, noting Constable Deschênes. Yes, it is confusing, and there are legalities around how we deal with bills, the honourable member opposite did note that, and it is important to know that it is difficult sometimes to simply change the title of the bill. I do feel there was an option brought forward, not on this bill, but it will hopefully give us the opportunity to - I didn't speak about another bill - deal with that.

The third part of the bill is around tow trucks and recovery vehicles. That is another aspect that I feel that we, as a government, support very much. It's an honourable part that needs to be brought forward. There's more than just RCMP on the highways, I have to attest myself, I know that we have our first responders that are in here from Hants West and Sackville-Cobequid, and we've heard lots of conversations around our EHS people. I myself, in my previous life, was a conservation officer and for five years, had not only a side arm but a vehicle with a flashing light on it - kind of scary to think - and I had to work on the side of the highway, and I understand what it means to be out there in bad weather, and it is treacherous. It is important that we note those other people that are putting their lives out there.

The fourth part of it that I find a little bit more difficult, and this is the last component of the bill, is the signage. Signs, when you see them all the time, lose their effectiveness. That's my concern. For example, a deer crossing sign, now you don't even notice them when you go by them, unfortunately. Entryways to our provinces - I'll bet if I

asked people if they knew what sign is prevalent at entryways to our province right now they probably couldn't tell us. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Clare-Digby has the floor.

MR. GORDON WILSON: We have some sharp people in the room. (Laughter) Again, my concern is it's about awareness, and I do feel that awareness through just simply signs, is not, probably at this point in time, something that we feel is adequate, and it's something that we would support.

The other three components, the First Responders Road Safety Awareness Day, the noting of Constable Deschênes, and certainly broadening - not only broadening to just tow trucks and recovery vehicles - but I would suggest there be a clause, a revision that gives the opportunity down the road to identify other potential vehicles that maybe should be identified as potential vehicles that should be slowed down for when you see them.

Common sense is the other - I heard the member opposite, in her conversation with her son, mention common sense. Wow, if we could legislate common sense, I think there would be a bill that would be an omnibus bill and would take over a lot of different areas of this province.

I had somebody tell me once - I believe we were talking about studded tires, winter tires, and things like that. There was a statement made to me that was very profound. We were talking about bad roads and clearing roads and salting roads and stuff like that. This was around bad road conditions. The comment was that bad roads don't cause accidents; bad drivers cause accidents. I think we need to somehow find a way to make sure that when we train our young people, when we license our young people, they're aware and that we set that example ourselves.

I only caution about the fact that I don't think signage is the answer. Sometimes it's a false security that's there, I think. I think we should focus on the other areas more.

Going back to road safety, I would like to commend the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - I mentioned the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but also the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal - for the work that we do on road safety.

Our paramedics, when they're on the road, and our first responders when they're on the road, they're the ones at the scene. They're the ones that we need to protect the most. Our DOT workers - that's another area where we have seen some great strides in this province. I'm sure that the industry, from what it was prior to - I believe we had a very serious accident on a 100-Series Highway that brought forward an awful lot of changes to our legislation as far as roadside safety when we have construction going on. All the work

that goes on there of having the advance warning signs, the pylons, the double speeding fine infraction when you're in a construction area - all those different things have brought us a long way. I think our province, over the last 15 or 20 years, has improved there quite a bit.

I also need to recognize the fact that although we talk a lot about our paramedics and our RCMP and our first responders and our EHS people and our fire departments, I don't think we could begin right now to totally identify every single safety aspect that there is on the side of the road. How do we cover all of them if we just individualize out certain ones? That's where it comes down to common sense for me. I think we need to understand that there are different ways that we can educate people on how to be safe on the road. Setting the example ourselves is the best start.

I only have a few minutes left here. I think we can agree on the elements of this bill by far. It's encouraging to see, at the same time, again, that we're looking at things collectively here. I think this is one sitting in the Legislature where we have seen a lot of collaboration on bills. I think it has been a great step forward for us as a government, not only a bill on highway safety, but if it's a bill on education, all of these ones. In my short time of four or five years that I have been in here in the House, it's nice to see that we have a lot of common ground here. It's through discussion and working together that we get to build on that.

My challenge to everybody is hopefully, as we continue to go through discussions on this bill and any other bill that we might have in the House, not naming what that other bill might be, things are going to continue to move here, and we are going to work together as a group.

[3:15 p.m.]

Also, it's not very often that we see a Private Member's Bill here on Opposition Day. I would like to commend the Official Opposition House Leader, or whoever it might have been who had that happen. I think that's important. Usually, it's just government bills that we're here talking about. This is not a government bill, and people should note that. This is a Private Member's Bill. That says something. I think it says a good thing, and it's important for us to note that.

In closing, I want to hopefully see, as we go through - I have always been told you manage to the 80 per cent. We have four components of a bill that are sitting before us here today. If we can have 75 per cent of that come out the other end, that's three of the four components. I think there's definitely a consensus on three of the four components of this bill. Again, those are the First Responders Road Safety Awareness Day on September 7th, the noting of Constable Deschênes somewhere in legislation in the Province of Nova Scotia, and the tow truck and recovery vehicles being added to this. For the components of any of those to be brought forward somewhere in this House would be great.

With that, I would like to take my seat.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

HON. DAVID WILSON: I'm glad to rise to speak for a few moments on Bill No. 77. It could be a bit confusing for some who might just be listening - and I know I'm not supposed to make mention of people who are paying attention - to the debate of the House on Bill No. 77. We have a bill that's going through the process that was actually just referred back to the House from Law Amendments Committee today, Bill No. 52. It's very much in connection with what Bill No. 77 pertains to.

For me, it's a great opportunity to talk about Bill No. 77 . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to remind the honourable member who is on his feet and all members that you are certainly welcome to speak to the bill that you are standing to debate today, which is Bill No. 77. We should not refer to other bills that have not been called at this time.

I would ask all other members, please, to keep the chatter down in the House, so I can hear the honourable member who has the floor.

The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid has the floor.

MR. DAVID WILSON: Must be a rookie mistake, Mr. Speaker, a rookie mistake.

Bill No. 77 does have a lot of detail that has been covered in existing legislation, a piece that is currently in the works and is law in the province and one that is trying to improve that. It can be a bit confusing for people, but I don't think that we need to miss an opportunity to talk about what's contained in Bill No. 77 and the other bills and the law that we have on the books today, Mr. Speaker.

I know yesterday must have been a difficult day for some of our visitors to the House. We had Constable Deschênes' widow Savannah here. She lost her husband, I think it was a year ago, or about a year and a half ago, when he was trying to assist a motorist. The RCMP officer was killed just outside Moncton, I believe. I want to thank her and the people who were with her yesterday and supported her, many of whom worked with Constable Deschênes. They were here yesterday to bring support I think not only for Bill No. 77, but also support for the move-over legislation and support for truly increasing the ability to make them and their colleagues have a safer workplace as they go to work every day for their shifts.

In Bill No. 77, there are a number of issues that have been brought up, which I extremely welcome and support. There have been some discussions in other rooms in this

Legislature on how we achieve obtaining what's in Bill No. 77, even if it is attached to another piece of legislation.

I know the member opposite who just spoke, I couldn't understand exactly what he meant that it was interesting to have a Private Member's Bill or an Opposition member's bill - it is Opposition Day, so we usually tend to call Opposition bills to the House.

He had mentioned some criticism in the bill around the signage, and I know that naming the bill - remembering Constable Deschênes in some kind of schedule that's attached to existing legislation or the law - I think is what the government is trying to do and I welcome it. I think his colleague and Mrs. Deschênes would welcome that also.

The signage was one that the member just said that he's not sure if it would be something that is as important, and I have to disagree with the member. I know that if you have a permanent sign, maybe the novelty wears off if you pass it on a regular basis, but I still remember that I can't import bees to Nova Scotia every time I come into Nova Scotia. I see the sign.

But seriously, Mr. Speaker, I look at my commute to Halifax, on a daily basis, and there are those electronic signs now on Highway No. 101 and one closer to Halifax as you approach the bridges, and I have to say it's often very useful as a motorist to see some signs.

Potentially, that's something the government could look at installing around the province, so that if it's the move-over law that we're promoting that month, have it in there. If it's another aspect of the laws or concerns that the government has, we could put that on there. I believe we have similar signage going through the Cobequid Pass, and that came about after the snowstorm and hundreds of vehicles that were stranded and pedestrians and motorists that were stranded there.

With Bill No. 77, I think we welcome the opportunity to continue to talk about what the status of the current legislation and law is in the province, and what we can do to improve on that. That's why I think we see bills like Bill No. 77 come forward, and others, so that we can strengthen legislation, and strengthen the opportunity to protect the people who provide services for our residents all over the province. I'm talking specifically about our first responders - our fire, EMS, police officers, but also tow operators. They truly are a team when they respond to emergencies, when they respond to accidents, when they respond to people in distress on our roadways. I think in Bill No. 77, it talked about that, and I know the government is welcome to amend the current law to include tow operators in the law today, but it doesn't happen overnight.

