



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/>

Second Session

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

Sixty-third General Assembly

Second Session

1:00 P.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Kevin Murphy

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Mr. Brendan Maguire

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll now begin the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table a petition, the operative clause which reads:

“WHEREAS the discriminatory use of street checks against Black people causes psychological trauma, perpetuates negative correlations between criminality and race, decreases trust in the judicial system, and disempowers Black communities to live safely and free of racism.

Therefore, we the undersigned citizens of Nova Scotia call on the Nova Scotia Government to ban street checks in the province.”

The petition has approximately 550 signatures, and I have affixed my signature as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The petition is tabled.

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, may I take leave to make an introduction?

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. INCE: If everyone could pay attention to the east gallery where I have a number of people here today. I would like to introduce the High Commissioner of St. Kitts and Nevis, Sherry Tross, and senior program adviser Kressell Daniel, who have travelled here from Ottawa on this very special day to raise the flag at Grand Parade. Along with them are Mr. Jack Widdowson, a St. Kitts and Nevis tourism and marketing officer for Canada. Also, Dr. Rustum Southwell, who emigrated to Halifax 45 years ago from St. Kitts and is CEO of the Black Business Initiative, BBI.

I would like all members to congratulate and welcome our guests to our province.
(Standing Ovation)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

RESOLUTION NO. 139

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

Whereas today, September 19th, marks the 35th year of independence for the dual-island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis, located in the West Indies, commemorating the day it gained freedom from British rule and control in 1983, and raising the flag here in Halifax, Nova Scotia; and

Whereas the inhabitants of St. Kitts and Nevis, whose African ancestors were originally brought to the islands under enslavement by Europeans, celebrate this day with patriotic flair, highlighting the culture, identity, and history of the island-nation's people; and

Whereas the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes the long-standing history of African-descendant people in Nova Scotia and around the world, and is committed to supporting their efforts for full inclusion in all facets of society;

Therefore be it resolved that the members of this House of Assembly join me in recognizing September 19, 2018, as the 35th Annual St. Kitts and Nevis Independence Day in the Province of Nova Scotia, and continue to celebrate the achievements of people of African descent living around the world.

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. (Applause)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 42 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 494 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Vital Statistics Act. (Hon. Geoff MacLellan)

Bill No. 43 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 35 of the Acts of 2010. The Conflict of Interest Act, and Chapter 34 of the Acts of 2001. The Lobbyists' Registration Act. (Hon. Christopher d'Entremont)

Bill No. 44 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 66 of the Revised Statutes of 1989. The Change of Name Act. (Hon. Geoff MacLellan)

MR. SPEAKER: Ordered that these bills be read a second time on a future day.

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

ODDFELLOWS HOME: PICTURE DAY - THANKS

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, today I stand to recognize the tremendous work done by the staff at the Maritime Oddfellows Home and Graci Young, a local photographer. Together they made Picture Day for the residents of the Oddfellows Home a reality.

The morning of the photo shoot began with summer students creating a pop-up beauty salon for the residents, with hair and makeup treatments available. Each resident was given a personal portrait shoot along with a chalkboard to write something about themselves or where they are from.

This event promoted the socialization of the residents as well as added to their self-esteem. The photos will be shared among residents and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I want to send my sincere thanks to Graci Young and everyone at the Maritime Oddfellows Home for undertaking this inspiring and loving project. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'll draw members' attention to the west gallery where we're joined by Hector Muise, the founder of the Circle of Care Society and a long-time member and tireless volunteer in Dartmouth South. I'd love it if we could offer him the warm welcome of the House. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MUISE, HECTOR & MARGIE: CIRCLE OF CARE - COMMEND

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hector and his wife Margie Muise for their true commitment to community well-being. This year on July 27, 2018, the Circle of Care Society closed its doors. This essential service provided furniture and other household necessities to those most in need in Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, and Eastern Passage for over 10 years.

With four storage facilities and two weekly pickup and deliveries, Circle of Care helped alleviate a huge need in Dartmouth. The Muisés are recognized leaders and volunteers in our community, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their tireless efforts to bring dignity to our community.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member Clayton Park West.

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MS. DICOSTANZO: We have a guest here in the east gallery, if I can draw your attention. This is Mr. Karim George and his wife Nermin who arrived in Canada from Egypt exactly nine years ago. (Applause)

[1:15 p.m.]