As I stated before, in a previous speech, I attempted to bring legislation forward some 14 years ago dealing with move-over legislation, and it took me about six years before I was able to pass that and have that become law in the province. Now, almost seven or

eight years later, that bill and that law has been enacted in the province. We're trying to move to strengthen it and improve it, and people do need to be reminded.

I know, more recently, there had been some criticisms about police forces around the province ticketing people who go by emergency vehicles without abiding the law - without slowing down, without reducing your speed, without moving over to an open lane. The criticism is, oh, they shouldn't be doing that. But I have to beg to differ.

I was reminded of that the other day. I was heading back to your community, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, to Windsor, to attend a basketball game. I was on Highway No. 101 and one of my wipers was moving, so I had to pull over to the side of the highway. I was waiting to exit my vehicle, so that there were no more vehicles, and there was a large lineup of trucks and other vehicles passing me. I was amazed at how much my vehicle was moving as I just sat there and waited for an opportunity to get out of my vehicle, and I drive a Kia Sorento SUV - a big, heavy vehicle - and it was moving.

I say this so that the people who might criticize the current law - and potentially criticize any strengthening of that law - to remember that. More importantly, remember the fact that if I was sitting in my vehicle, what is it like if I'm standing next to that vehicle or if I'm laying down on the asphalt trying to pull somebody out of a vehicle that has flipped over on the highway? Imagine what that would be like, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker - and I know you do. I know you do.

I welcome criticisms on pieces of legislation and laws, but ultimately you need to put yourselves in the shoes and the uniforms of the men and women who work every day, who go and respond to emergencies and distress calls on our highways - and that they need to be protected; they need to be ensured that they can go home at the end of the day.

The one thing you're always trying to get are stats to back up the information, the legislation or the policy changes you bring forward. It is sometimes difficult in Canada because we do not keep statistics like the U.S. Any time you Google, or try to research that, you get the American numbers, so I do have some American numbers. They would be different in Canada, but I think it shows how important it is to have move-over legislation here in Nova Scotia and how important it is to increase the awareness and really strengthen that bill.

In the U.S., all 50 states have move-over legislation. In the last 10 years, 73 law enforcement officers have been killed on the side of the highway by being hit by another vehicle - 73 - and 32 firefighters and EMS personnel have been killed while performing their duties on the side of the highway. I know those numbers do not reflect what is happening in Canada, but it does happen in Canada and for us, if we can prevent one death, then I think it is well worth it.

First responders definitely sign up to face danger; they know that. As a former paramedic, I knew that, and I'm sure you did, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. If you talk to some of our colleagues here - police officers who are volunteer firefighters - you sign up to put yourself in dangerous situations. We would hope that those who bring in legislation, those who create our laws, would recognize what they can do to minimize the dangers first responders, and others like tow operators, face every day when they go to work.

That was really the essence of the original piece of legislation in 2004 - it was really and truly to protect those who protect us. I say that often and I'll be completely honest, I saw that on the handle of the spout of a gas pump while I was filling up my rental vehicle in Florida. It was a little advertising thing that they stick on there. I don't see too many in Nova Scotia, but it's a good opportunity and a good place for it. It said: Protect those who protect us. I thought, what's this? I was curious, so I looked into it and it was back then, in 2003, when I learned that the State of Florida had move-over legislation. We worked here in Nova Scotia with a number of paramedics for a lot of years to try to see if we could get that here.

I want to thank the Official Opposition Party for bringing this forward - for trying to not only keep the memory of Constable Deschênes alive and show and honour the sacrifice he made, but by trying to ensure that Nova Scotians recognize that. Our lives are busy. People want instant gratification and answers right away. I know that. I have a teenager and I have a young person who is in their 20s, and to tell them that they have to wait a little bit to find out information is sometimes challenging, but people need to realize that on our highways people are there to help them and they need to slow down. They need to slow down.

I travel the highways every day and I've been fortunate where I don't speed as much I used to. I've had a couple of tickets, and I think the older you get, you realize how dangerous it is, but it is amazing to see how fast people drive these days - and I think everybody would agree. You go 110 to 120 on the highways and there are people passing you like you're standing still. We need to do more to educate people that the appointment isn't as important as someone's life. It's isn't as important as someone's life, so if you're late for work, if you're late for your appointment at the doctor, if you're late for picking somebody up, it's not as important as that person who is on the side of the highway, probably helping someone in distress, most often in an emergency scene. They have to slow down.

[3:30 p.m.]

Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, I know you've had some close calls. I've had close calls. One that stands out for me is being on the end of a stretcher in the ditch with my partner at the top of the ditch, trying to transfer a patient into the ambulance, and a vehicle at a high rate of speed clipping my partner's jacket, which was unbuttoned. You could just see it in

his face, that it was close - and it was. We were very fortunate that all that was hit was his jacket.

It made me realize that if I had an opportunity like I've had over the last 15 years, that I would stand in my place, bring forward good policy that improves safety for men and women who work in our province, and support other Parties' legislation that would do the same. That's why I would support the bill and the issues that it contains.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour today to stand and speak to Bill No. 77, Frankie's Law, and to pay tribute to Frank Deschênes, an RCMP officer who gave his life in service to others.

Constable Deschênes lived in Cumberland North, and his death affected our entire community - his family, his wife, but also all of his fellow RCMP officers and other first responders who could see themselves in his role. It brought a sadness to our community that was needless. I was very encouraged yesterday to see Constable Deschênes' widow here, along with several other colleagues.

When Constable Deschênes passed, was killed needlessly, a very good friend of mine started speaking out again about the move-over law. His name is Mr. Paul Calder. He is a retired RCMP officer. He also was struck on the side of the road, on November 11, 2001. Thankfully, though, he survived. He was leaving Oxford after a Remembrance Day ceremony and was on his way back to Amherst - a very similar situation where there was someone off the road, and he had pulled over to help. In serving others and helping others, he himself was struck, was unconscious for 20 minutes, and took quite a few months to rehabilitate back.

Mr. Calder has worked with his coworkers to promote the move-over law since it was put in place in 2010, and Constable Deschênes' death drove home that he needed to do more. He brought to light that there are signs in Alberta, signs near interchanges on highways, that remind people to move over. He actually sent me a picture of one of those signs a few months ago. I should have it here. I apologize, I don't have it here to table.

These signs are on the highway. They remind people to move over and slow their vehicles down to 60 kilometres an hour - that's what's on the sign - when passing emergency vehicles on the side of the road with their lights activated. He and his colleagues think this would be a good idea in this part of the country as well.

I struggle when I hear members opposite say that signs aren't effective. It's kind of a poor excuse, Mr. Speaker, really. I will table this document that came from the *Cumberland News Now*, from when Constable Deschênes was killed. It also has comments

from Paul Calder when he was bringing back memories of his crash and his comments to that.

Mr. Calder also worked with me last Fall and wrote a letter to our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, asking him and his department to consider putting signage on the highways here in Nova Scotia to prevent another similar death. I will table this letter, which was from Mike Croft in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, letting Mr. Calder know that again, they didn't feel that signs were necessary, or that they would make a difference.

We can look at other provinces and I'll table that letter as well, the letter to Mr. Calder. The fact that our neighbours in Alberta have put these signs in place, I think it speaks to the validity that it is a good idea. I would encourage members opposite to reconsider this.

I do support Bill No. 77, I believe it uses several measures to raise awareness and to keep first responders safe. Perhaps the most poignant measure is marking September 12th as First Responder Road Safety Awareness Day. Frankie Deschênes died on September 12th, and we could use this bill to enshrine in law a permanent day of remembrance and awareness of him, but also all other first responders that sacrifice and serve our province every day.

This bill also requires signs to be posted on 100-Series Highways, reminding people to reduce their speed and move over when they see a vehicle with flashing lights on the side of the road. They are common-sense actions, they are small gestures, but we have potential here to have a huge impact - a positive impact - an impact that would actually save a life, save lives. Our police officers are brave and dedicated public servants. They commit their lives to serving and protecting people in our community and sometimes they do put their own lives in jeopardy. I know all of us in this place admire police officers and other first responders and tow truck drivers. We are grateful for their selflessness and we want to do everything we can to keep them safe as they perform their jobs.

I think I shared this story last week. This law will remind people when they see an accident on the side of the road - lights flashing - to slow down. We're not only protecting our first responders here, we're also protecting the drivers. When someone causes an accident, they have to live with that the rest of their lives, and they've changed their life forever in a negative way, and I suggest this is to also protect the drivers out there as a reminder to them. Distracted driving is a problem and becoming more of a problem. No one would purposely cause an accident and cause a death, and if we can put up some signs on the road and put this bill in place to remind people to slow down, I think that's a good thing.

Back in 1991, my own father was struck on the side of the road, he was a foreman for the Department of Highways at the time, and he had pulled over one of his snowplow

operators to discuss the roads, and a car came along and hit him. At the last minute he jumped and survived, broke both legs, but if he hadn't jumped he probably would have been killed on scene. If we can put this bill in place, just remind drivers to slow down, move over, slow down to 60 kilometres per hour, we will save lives.

My heart goes out to Frank Deschênes' widow, Savannah. She has endured an unimaginable loss. Despite that loss she is fighting to create awareness, and to safeguard her late husband's fellow officers, and all first responders who work on our roads and highways. When she was here yesterday, she told me she's working with the Government of New Brunswick to put a similar law in place there, and ensure that signage is put up on the roads of New Brunswick as well.

Frank Deschênes was a hero. The strength and courage Savannah exhibited in the House yesterday makes her a hero too. I hope all MLAs will recognize Savannah's bravery through supporting Bill No. 77 and shepherding it quickly through the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to speak on what is maybe the remaining time on this bill. I don't know if I have a full 10 minutes of this, but we've had some very good presentations over the last hour about Frankie Deschênes, about the move-over law, about other laws that of course are before us for consideration.

I think we all have a story of almost getting hit that we talk about. I mean, how many people have walked along any one of our roads in Nova Scotia and seen an oncoming vehicle, or one that's coming behind you, flying down the road - it's very unnerving. If you can imagine yourself walking along the side of the road and multiply that a little bit, by doing that every day, because that is the office of these RCMP officers, of these paramedics, these tow truck operators, of these volunteer firefighters and paid firefighters. It's hard to believe sometimes, when you really don't expect it, how fast a car that is going 100 kilometres per hour really is.

Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone actually drives 100 kilometres per hour anymore, I think they're always trying to get that upper limit of 110 or so, hoping that the RCMP will be giving them a little bit of leniency as they travel up our 100-Series Highways.

Mr. Speaker, I do know that I have until 3:50 p.m. before it times out.

You can only imagine how quickly you have to make a decision when you are confronted with a car coming at you. The Cumberland North member's father, maybe the car wasn't going that fast, but he still had to make that split-second decision to jump out of the way. In a lot of cases, especially with the RCMP, they're not watching the oncoming

traffic, they're paying attention to the driver they're talking to, the speeder, the person who broke the law by going through a stop sign. Whatever the reason is that the RCMP officer or the police officer is making this stop, they're not paying attention to the traffic that's coming. We do see some procedures that they do have in putting their cruisers a little further into the road than what the car that pulled over has done, so there's a little bit of protection, but boy, Mr. Speaker, that's not a lot of protection.

If we remember the articles around Frankie Deschênes, if you look at the pictures of the accident, and I really hadn't thought of it too much until I saw it, I believe on ATV last night, there was a story on there and they used some of the scene pictures of the absolute devastation of the car that was hit, that he was standing behind, or in front of, I don't know where he would have been in that, but there was no car left - just a heap of parts.

To imagine the trauma to one's body when that happens, thankfully I don't think he would've known anything happened to him, but quite honestly, how does one truly understand the enormity of that accident? How can anyone react in time to avoid that kind of accident?

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken before, in my own experience with this, with our fire department, the Eel Brook and District Fire Department. Halloween night a number of years ago when, quite stupidly, some locals thinking it was funny on Halloween night to burn tires and palettes in the middle of the road, they had done it this time in the middle of Highway No. 103, down by Glenwood. They do it on bridges - I tell you, it's calmed down since that time, but this was one of those times that some of the hooligans were out with a little bit of mischief, and had lit this fire in the middle of Highway No. 103.

Number one, I mean come on, it's a 100-Series Highway with a speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour.

You came over this crest and here was this fire. So we got called out to that fire, as many local fire departments get called out to these kinds of things. As usual, how many guys, girls, show up to a fire like this, normally there is the truck operator, a couple of firefighters, the chief, so there were actually only three people on the scene, I believe, that night when they pulled off and put the truck in the middle of the highway.

[3:45 p.m.]

My friend Junior DeLong was running the hose and trying to put it out. He had sort of stepped into the traffic lane. He got hit. A car coming from Yarmouth obviously didn't slow down for the fire engine that happened to be in the middle of the road and you can imagine that a fire engine is a pretty big machine with big red lights flashing on it but Junior got hit. I don't remember how many bones were broken but he did suffer a fair amount of time off, in hospital with a concussion and with a number of bruises and broken bones.

Thankfully Junior survived that hit but it is very few and far between that we hear of those situations where people actually survive this.

This is an important law, regardless if we're talking about the other law or this law because they are very similar. It is our feeling that giving it the name Frankie's Law truly gives it a special place and something that people can remember. Not only does it remember Frank Deschênes, it also allows us to say oh yes, Frankie's Law, that's the one I've got to pull over, that's the one I need to move over, rather than whatever of the Motor Vehicle Act, blah, blah.

Mr. Speaker, having this in and looking at the day of his death as being Road Safety Awareness Day, I think, is a valuable suggestion. It gives the opportunity to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to sell that day. I don't know how many days the department has that it can use as awareness days, there's not a whole lot of them, this is an opportunity for the department to talk about safety.

Mr. Speaker, we were also talking within this bill about signage. I mean we're not saying today that we want the department to go out and spend millions of dollars on new signs. There are a number of signs out there that maybe need changing and in the course of that process they should be able to go and put these kinds of laws up there. I tell you, if I asked the majority of my constituents what is their responsibility when they meet a flashing light on the side of a highway, whether it be a red and blue or a red and red or whatever those lights are, they most times can't tell you.

As a matter of fact, if you have the discussion with them they are probably going to say, they are slowing us down, those cars were slowing down and they were pulling off to the side making it dangerous, because they don't know the law, because we as legislators, they as government, have not done a good job in making sure that people understand what the laws of this land are. That's why we need signs. I wish we didn't need signs but that's a way to make people aware.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, you know if we have some electronic signs why wouldn't we just put some of these messages up on those signs? I mean I don't know, every time I come through Highway 111 or I come through the Cobequid Pass, I don't know how many times, there's really nothing on the sign - put revolving messages up there.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill. I thank you for the opportunity for the government to listen to this bill. I really have enjoyed the interactions on this one. There's a couple of opportunities for us, maybe not just this bill, maybe there is an option to amend another bill. I think we'll try to do that in time so that we can all celebrate the life of Frank Deschênes and remember him in making sure that our highways are safe for all times.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Time for debate on Bill No. 77 has expired. I thank all honourable members for their conversations this afternoon on a great topic.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 6.

Bill No. 6 - Sexual Violence Action Plan Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: I'm not sure that there will be as many opportunities to speak in this House on something that I am so passionate and care so much about.

Before I get started, though, I would like to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do.

MS. ADAMS: I would like to draw everyone's attention to the west gallery, where we have three students from the Canadian Federation of Students, the Nova Scotia branch. I'll ask you to stand up. We have Aiden McNally, Marie Dolcetti-Koros, and Grant McNeil. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: We welcome our guests this afternoon.

MS. ADAMS: In 1892, the penalty for rape was either life in prison or death. Right now, the current penalties that we have for these crimes do not fit. They're too lenient in this province.

But we're not here today to talk about punishment. We're here to talk about trying to prevent the crime in the first place. Why do we even need to talk about it? Unfortunately, sexual assault and rape are a part of a culture that we always need to be talking about, be vigilant of, and talk about policies that might save the lives of some of our children and students in university.

The statistics are appalling. Out of 52,000 crimes in Nova Scotia, over 626 sexual assaults occurred. Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates in Canada for sexual assault. The Canadian Centre for Justice states that there were approximately 14,000 child and youth victims of sexual offences in Canada in 2012. That's 205 victims for every 100,000 children and youth, and I'll table that, Mr. Speaker. This is a sickening statistic. Our most vulnerable - our children, your children, and my grandchildren - are being assaulted on a daily basis.

Not much gets better when they get to university. Victims between the ages of 18 and 24 have the second-highest rate of sexual offence in our population. We're really only safe when we get to my age or older. Stats Canada says that the rate in 2009 is still the same rate in 2012, and I heard in committee that we are not moving that number. We have to do better.

On March 1, 2018, just less than a week ago, Maclean's magazine wrote an article called "Canadian universities are failing students on sexual assault." It was an exclusive investigation where they talked about the fact that almost half of all sexual assaults occur while our children are at university. I'm going to say that again so I'm sure everybody heard me. Almost half of all sexual assaults occur while you're at university. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. If I could just quiet the Chamber down a wee bit. For your conversations, if you could take them outside, that would be fine.

The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. ADAMS: I'm going to table that because I think everybody should read that report.