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

GEORGE, KARIM: BUS. COM. - ROLE MODEL

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a hard-working businessman and owner from Clayton Park West. Karim George came to Canada from Egypt in 2009, exactly today, and is now the CEO of InTouch Communications Inc. He offers high-quality video production and digital marketing strategies to businesses of all sizes.

Karim employs 11 people and his clients include Killam Properties, O'Regan's, Clayton Developments, and the Halifax Airport Authority. He is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a board member of the Halifax Dunbrack Soccer Club, St. Mena Coptic Orthodox Church, and the Bella Rose Arts Centre, Karim was recently nominated as one of the Top 25 immigrants in the Maritimes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that members of this House of Assembly join me in applauding Karim for his accomplishments. He is certainly a role model for many newcomers to Nova Scotia.

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

INVERARY RESORT: RESTORATION - BEST WISHES

MR. KEITH BAIN: Mr. Speaker, on June 7th, an overnight fire destroyed the main lodge of the Inverary Resort in Baddeck. The building was built in the late 1800s and has been welcoming guests for over 70 years. Even with this tragic loss, the MacAulay family and their staff worked hard to ensure that as few interruptions as possible took place and even hosted a wedding on-site the following weekend.

With the magnitude of the fire, firefighters were on the scene for more than 18 hours. Thanks go to the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department and neighbouring departments for ensuring that the fire didn't spread to other parts of the resort or neighbouring property.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in wishing all the best to the owners and staff of the Inverary Inn Resort as they rebuild and in thanking all fire departments involved for their tireless efforts.

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

KNOCKWOOD, RHONDA: CAREER ADVANCEMENT - CONGRATS.

MS. LENORE ZANN: I rise today to welcome and congratulate Rhonda Knockwood as she relocates from British Columbia to Nova Scotia to join Regional Chief Morley Googoo's Assembly of First Nations Office in Halifax as its new chief of staff.

Ms. Knockwood is wrapping up her role as political advisor and chief negotiator with the government of the Ucluelet First Nation. She also served as chief of staff for Shawn Atleo's AFN regional office in B.C. and, of course, she is no stranger to Nova Scotia, having lived in Sipekne'katik during her consulting work with the Atlantic Policy Congress of Atlantic Chiefs and the Union of Nova Scotia Indians.

A Simon Fraser University MBA in Indigenous Business and Leadership graduate, we are very lucky to have her skills, experience and talent returning to Mi'kma'ki. I look forward to having the opportunity to working with Rhonda Knockwood in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Antigonish.

TOMPKINS, MILES: SERV. TO ANTIGONISH BULLDOGS - RECOG.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, no one can doubt Miles Tompkins' love for the game of hockey or his dedication to the Antigonish Farmers' Mutual Junior B Bulldogs. Over the course of many years, he has been involved with the team in some way or another. He has been the head coach, general manager, executive member and, most recently, president and past-president. Throughout his many roles, he has seen a lot of players come and go, has been involved in a variety of fundraising initiatives, has volunteered uncountable hours to the team and has attended countless games.

Perhaps one of his biggest accomplishments was overseeing the establishment of the Saputo Scholarships. They are open to students enrolled in a secondary school program and are awarded to players who demonstrate academic excellence, community involvement, and athletic performance. The opportunity of a scholarship is an important recruitment tool for the Bulldogs.

Mr. Speaker, Miles' role as a vital volunteer to the Antigonish Farmers' Mutual Junior B Bulldogs will be a large role for the team's executive to fill as Miles steps down as president and scales back his involvement with the club. I know he will be missed and his time has been greatly appreciated.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

MACGILLIVRAY, JAMIE: HIST. RESTORATION - THANKS

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Jamie MacGillivray, owner of MacGillivray Properties Ltd., recently purchased the warehouse portion of the former Maritime Steel Foundry in New Glasgow.

The steel foundry ceased operation approximately seven years ago, ending more than a century of steel-making at this site.

Mr. MacGillivray has established the reputation for caring for historical buildings because he restores many structures and maintains the history of unique landmarks. Jamie plans to reclaim the old warehouse portion of Maritime Steel and to use it to produce and sell industrial-style furniture.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jamie for his concerted effort to maintain environments and spaces in which generations before us lived and worked.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

CAPE BRETON MINERS: VALUING HOSPITALS - RECOG.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: In the former coal-mining town of New Waterford, miners were credited with helping to build the first hospital and, in later years, the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital Charitable Foundation has been raising money for services and equipment.