We have had a number of initiatives over the years trying to change things. Our Turn is a movement connecting 20 student unions across Canada. Their analysis stems from the Ontario Government having mandated that all post-secondary institutions create stand-alone sexual violence policies by January 2017. Ontario did this. We do not have stand-alone policies. That is something that we are missing that we can correct.

Our Turn created a report card for 14 sexual violence policies in Canadian universities. Guess how we scored? Dalhousie - the university that I went to - got a D+, which is 57 out of 100. My son is going to that university, and although he's not a likely target, I don't want anybody at a university getting a D+ on such an important issue.

We're standing here debating this bill - which I know has been introduced by the NDP in the past - on the eve of International Women's Day, trying to get support from the members across the aisle to have mandated sexual assault action policies in our post-secondary institutions that meet the memorandum of understanding between the government and the organizations that they are working with. I know that every parent who sends a child to college or university wants to know that there is something in place and somebody holding them accountable to make sure that the universities are doing their job.

The truth is, Canada has a very high rate of campus sexual violence, and we need to change that. On February 27, 2018, the *Huffington Post* produced an article that says "Canadian Universities to Face Funding Cuts If They Fail to Address Campus Sexual Assaults." This is the federal government promising to take money away from universities if they do not introduce these policies. I had a chance to talk to the students up above not

10 minutes ago about what they thought of that and, while the intent is good, universities are already struggling for funding. We want to motivate them, not punish them, to bring in this legislation and stand-alone policies. The legislation that we are trying to introduce today that we hope the members across the aisle will support is one of those actions that we can take. I'll table that article.

The Minister of Community Services advised me just a short time ago that the government does have a policy where they will withhold some funding from Nova Scotia universities if they do not introduce these policies. I appreciate the effort as well as the intent again.

However, the universities in Nova Scotia - I looked on all of their websites - all do have some form of a policy. It's there. It's difficult to find. I had to call some of the university security officers to find out where the policies were. One of them was listed under parking and security, and I never would have found that, so I'm going to encourage all of the universities to make it a little more obvious as to where they have their policies.

But these are not stand-alone policies. According to the Canadian Federation of Students for Nova Scotia, to meet the requirements of the memorandum of understanding between the government and the Council of Nova Scotia, the policy is supposed to be stand-alone. We have one more year in order to get that done.

However, I know of someone not in my constituency, but in our area, who was raped walking home on her way back to university. She could not cope with it and she committed suicide. We don't have time to waste. I have granddaughters who are getting ready to go off to university, and I want to know that the university they're going to has a very clear policy, that every student knows what it is, and that they are obligated to at least know what it is and that there are people overseeing that.

One of the statistics that the students shared with me that I didn't know, and I'm always surprised when there's such a statistic out there that I don't know - sorry, that didn't sound quite right. This one really made me sad: many on-campus sexual assaults occur during the first eight weeks of class. I'm going to say that again: Many of the sexual assaults occur during the first eight weeks of class. Whatever policy you might be implementing, most of the students are so excited about getting their dorm room and getting their books and meeting new people and finding out where their classes are that this is probably the last thing on their minds. But I can guarantee you, it's the first thing on mine.

I knew this statistic, but I want to say it again, and I'll say it as many times as I can over the next three years: between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of rapes that occur in this province and across this country are done by someone you know. This is not a stranger lurking behind an alley. This is a guy you meet at a party on or off campus. This may be a family member or a neighbour. We don't just need policies. We need to make it completely reprehensible that anything like this should ever happen.

[4:00 p.m.]

There are many attempts to try to change the culture, but sexual assault is a unique crime in the sense that the act itself may or may not be a crime, it depends on whether the person consented or not - and you start adding in mental health issues, intellectual disabilities, alcohol and drugs, and soon the introduction of cannabis. We often put the person who has reported the crime on trial, which is why the majority of cases are not reported.

I want to notice the Nova Scotia Government introduced, with the Human Rights Commission, *Safe Places Make Great Workplaces: Prevent and Address Sexual Harassment in your Workplace* - it's a free, online resource. Wonderful, I want to encourage everyone to go there, it's #safespacesNovaScotia.

We could require every university student to have to take something similar - if you want to get your marks, you have to take an online course. There's no reason why we can't do a better job to educate our students because no matter what else we're teaching them, we need them to be better citizens and we need to do that now.

We know that everyone in this Legislature cares deeply about this issue. I would like to say I am optimistic that it is going to get passed this reading, but I'm not. Having said that, I would like to say that each university itself is trying to do what it can do, but we need to hold them accountable. Each of the universities in this province did report how many people were sexually assaulted. There were 24 in the past year. That doesn't sound like very many, but having worked in health care for 35 years, I can tell you that people who had it happen to them 10, 20, or 50 years ago can still feel it as if it was happening to them today - so 24 is 24 too many.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I cannot think of a single reason to vote against this bill. I cannot imagine anyone thinking that it isn't a good idea. I will admit that I can imagine that no university wants to have their statistics plastered on their website but, to be honest, I would gladly send my granddaughter to a university that did so because I would have a sense that they cared deeply about this issue and that they were trying harder than others to deal with it.

I know that every woman's group, every sexual assault centre and every victim out there, and every friend of a victim, which is pretty much the entire province, is going to watch the government and all MLAs when they talk about this issue and to whether they support a bill of this type. If it made it to a vote I would be voting "yes", all of our PC MLAs would be voting "yes," and I would encourage everyone else who is sitting in this Legislature to do so. It is time for Nova Scotia to become a national leader in mandating our diverse post-secondary institutions, to have a clear policy with student input and to post the incidents, the strategies, the changes and, hopefully, the improvements online.

Due process and presumption of innocence must always be part of our system, but not having a clear policy forces the victims to go only to the police and not necessarily to the campus with which they have entrusted their lives. Even doing so doesn't necessarily keep them safe on a campus. We have seen how the justice system treats sexual assault survivors sometimes, but we are moving in that direction to improve that as well.

It is time for all of us to do better. I implore all members of this House to support this bill in moving it forward, and I strongly urge the government to support this and to make it happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I want to start off by apologizing, I am in the midst of an allergic reaction to something, so if you see me squinting - and I don't need any sarcastic comments about being on this side of the Chamber or whatever.

I really am so honoured and privileged to be able to stand up and speak to this bill today. I'd like to thank the Opposition for introducing this bill. It really is a privilege to stand here and speak on such an important topic. It is not the first time I have stood; as the member opposite mentioned, we have had similar bills brought forward. I have been the one able to speak to them.

I want to echo the member's request - or dare I say demand - of universities to have policies that are clearly outlined. I think looking in the security section of a website is not acceptable. It's important to encourage and to support a stand-alone policy for each of our universities across the province, 100 per cent. I really do agree that we're a long way from solving this issue entirely, but I dare say I wish it could be as easy as a piece of legislation to make this happen.

If it were so simple to have a piece of legislation that would eradicate this issue, not just on university campuses but across all of society, I would say this government would have brought it forward or the previous NDP Government would have brought it forward or the previous PC Governments would have brought it forward. This is definitely a topic that goes beyond political stripes. This isn't partisan. This is something that either has impacted or will impact each and every one of us who sit in this Chamber, or someone close to us, whether we realize it or not or whether we're ever even told of it or not.

It's not a new issue. Unfortunately for us, it's a much larger issue to solve. How, then, can we eradicate sexualized violence? How do we solve misogynistic attitudes and the culture we exist in of victim-shaming and victim-blaming that are entrenched in our society?

When I was younger I was taught to protect myself from dangerous situations. I was told to be mindful of how I dressed, to not go anywhere alone. When I started going

to bars I was told not to put my drink down, to always keep it in my sight in case somebody was to slip something in it.

But then on the flip side, through popular culture and through experience, I was taught that boys don't like aggressive girls, that I should work hard at always being polite, to not argue too much or to disagree too much, to be pleasing, to be demure, to be friendly, to not make others feel uncomfortable, and to defuse any awkward situations that I might find myself in.

So it's in this dizzying environment, which still exists, that we continue to raise our girls. A number of friends are now parents to little girls. Some of my friends who used to go downtown with me are now raising this new crop of little girls. They're teaching them to have strong voices and to be determined, because deep down they know that soon enough girls will rule the world. But ultimately, is this the environment that we're actually sending these young girls out into? I don't know. I know that we can't get discouraged, no matter how hopeless it seems at times.

I know we need to be teaching our boys just as much as we teach our girls - teaching them that being a man means being respectful, that being a man means understanding not only what rape means and looks like in the most violent extreme but also what implicit consent means and what that looks like.

If we teach our girls to use their voice, then we must teach our boys to use their ears. We need to teach our children and ourselves that there is no place for victim-blaming or -shaming, and at the same time there is no place for an incensed court of public opinion. The only way for progress is in healthy, educated, calm debate, no matter how badly we want to scream at the top of our lungs at the unfairness and disgrace of it all.