The first hospital opened in 1913 in two company houses on King Street. In those early days, the main financial support for the hospital came from the miners and other workers. The chair of the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital Charitable Foundation said miners and the community, in general, have always been supportive of the hospital and making sure the necessary equipment and resources were available. Sisters of St. Martha, who administered the hospital before the province took over, had compassion and caring for the community at large.

The New Waterford Consolidated Hospital Charitable Foundation was formed in the 1970s. The foundation took on a greater role with the amalgamation. Any money raised

from the New Waterford Hospital Foundation stays in New Waterford, and we're looking at about \$100,000 to \$200,000 or more through the years.

The hospital means so much in New Waterford to the people, as they were born there and spent their last days on earth there in that hospital. It is the essence of our community, and our government should realize the same.

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

DIGBY CARE 25: COM. FUNDRAISING - THANKS

MR. GORDON WILSON: I rise today to recognize the continuing efforts of Digby Care 25 to contribute to good causes in our area.

Last June the group gave \$3,500 to the Digby Elementary School to go towards their Spark Bike Program. The program and its associated fundraising campaign were established in 2015 by a resource teacher in hopes of procuring 10 of the stationary bikes specially designed to be used in classrooms. The bicycles, some in classrooms across Canada, allow children to work off energy if they become hyper or stressed. They also allow children whose energy is waning to get their blood flowing. In both cases, the children are more attentive and better prepared to learn. This contribution will allow the school to buy a number of bicycles for their classrooms.

Digby Care 25 meets four times a year to hear presentations from groups and choose one to get that night's donations. Since 2014, the group has donated over \$30,000 to projects and causes in our communities. Its members want to make a difference and realize they have a bigger impact on this community. I want to thank them very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

MR. TIM HALMAN: I beg leave to make an introduction.

MR. SPEAKER: Permission granted.

MR. HALMAN: In the west gallery, we have two amazing Dartmouth East residents. We have Ms. Julia Kenney, who is my constituency assistant, and we have Ms. Claire Belliveau, who worked in the Dartmouth East office as a community outreach coordinator. I think all MLAs in this Chamber recognize that we would be nowhere without our constituency staff. I ask the House to give a warm welcome to Julia and Claire. (Applause)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

DOYLE, MARY: ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE - SUPPORTING FAMILIES

MR. TIM HALMAN: In recognition of Alzheimer's Awareness Month, today I would like to honour Mary Doyle, my partner Christine's mother and a long-time constituent of Dartmouth East.

There is no shortage of great tales about amazing moms, from the mothers of the famous to your own. Well, Mary Doyle and her husband gave birth to and raised 13 children. When Christine and I think four is a lot, we think of Mary. We laugh and know that raising four is a breeze compared to 13.

Mary had many trials and suffering in her life, including the loss of three daughters, but her strength, love, and resiliency never wavered, to carry her family through the most difficult times. She is a powerful woman, and her children have nothing but respect for her.

Mary was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and we personally see the overwhelming impact this disease has on families. To see such a strong woman lose the independence she once had is not easy, but Mary's strength lives on in her children.

Mr. Speaker, let us make sure families who care for loved ones with Alzheimer's are supported. I want to thank Mary for her many sacrifices and love and care for those around her.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

LAKECITY WORKS: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS - THANKS

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, last month I had the privilege of volunteering some time at LakeCity Works in Dartmouth North helping to paint a tiny home, which will be raffled off to raise money for programs for people living with mental illness. I also got to tour their showroom, which showcases the amazing and beautiful wood furniture made at LakeCity.

The contributions LakeCity Works makes to our community go far beyond fundraisers and gorgeous pieces of furniture. A not-for-profit that is always developing new programs to support mental health consumers, LakeCity Works started in 1972 as a drop-in for clients requiring mental health supports. Recognizing that work was an important aspect of reintegration and treatment, the business was created in 1988, and a community employment program was launched. Today they continue to provide amazing opportunities for people living with mental illness, from employment services to therapeutic woodworking courses.

Mr. Speaker, LakeCity Works is an invaluable organization in our community, and I would like to express my sincerest appreciation for their thoughtful and much-needed contributions to Dartmouth North.

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

SHERBROOKE 4-H RALLY: TALENTED PRESENTERS - CONGRATS.

HON. LLOYD HINES: Mr. Speaker, Guysborough-Eastern Shore-Tracadie was well-represented at the Eastern Region 4-H rally held recently in Antigonish. Two members from Sherbrooke took home first place in their respective age groups.