Our government has tried to address this issue head-on. The member opposite asked for assurances on this. In 2015, the province and university presidents entered into a memorandum of understanding to combat sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses. As part of this commitment, the sexual violence prevention committee was formed, and in December this committee released their report, *Changing the culture of acceptance*, with 10 recommendations on how to directly help prevent sexual violence on university campuses. I believe that was tabled in this House at the time.

The first of its kind, this report does not sugar-coat or mince words on the issues of sexual violence and the societal influences of power and privilege. I encourage everyone to read this report, and see first-hand the findings of this dedicated and passionate group of people who make up this committee.

The committee explored the many complexities of sexual violence in the development of their recommendations, many of which were touched on by the member opposite's remarks, such as the disproportionately higher rates of incidents involving

women, women of colour, Indigenous women, lesbian and bisexual women, trans women, and women with a disability. They examined the influence of power and privilege in the many systems of oppression, including gender inequality, racism, colonialism, heterosexism, and ableism. They examined the intersecting oppressions experienced by marginalized populations based on their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ability, class, age, and religion.

Sexual cyberbullying, consent, hypersexuality, and alcohol consumption were also explored to better understand the issue of sexualized violence, as were the many on-campus and societal influences, including the normalcy of an alcohol culture, and the heightened masculinity commonly found in athletics and fraternity.

Seven months of research and dialogue, and input of community stakeholders led to the 10 recommendations. These include: the delivery of consent education, training on responding to sexual violence disclosures, the development and delivery of anti-oppression education for leaders on campus, the establishment of sexual violence prevention advisory committees, and the development of a Nova Scotia specific bystander education program.

They are focused on primary prevention initiatives, reducing victim-blaming - and I can't stress that enough, reducing victim-blaming, which is so prevalent here, and in our society - and changing the culture in which sexual violence exists. At the end of the day, students should be able to study and learn in an environment free from the fear of sexual violence, and I believe that these recommendations will help us to achieve that.

This report serves as an important resource for our universities, and although it was produced specifically for them, its value extends to every community and every household across the province. It really is about shifting the culture in which sexual violence exists. This report, I assure you, will not be one that just sits on a shelf. We expect our universities to address each of these recommendations. It's important for the safety of our students, and for our campuses, and I believe it will serve our communities too.

The report complements the work of the Sexual Violence Strategy, which has made progress over the past three years, and I would like to take a moment to commend our Minister of Community Services, and our Minister of Labour and Advanced Education for their work on both of these strategies, and their commitment to eradicating sexual violence.

Together, this is the kind of work that will make our province strong, and we must keep making progress. I want to end by encouraging all of the members present in this Chamber, to collaborate, and to raise awareness on this subject. To look around, to see how we treat each other, what we say to one another, how we support each other. When we leave, and we go out into our communities, each and every one of us touches every corner of this province, our words, what we say, what we do, how we behave impacts and resonates with all of those that we represent. If we begin to change, if we begin to hold ourselves to a higher standard, if we begin to raise awareness, then those community

members will begin to see that as the norm. I truly believe that we are in such a unique position, because we really do have such a broad impact across the whole province, we really can make a change.

I encourage all of us to begin to facilitate the cultural shift that we need to make in order to truly help, not only solve this horrific issue, but indeed make this a safer and healthier place for all of our children, and grandchildren alike.

[4:15 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River.

MS. LENORE ZANN: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 6, an Act to Address Sexual Violence at Colleges and Universities. I want to thank the Progressive Conservative caucus for bringing this forward.

Mr. Speaker, it's very hard to understand why we in the Opposition need to keep pressing this government to take meaningful action and take steps to deal with the culture of sexual harassment and violence on university campuses today.

In 2015, the NDP actually introduced the Safer Universities and Colleges Act. It was a much-needed response - we felt then and now - to several events that had revealed the disturbing degree to which misogyny, sexism, and sexual violence often go unchecked on campuses. Fifteen hundred students sent postcards to the government asking that our bill be passed, but the Liberals responded by saying that it was "a good conversation to have," and then they never even brought the bill forward for debate. That was more than two years ago - three years ago, actually. Students are still calling on the government for action.

Despite this government's non-binding changes to the memorandum of understanding between government and universities, half of the post-secondary institutions in the province have failed to comply with the MOU's standards for sexual assault policies. Acadia, Dalhousie, Kings College, and the Atlantic School of Theology are all below standard. This government is acting like it doesn't understand that the damage done by sexual violence on campuses is hugely problematic. As this government makes slow and superficial changes, more students, mostly women and trans people are facing harassment and violence - and I would also have to say people of diverse cultures, races, and backgrounds. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

The rape chants at Saint Mary's University, the deeply misogynist dentistry group at Dalhousie, and the university's mishandled response were really wake-up calls for this province. But those incidents grew out of an underlying culture that does not understand consent and seems to just high-five misogyny and racism. That didn't go away when the

headlines did. One in five women studying in North American post-secondary institutions experience sexualized violence over the course of her studies. For survivors, those traumas can have lasting impacts. I know, Mr. Speaker. I am one of them.

This government has the power to do something about that, and it's not that hard to do. Ontario has done it. Manitoba has done it. Quebec has done it. B.C. has done it. What's wrong with Nova Scotia? Aren't we good enough? Don't we deserve that too? The work isn't done in those provinces, but at least they are listening to students, and they are taking effective steps.

We're not finished, Mr. Speaker. We can't keep letting new students enter institutions that don't have the tools to challenge the cultures of misogyny and sexual violence on campus and to keep students safe. We need legislation that requires every single university and college to have a stand-alone survivor-centric sexual assault policy and to publicly report incidents of sexual assault on campus.

That's why tomorrow, on International Women's Day, I will be reintroducing our own NDP bill, the Safer Universities and Colleges Act. Our bill has been developed in consultation with students, and it has the teeth to make sure that universities and colleges get their act together, something that this government seems unwilling or unable to do.

What Bill No. 6 and our own NDP bill both mean for me is, sadly, that they remind me what it means to be a woman in 2018. However, for me and for so many of us who are engaged in the struggle and have been for many years, it is also a time of transformation. The culture is finally shifting. Victims and survivors are speaking up, and the message is becoming louder and clearer. Time's up. Time's up, Mr. Speaker. Honest, intimate conversations about consent and what that means, and the sheer scale of sexual harassment and assault are finally emerging as more and more #MeToo stories are shared publicly.

I, too, have had the opportunity to tell my story, including the old boys' club mentality I have personally experienced in both show business and politics, that has for too long made so many workplaces intimidating and difficult for women to rise to their full potential. That is what is missing here, Mr. Speaker - women being able to rise to their full potential with full support, and without fear.

While the NDP can now celebrate having the highest proportion of women MLAs of any caucus with Official Party status right across Canada, we are still facing a government that is unwilling to properly address the problem of sexual assault on our campuses, for our young people, our young women, and this boggles the mind.

Sadly, sexualized violence remains pervasive in our culture, our communities, workplaces and our homes, but as the feminist chorus becomes larger and louder with each sister's voice who steps forward from out of the shadows, the power of our voices singing together - our truth is growing.

Some amazing women's organizations are working on the ground with sexual assault survivors and they are adding their notes of strength and stability to the chorus, but they, too, cannot meet the growing need for counselling, therapy, and advocacy without a committed and financially-supportive partner in government. Many of these community-based services are at risk of losing their funding, and that is a shame. We cannot have that. That's why it's so important for government to not only support those organizations but to invest in the support of our advanced education students.

In studying this bill, as both the N.S. NDP spokesperson for the Status of Women, and also Advanced Education, I would really like to reaffirm right now our NDP commitment to taking action on sexualized violence. As I said, we've already introduced legislation to strengthen the response to sexual assault, and we will be reintroducing that tomorrow. But with a caucus of five women and two male allies, we are using our voices in the Legislature to call on this government to make the reasonable investment needed to expand sustainable sexual assault services in our universities and colleges, as well as our women's centres and sexual assault centres across this province.

I am happy, Mr. Speaker, to stand here in the Legislature as one of 17 women in the Women's Caucus, and to say that in spite of the challenges still facing us, feminism is alive and well in Nova Scotia. Yes, it is - it's alive and well. All of us here who have taken the trouble to run for our seats and get elected are part of the answer.

I'm inspired by all the activists among us who embody a diverse, intersectional approach to changing our world one day, one march, one song, one poem, one heart, one breath, one student, and one piece of legislation at a time. We can do it, Mr. Speaker. We must do it. We are doing it together. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

MS. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, this is a matter that affects people we know. If we look at the statistics, about one in 1,000 Nova Scotians reports sexual assault each year. If we consider that only six people report sexual assault to the police, that leaves another 16,000 - either incidents or people - who don't. That's upwards of 17,000 people potentially, so this is something that affects somebody we know.

Mr. Speaker, it affects men, it affects women, but at the end of the day, it affects us all, whether it is affecting us directly or indirectly.

Let's look at who is being affected the most. According to the Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, and that was looking at years 2010 to 2011, most people were between the ages of 17 and 25, which makes this bill most relevant. If we want to try to focus on helping the people affected, which we do, and we have heard a statistic that 50 per cent are young people, we have to consider, where is this happening? Where is the

audience who needs our support? Mr. Speaker, colleges and universities are part of that, which is what this bill is about.

If the administrations at the universities and colleges that we count on to protect our youth on campus do not record incidents, if they do not warn the student population to be extra vigilant, then our young women and men bear a very high burden of risk. Yes, there is the presumption of innocence under our legal system, but that in no way absolves universities and colleges from having a clear policy, which includes ensuring reported complaints and incidents are available to students, posted on a website right online. If the university administration hides this information even passively by not reporting it, then it accepts no responsibility for preventing sexual violence on campus.

If we are to look at the root causes of some of this behaviour for the purpose of preventing it in the first place, I think about a speech that I have given in this Legislature before on pornography and the need to keep pornography out of the hands of children. Mr. Speaker, it's one thing for adults to watch pornography, but quite another if we allow our children to watch it.

I learned this when I went out to a conference in Winnipeg, which I attended with some of the survivors that we have had in this Legislature. Bob Martin and Dale Sutherland were two of them, and when I went out there, they received a media award for the work they did in advocating to change legislation in this Legislature. At that conference, there were people speaking about young women who are taken and forced into prostitution. They were asking, how do they get them into the trade? They linked pornography to that. They linked a lot of things to it.

One of the significant issues they spoke about that we should be concerned about in this Legislature is, what are we doing to keep pornography out of children's hands? Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, to date we have done nothing.

That is something for us to be thinking about. I learned at the conference that the average age when a young person starts consuming pornography is 11 years old. Think about that. We know 11-year-olds, and we know 10-year-olds this year, who are going to be 11 next year. If we just let this continue, what are they seeing on there?

They are seeing a lot of violence against women. They say that 90 per cent of pornography has some level of violence against women. Here I am, Mr. Speaker, a man in this Legislature, saying it because it's time for men to speak up too. We're in this together, and we should be in it together for our children.

I think about the biggest thing we could do, Mr. Speaker, is to create a law that would force Internet service providers not to allow pornography to be so easily accessible. That's the easiest thing we could do. People out there who still want to watch porn, we're

not going to stop you, but I think what we should be stopping is porn getting into the hands of children.

[4:30 p.m.]

Mr. Speaker, I think about Bell mental health day. I don't want to pick on just Bell, because all the other Internet service providers are doing the same thing, but Bell has a mental health day where everybody goes on Twitter and puts - I don't know what it is - #Bell mental health. I'm not on Twitter a lot.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let's Talk.

MR. MACMASTER: Let's Talk. Well I would say, let's talk about Internet service providers as the purveyors of pornography, the result being - consider the mental health issues that are a result of that. Consider the mental health issues of 11-year-old boys watching pornography, digesting a steady diet of it, consider the mental health aspect - or 11-year-old girls - and seeing what they think sex is about or what it should be about. Now think about them in a few years' time going off to college or university and thinking that is normal. Mr. Speaker, it's not normal.

I would challenge Bell - and I'll send them a copy of this Hansard when I'm done - that if they're going to have Let's Talk mental health days, consider what you're putting across to young people over the Internet. Consider the mental health impacts of rape, consider the mental health impacts of everything else that is going on that young people are seeing in pornography and maybe acting out a few short years later themselves. Consider that and do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, I will add to that that I think we should do something about it in this Legislature, something for us all to think about. I think we should tear down the political barriers. I think we should get together as three Parties on this, and I think we should put something in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I think of young people who are at universities and colleges and I think about my first week. Maybe I shouldn't talk about that, I have a couple of boys at home now too. I think about what young people are facing. They are going into a world of unknown, there's a lot of alcohol and drugs being consumed around them. There's a lot of expectations that they see through popular culture, whether it's through MTV, whether it's through the Internet, some of the things I've just been speaking about, through popular music. There's a lot of things swirling around in their heads when they're going off to college or university.

I do believe nothing excuses assault, but I will say, let's not ignore our responsibility to do what we can to stop it before it starts.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is about reporting and transparency. It is real, something real. It is saying that sexual assault is real. It is saying that sexual assault has consequences. It is saying that colleges and universities are accountable, that there is a complaints procedure, there is a response protocol, and there is reporting of statistics. That says that it is real. It sends the message to young people when they're going off to college or university that this is something the university cares about, it's real, be aware of it. Hopefully that will act as prevention, and I know it will do a lot of other things as well.

The fact that this Legislature is discussing this bill and hopefully taking action, Mr. Speaker, the fact that universities could implement this bill and would choose to do so, that sends a message that we care and that we want people to come forward who have been sexually assaulted.

They will not be blamed or faulted. They won't be forgotten and there is hope for healing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Mr. Speaker, that does conclude Opposition business for today. I want to thank everybody for their interventions and their thoughtfulness on these topics.

I do want to say one thing, though - maybe on a point of order, if I may. I know the Government House Leader is going to stand up in a few moments to call hours for tomorrow, but I do want to caution that it is International Women's Day tomorrow. There are a number of breakfasts being organized for tomorrow morning, and I want to make sure there is some leniency for our female members who will be attending some of those.

I know it is a 9:00 a.m. start, from what I am understanding, but a 10:00 a.m. start or at least some leniency there, so that our members can attend those things tomorrow morning. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: I am not sure if that is a point of order. I will take it under advisement.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I do thank the honourable Official Opposition House Leader for that. We certainly are open to that. We had discussions with our caucus, and by all means, if we want to get together and talk about the specifics of that, that is easily doable for us. That's a great suggestion and we appreciate it.

With that, that concludes the government's House business for today.

I move that we do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Thursday, March 8, 2018, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.

Following daily routine and Question Period, we will move to third reading on Bill No. 72, and with time remaining, we will resolve ourselves into the Committee of the Whole House on Bills to consider Bill Nos. 52, 66, and 70.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to recess for today to meet again tomorrow from the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

We have reached the moment of interruption under Rule 5(5), submitted by the honourable member for Dartmouth North.

“Therefore be it resolved that the Government of Nova Scotia and the Department of Community Services failed Abdoul Abdi by not assisting him in gaining Canadian citizenship while in their care and should, therefore, immediately enact policy to ensure the department seeks to obtain citizenship, in a timely fashion, for children in their care.”

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION UNDER RULE 5(5)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

COMM. SERV. - CHILDREN IN CARE (ABDOUL ABDI): CDN. CITIZENSHIP - DUTY TO OBTAIN

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, thank you to everyone for paying attention to this important situation that is facing a citizen - I'm sorry, a person from Nova Scotia who could be facing deportation.

As the House probably knows by now, Abdoul Abdi came to Nova Scotia as a six-year-old boy, as a refugee from Somalia. His family was escaping the war-torn situation in Somalia. Shortly after he arrived in Nova Scotia as a refugee, he was removed from the care of his aunt, who was his legal guardian. While in the care of the province, he was transferred to 31 foster homes or group homes until he aged out of the child protection system.

Eventually, Mr. Abdi became involved with the justice system. He committed a crime and was incarcerated. Now that he has done his time in prison, he is facing a deportation order back to Somalia - a country he does not know.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I just want to remind the honourable member and all honourable members who are in the House who will be talking on this specific topic

that this is a case before the courts. We are not permitted, in this Legislature, to speak to the name of an individual who is in that position.

You can speak generally to the topic of what you have put forward without mentioning the names of specific individuals who are before the courts - just so all members are aware.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North has the floor.

MS. LEBLANC: So that everyone knows who I am referring to, I will say “the individual.” The individual in question now faces a deportation order back to Somalia, where he does not speak the language and he has no family. Indeed, it is a country that is deemed so unsafe by our country that Canada advises that we do not travel to Somalia, or if we are in Somalia, to leave immediately.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Just for further clarity, we are unable to talk about the case specifically - the topic in general terms, not the specific case. I know it’s a bit tricky, but given the circumstances, those are the parameters of this House. Carry on, please.

MS. LEBLANC: Thank you. When we look at the Children and Family Services Act of Nova Scotia, there are a couple of places that I want to highlight.

The first one is where it says “. . . children have basic rights and fundamental freedoms no less than those of adults and a right to special safeguards . . .” If a child is in care, I would argue that that status of their citizenship would be deemed a special safeguard to preserve the child’s rights and freedoms. If we look at a child who doesn’t benefit from this, then we get the situations where people don’t have the status of being a Canadian citizen and can face situations like, for instance, deportation to a country that they are not familiar with.