Seasoned member Dawson Dort presented his soap and led a demonstration on the soap-making process. He was very knowledgeable and expressed keen interest in the subject matter, impressing the audience with his lemon-fresh product.

Holly Dwyer, in her first year of 4-H, presented her cake-decorating tips using five design techniques, and was a hit with the audience as well - especially after she treated everyone to a free demonstration of her abilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate both Sherbrooke 4-H members on their achievements. They are both excellent examples of the 4-H philosophy – “Learn to do by Doing.”

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MOTHERS' UNION: COM. BREAKFAST - THANKS

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the Mothers' Union and Parish of St. John the Baptist Anglican Church in North Sydney. This dynamic group of volunteers sponsor a free community breakfast three days a week, where everyone is welcome. The breakfast attracts about 50 people each morning and, in addition to a nutritious meal, there's a chance of fellowship.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the women from the Mothers' Union and the Parish of St. John the Baptist for this program that builds community spirit and starts the day with a good hot meal.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Portland Valley.

MURRAY, MARY: MEDALLIST, CAN. 55+ - WELL DONE

HON. TONY INCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the exciting accomplishments of Mrs. Mary Murray, who participated in the 2018 Canada 55-Plus Games, hosted in Saint John, New Brunswick. Mary received a silver medal in swimming for the backstroke and also silver medal in freestyle. Mary also received a bronze medal for the 100-metre butterfly stroke.

I would like to say congratulations to Mary for her contagious enthusiasm and for these noteworthy athletic accomplishments. Well done, Mary. May we all have such zest for life.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Beaver Bank.

MACGREGOR, ANGELA: RETIREMENT - CONGRATS.

MR. BRAD JOHNS: I rise today to recognize Angela MacGregor, a resident of Middle Sackville, someone I have much respect for and a former teacher at the Sackville Heights Elementary School. For 34 years Ms. MacGregor helped to shape the minds of young students at many different schools. Over the years Ms. MacGregor wiped noses, buttoned jackets, and helped to build confidence and independence in countless students.

In June 2018, Ms. MacGregor waved goodbye to her last Grade Primary class before retiring.

I'd ask the members of this Legislature to join me in thanking Ms. MacGregor for her many years of dedicated service and wishing her well in the next phase of her life.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

ROACH, JOE - PHYSICIAN: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize an old country doctor by the name of Dr. Joe Roach. Roach grew up just outside of New Waterford, in the Cape Breton region of Nova Scotia, on the Lingan Road.

Roach, like many of his friends, dropped out of high school to work in the mines. He schooled himself in Latin and received a scholarship to study medicine at Dalhousie University and spent his summers working and saving money.

The miners got word that Dr. Roach was studying medicine and never let him do a job that would risk his hands - we'll take care of you, so that you can take care of us.

He came back to New Waterford on December 28, 1948, where he started to practise medicine. At 83 years old, he saw 40 patients a day, 12,000 patients a year, assisted in operations and treated emergency room patients. He delivered babies, headed up to see patients in the office, and did 10 to 12 house calls on the way, all while he was in a three-piece suit.

In May, when he retired, 400 New Waterforders stood by to celebrate the 83-year-old. Dr. Joe Roach was a family doctor in New Waterford from 1948 until 2004. He died at home in his sleep at age 85, in 2005.

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

PETERS, GILL: ANIMAL WELFARE ADVOCATE - RECOG.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Gill Peters for her outstanding compassion, devotion and advocacy work to protect animals.

As a specialist at PetFocus Veterinary Group, Gill, along with her beloved best friend, a 12-year-old golden retriever by her side, has spent countless hours fundraising for animal rescue events - some of which I have attended personally.

In addition to caring for and supporting rescue animals in Nova Scotia, Gill has taken her mission to love, care, and protect animals overseas to Trinidad and Tobago. While visiting a close friend and former colleague in Trinidad and Tobago, she witnessed first-hand the desperate need for shelters and trained staff to care and protect abandoned dogs in that region. As a result of her life-changing visit, Gill has volunteered her time and devoted her vacations to working in a veterinary clinic at the local shelter in Trinidad and Tobago.

I would like the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Gill for her generosity, passion for her work, and for advocating for the welfare of animals.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

CHARLES, CHRISTOPHER: CADET, PWR. PILOT - CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, local air cadet Christopher Charles, at the age of 17, has risen to the rank of Warrant Officer Second Class at 507 Flight Lieutenant McLean in Aldershot.