Later in the Children and Family Services Act, as part of the preamble, it says, “AND WHEREAS when it is necessary to remove children from the care and supervision of their parents or guardians, they should be provided for, as nearly as possible, as if they were under the care and protection of wise and conscientious parents.” We need to ask, did the government provide protection as though the government was a wise and conscientious parent when the individual was in the care of Nova Scotia? I am not referring to the case before the courts. I am referring to when the child was in the care of Nova Scotia. Did Nova Scotia act as a wise and conscientious parent?

As a parent, if I was bringing my family to another country, for any reason, let alone as a refugee having to flee Canada for some reason, I know that I would do all I could to protect my children with whatever was the strongest protection possible in that new place. In Canada, we would assume, we believe, that being a Canadian citizen is what would

protect us the most. We who are Canadian citizens here have the most rights and privileges of anyone else who lives in this country. Therefore, I wonder why the government would not have looked after this protection for a child in its care, especially given that there were other family members advocating for that child, who wanted . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'm going to ask the honourable member to take a pause. We'll stop the clock and give you the allotted time. I want to check on something around the logistics of this and the law as it stands. We're going to take a short recess while we do that.

[4:43 p.m. The House recessed.]

[4:48 p.m. The House reconvened.]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Before we resume with the time left for the honourable member for Dartmouth North, I want to remind you that the topic is on the question of policy and we cannot get into the details of any case before any level of court. So, I would ask you to keep your comments general and directed towards policy on the topic, but not on the particulars of this or any court case.

The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will do my best, I really will, I promise, I am not trying to - if I stray from that, I am not trying to do it on purpose. I am going to say "hypothetically" to the last few things that I wanted to say.

When I stopped, I was talking about the part of the Children and Family Services Act that said that children ". . . should be provided for, as nearly as possible, as if they were under the care and protection of wise and conscientious parents."

The third part of the Act that I want to bring to the attention of the House is in the Purpose and paramount consideration, Clause 2(2). "In all proceedings and matters pursuant to this Act, the paramount consideration is the best interests of the child." So, hypothetically, if a child is in the care of the state and does not have citizenship, then it is in the best interests of the child to have his or her citizenship obtained for him/her by the province. It is the duty of a parent to look after a child as best as possible, and the province is the child's parent in the cases when a child is in the care of the province. So, the province needs to obtain citizenship for a child who is not a citizen.

I can't imagine a situation where it would not be in the child's best interest to apply for citizenship on the child's behalf. So, given that, I would suggest that in the Province of Nova Scotia - we don't know how many children this has affected in Nova Scotia. We don't know how many children in care are not citizens at this point, because we don't

collect that data, so we need to start collecting data on these particulars when children are brought into care. That is the first thing I would say I am adamant about.

The other thing is we have heard from the Premier, from the Minister of Community Services, and from the Deputy Minister of Community Services, that changes or discussion is afoot in terms of these policies. Well, we've also heard that changes won't happen until 2019, and my question is, why wait until 2019? It is a simple policy change. All it would mean is that when a child is taken into care, somebody would check to see if they are a citizen, and if they are not a citizen, they would start the ball rolling on the citizenship process. That does not seem like a policy that needs to wait until 2019.

There could be children in this situation in the care of the province right now who are vulnerable and if the province does not pay attention to this then the province could fail these children. This could save lives. Lives could be lost because of this policy not being in place.

I think the rest of my comments were specific to a case before the federal courts so I will say that Black Lives Matter and Children's Lives Matter, and we need to do the right thing and change these policies now. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I think this is going to be a tough 10 minutes. I think the member is right, it's going to be hard not to address the specific court case. What I want to talk about is, I know that one of the questions put forward was, how many children has this impacted? I can tell you three that I know of - myself, my oldest brother, and my second-oldest brother. When we were taken into custody, I was five years old. I was born in Weymouth, England. I did not carry Canadian citizenship. My other brother Paul was born in Ballyhaunis, Ireland, he did not carry Canadian citizenship and my oldest brother was born in Weymouth, England - or Dorset - and he did not carry Canadian citizenship. My other brother and my two sisters did.

My parents, for some odd reason - Ireland, England, Canada, Ireland, England, Canada - so they were all over the place. In my own experience, how this went down was when I turned 14 my social worker at the time, Charmaine Tanner, approached me and said, you are not a Canadian citizen, you need to get Canadian citizenship. No, I don't care about that, it does nothing for me, I've got other things I need to do. It wasn't a priority. When I was 15, you need to get Canadian citizenship, we'll get you a lawyer, we'll set you on the process, it doesn't take long. No, I don't want to.

When I was 16, I finally agreed. The Department of Community Services and Charmaine took me hand-in-hand, they took me to get my picture at the time. I don't know how the citizenship process works now, but you had to read a book, you had to write a test,

and then you had to be sworn in, in front of a judge. She was there with me every step of the way.

One of the things they said to me, and I'll never forget it was, there's several options: you can be a Canadian citizen, you can continue to be a citizen of the U.K., or you can do a dual citizenship. I said I'd like to do a dual citizenship. Well no, we're not doing that, we're going to make you a Canadian citizen and that's it. So, I had to stand there and fight for that.

One of the things I try to wrap my head around in this process, without going into the specifics of that case, because quite honestly, no one in this room really knows the specifics of that case, we don't know the conversations that were had, we don't know the difficult choice. The truth of the matter is, for anyone who has been in the system, to bounce around from 30 homes, the least of your concerns is a citizenship. That's the least of your concerns. So, nobody knows that was going through anyone's mind - not 30, but let's say it was 10 - I see you looking at me. Just in general, when you're in care, that's the least that's going through your mind.

The truth of the matter is, my two brothers and I were treated with respect. I'm just talking about my own personal experiences. There was pushback. We didn't feel like Canadian citizens, and we didn't feel like Nova Scotians, so we didn't care about our citizenship. At what point do we say, you have to, you have to do this?

I understand when people say that when you're a ward of the court, the government is your parent. It's not that simple. It really isn't. That is one of the things that I spent a lot of time on. Before I did this job, now that I'm doing this job, and long after I do this job, I will continue to talk to kids in care, because I feel like we're all connected, and we are all a special group. A lot of kids go through a tremendous amount of trauma. To come out the other end okay, to me, is a miracle.

The government is your parent. How many people here have listened to their parents? Can your parents force you to do something if you say no? I guess that's the fine line. I have spoken to lots of legal experts on this. I have talked to people who were in similar situations, and I have drawn on my own personal experience.

How do we cross that line and say, listen John, you have to get a Canadian citizenship - you have to get rid of your own citizenship, or you have to get dual citizenships in order to continue to be a citizen of this country and to get all the benefits of this great country? I don't think this is as black and white as everyone in this room does. Listen, I understand your passion and everyone in this room's, and the people I have spoken to about this case. I understand. It's a very difficult case, whatever case that may be. It also brings up similar cases that have been before the courts, or similar experiences that have been before the courts - I'll go off on a little bit of a tangent, no surprise - that have spurred up

some kind of thoughts about what direction government and governments, federally and provincially, should take.

The federal government - I continue to go back to mandatory sentencing. I think that our judicial system has to have the ability to look at every single case individually and say, that individual here may have done this, but this is what led to it. It's not as simple as just saying, this guy over here or this lady over here broke into a car or maybe committed a violent crime, and they just did it because they're a bad person. Let's get rid of them. Let's lock them up. Let's deport them from this country. There are reasons why they got there.

There have been failures along the way. There have been failures from every level of government. There have been failures from individuals who should care for these people. There have been failures from people who should have protected and respected these children, because that's what they were. Now we're saying that as adults, there are consequences.

These cases are not as black and white, and they're not as easy. It's not about race, it's not about gender, and it's not about sexuality. The courts are going to make their decision. I look forward to whatever outcome of whatever court case.

What I want to say is that my own personal experience through DCS - people who know me know that I have been critical of past experiences that I have had through the system. I'm sure there are probably people at Community Services watching this right now, kind of white knuckling their desk to see what I'm going to say.

The truth is that experience that I went through around citizenship was very well explained to me. I would hope, I would hope and pray, that they would do the exact same for any individual who came into DCS, no matter their race, culture, religion, or sex. I have faith in the system that they may have. I look and I think, hypothetically if these things happen, then you have to look at those individuals and ask, why did they make that decision?

I hope whenever the courts come down with their decisions, on whatever cases that there may be, that they look at the past circumstances. But in the end, my experience when it came to citizenship, I think I was very educated on it. They told me the importance of keeping it. They explained that to my brothers, why it was important to keep it once we told them we wanted to stay.

I understand why things get politicized. I just don't think it makes a situation better. I don't think it makes a situation better to point fingers and say, that government did this, and this government did that. Someone slipped me a note a while ago that said, you know what? Previous governments had their hand in whatever court case may be there. Who

cares? This is where we are now. If there need to be policy changes, if we need to protect these individuals, then we do it.

[5:00 p.m.]

But how do we force them? That's the problem. You can't force individuals. Even a child - we can't force a child to do our bidding. We can't say, you are going to do this. Citizenship is very personal. I'm sorry, it's a very personal thing to belong to this country.

I am proud to belong to this country, but I'm also proud that I was born in England. I'm also proud that I have northern Irish roots and that my children are the first natural Canadian citizens in my family. I'm proud of that, but I'm also proud of where I came from.

Do we force that on a child at a young age? Or do we wait until they're hopefully old enough to make a decision, allow them to know their past, and allow them to know what it means to be Somali or Irish or Greek or Lebanese?

I don't know what the outcome of that court case is going to be, but I hope it's good.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage.

MS. BARBARA ADAMS: I would first like to start off by thanking the member for Halifax Atlantic for sharing such a personal story with us once again, and the member for Dartmouth North for raising the issue.

Having worked in the health care industry, I'm used to working with vulnerable groups. On becoming the Critic for Community Services which includes children in care, I have heard a lot of stories that break your heart.

I remember the first time I had to be away from my family. I went to Toronto for a conference and had a phone call from my son. I think he was seven or eight years old. Of course, on the phone, he didn't know where I was. He said, you're going to be at my basketball game tonight, right, Mom? I said, no, I can't, and he immediately started crying and said, but you're always there. I felt like crap, and I can honestly say I haven't missed too many others. One night away from my son left him traumatized. I don't think he feels the same way now. He's 26.

The point is, somebody who has been bounced around from one foster home to another is, if not the most vulnerable, at least one of the most vulnerable in our society. I agree with the honourable member - I don't know that it's important to point fingers because the one thing we don't do in this Legislature nearly enough is recognize the maybe 99 per cent of the cases we do get right. We're always looking for the cases that didn't go

right so that we can try to bring about change. If we're trying to do it just to make ourselves look good, that's not a good thing, but if we're trying to see that the system improves, then it does have a purpose.

We're talking about quite a number of different government systems when we're talking about these hypothetical issues that we're talking about today. We're talking about the foster care system, which is enormously complex. We're talking about immigration, which is even harder to navigate. We're also talking, in some of these cases, about the criminal system, that somebody moved from foster care into that system. Then along the way, there may have been leaks or gaps in the education and health care systems, especially for children in the care of the government because there isn't necessarily a consistent person to navigate and advocate for them. We're not sure exactly how things go wrong in certain cases, so the onus is on us to try to fill in the holes and plug the gaps where we can.

I just want to talk about two issues that my constituents faced, one with respect to immigration and one with respect to foster care. I had a constituent who was working here on a work visa from another country. She lost the job because the company she was working for went bankrupt. She wanted to open up the very same business that went bankrupt, but the route for her to try to get citizenship was so onerous, that we went around the loop over and over again, between the federal and provincial governments and agencies, to the point where she got so desperate, she hopped in the car and drove to the border in Ontario to try to get solutions to her immigration issues.

I'm sad to say that she never made it through that. I know at one point me trying to get a phone call from Immigration Services resulted in me not getting any answers from anybody, to the point where I jumped in the car and drove over to Halifax and walked in and sat outside somebody's office until they paid attention.

I will acknowledge that I spoke to the Minister of Immigration about this issue, and she very quickly helped me with that issue, and I appreciate that. But there are others who are trying to navigate this issue, there are point citizenship and immigration - sorry, I just want to point out that there are quite a number of people who want to move here and I would mention the Canadian Federation of Students and they mentioned that in Cape Breton almost half of the students going there are coming from foreign countries, and an awful lot of them want to stay here but the point system does not allow them to do so.

Unfortunately, once you reach my age or older, that goes against you as well. I won't tell you how old I am, thank you very much there, minister, but I'll let that pass. I'm just telling you that if I tried to apply now, you might not let me in - maybe for other reasons than my age, I don't know.

There are an awful lot of hard-working, great people who want to come to this province and stay here. We need to make that as easy as possible. We know there are

language barriers, we know there are all sorts of other barriers, and we want to steamroll those down, so this is just an opportunity to talk about that.

I am sensitive to the fact that the more immigrants we have here, the more people we have here, it may result in more kids in care temporarily, so we need to talk about kids in care and the foster care system.

We have a new wave of people taking in children without parents, and that is grandparents. For some strange reason - and I've mentioned this before - but in a two-month period I had five sets of grandparents trying to gain custody of their grandchildren, and in a couple of cases just trying to have unsupervised access with their grandchildren, even though they already have adopted another child. It's very difficult, because the policies in foster care are very specific to foster parents, but not necessarily grandparents. So as a grandparent, I know it would absolutely devastate me if, for some reason, or any reason, I couldn't see my own grandchildren.

In this particular situation where we've got the foster care system criss-crossing with the immigration system, and the criminal system, it's very difficult to have all those agencies working together, but we can take a look at it. I don't know, as the other member said, how many children in foster care in this province right now may need to gain citizenship, but I will encourage the Minister of Community Services to look at that, although I have spoken with her about this issue, and she has been very kind in dealing with my questions, especially the specific cases with the grandparents that I'm talking about.

I do agree with everyone here that we all care about the children who are in the government's care, but we can always do better, without pointing any fingers, so I am going to call on the government and every member of this House to support any endeavours that improve the lives of any child in this province, especially for those for children in care. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: In the absence of any other speakers on the topic, I'd like to thank you all for your contributions to late debate tonight.

The House now stands adjourned.

[The House rose at 5:10 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 1009**

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas the 40th Annual 4-H Provincial Show was held at the Annapolis Valley Exhibition Grounds in Lawrencetown from September 29 to October 1, 2017; and

Whereas more than 2,300 projects were showcased and attended by several thousand 4-H members and their leaders; and

Whereas Isabella Phillips from the 4+1 Maple Nuts Club won the Junior Scrapbooking Competition;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Isabella Phillips and wish her all the best.

RESOLUTION NO. 1010

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Digby volunteer firefighters were honoured February 17, 2018, at the department's annual banquet; and

Whereas William Grover was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping to preserve the security of our town, municipality, and surrounding communities:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter William Grover for his 10 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1011

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Digby volunteer firefighters were honoured February 17, 2018, at the department's annual banquet; and

Whereas Sean Gamborg was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping to preserve the security of our town, municipality, and surrounding communities:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Sean Gamborg for his 10 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1012

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Digby volunteer firefighters were honoured February 17, 2018, at the department's annual banquet; and

Whereas Mike Bartlett was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping to preserve the security of our town, municipality, and surrounding communities:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Mike Bartlett for his 20 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1013

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Digby volunteer firefighters were honoured February 17, 2018, at the department's annual banquet; and

Whereas Kenny Walker was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping to preserve the security of our town, municipality, and surrounding communities:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Kenny Walker for his 30 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1014

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Digby volunteer firefighters were honoured February 17, 2018, at the department's annual banquet; and

Whereas Steve Savory was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping to preserve the security of our town, municipality, and surrounding communities:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Steve Savory for his 30 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1015

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas many local volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the Digby volunteer firefighters were honoured February 17, 2018, at the department's annual banquet; and

Whereas Kevin Manzer was recognized for his dedication and service beyond the call of duty in helping to preserve the security of our town, municipality, and surrounding communities:

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate firefighter Kevin Manzer for his 15 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1016

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Alfred Comeau was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 15 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Alfred Comeau for his 15 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1017

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Christine Deveau was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for her 5 years of dedicated service to her community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Christine Deveau for her 5 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1018

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Dony Deveau was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 25 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Dony Deveau for his 25 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter,

RESOLUTION NO. 1019

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas David Doucette was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 20 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter David Doucette for his 20 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1020

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Dwayne Beck was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 5 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Dwayne Beck for his 5 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1021

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Paul LeBlanc was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 30 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Paul LeBlanc for his 30 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1022

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Raymond Saulnier was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 25 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Raymond Saulnier for his 25 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.

RESOLUTION NO. 1023

By: Mr. Gordon Wilson (Clare-Digby)

I hereby give notice that on a future day I shall move the adoption of the following resolution:

Whereas volunteer firefighters provide a vital and outstanding service throughout rural Nova Scotia; and

Whereas volunteer firefighters are individuals who show their dedication to serving others by protecting our homes and communities, often risking their lives to do so; and

Whereas Yvon Thibodeau was honoured at the Little Brook Volunteer Fire Department Awards Banquet on November 25, 2017, for his 25 years of dedicated service to his community;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House of Assembly congratulate Firefighter Yvon Thibodeau for his 25 years of service as a dedicated volunteer firefighter.