This summer, he received his Power Pilot wings in Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador, after receiving a scholarship. Eighteen cadets from Nova Scotia wrote the exam this year and only 12 of them were accepted. As a ground school instructor, Christopher is

regarded as an exceptional cadet by his peers. He completed the Glider Pilot Scholarship in 2017.

I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating Christopher Charles on his accomplishment, and wish him continued success in all his future endeavours.

[1:30 p.m.]

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

SQUARE ROOTS: 1st ANNIV. IN BUS. - CONGRATS.

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Square Roots Fairview/Clayton Park on their one-year anniversary in our community. Square Roots is a local organization that expanded into our community last year. Their project focuses on minimizing food waste and insecurity within the province by providing bundles of produce that would otherwise be composted by farmers at a low cost.

This initiative has been a great success in our community due to the dedication of the project managers and, most importantly, Fairview franchise manager, Jan Merchant. Jan has donated countless hours to this program to ensure that the families in our area have healthy food options at an affordable price.

In the past year, the project has diverted over 50,000 pounds of produce to help hundreds of customers across the province. Square Roots continues to grow and is currently a nominee for the Best Community Project in The Coast's Best of Halifax Readers' Choice Awards.

I ask the members of this House of Assembly to join me in recognizing Jan Merchant and the Square Roots team for a successful first year in business and wish them and this initiative continued success.

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

MIRA RIVER COTTAGES: 20 YRS. IN BUS. - CONGRATS.

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Tom and Eva Kummer, owners of the Mira River Cottages and Riverbank Restaurant on their 20 years in business. Mira River Cottages and Riverbank Restaurant are located on a pristine property on the Mira River, with river access and blooming meadows for the avid naturalist and hiker. The Riverbank Restaurant is very well known for their Canadian and European suppers and it's famous for their delicious barbecues.

I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Tom and Eva Kummer for their 20 years of hard work and dedication, and wish them the very best and many more years of success.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank.

PEACOCK, EMILY: HOMELESS OUTREACH - COMMEND

MR. BILL HORNE: Mr. Speaker, I and our community are very proud of Emily Peacock from Fletcher's Lake. Emily, who is a Grade 4 student at Holland Road Elementary School, participated in the Genius Hour project. This project allowed students one hour a week to work on a project that inspires them to help others. Emily decided to help women and children who were homeless and was able to collect enough items to fill 10 care packages. These donations came from family and friends. These packages are delivered to Adsum House in Halifax by Emily and her mom.

We are very proud of Emily's accomplishments and for helping others.

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

LEEFE, JOHN: 40 YRS., PUBLIC SERV. - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, on September 19, 1978 - 40 years ago today - Mr. John Leefe was elected as the Progressive Conservative MLA for Queens.

Over his 21 years as MLA, John served as Minister of Fisheries, Environment, and Natural Resources. John also served as Government House Leader from 1991 to 1993. In 2000, John continued his public service as mayor of the region of Queens Municipality, a post he held for two years. John is an Honorary Colonel of the West Nova Scotia Regiment and was granted the degree of Doctor of Civil Law by the University of King's College.

In addition to all of this, John has been my loyal friend and trusted adviser. I am so proud to call him my friend. I ask all MLAs to join me in thanking John Leefe for his many years of public service, and wish him many more happy and healthy years.

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

ATL. SPLASH ADVENTURE: NEW MGMT. - BEST WISHES

MR. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Splash Adventure, formerly known as Atlantic Playland, situated on the Lucasville Road is a must for family fun. The new owners have not only changed the name but have upgraded existing attractions. They'll be adding six new waterslides to open next season. The new slides, the Bluenose Blaster and the Bowl of Fundy, to name just two, will make for a full day of fun for the older kids or kids young

at heart. The younger ones can enjoy the splash pool, bumper boats, and three rides just size.

Those who want to stay dry can play a game of minigolf, improve their skills in the batting cage, or race the go-karts. The Ferris wheel and Tilt-a-Whirl can be enjoyed by all.

Atlantic Splash Adventure is great for families that want to cool down on hot summer days.

I ask all members of the House to join me in wishing Atlantic Splash Adventure a successful venture.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou East.

SAUNDERS, STACEY: SPECIAL OLYMPIAN - BEST WISHES

MR. TIM HOUSTON: Mr. Speaker, not many people get to win a medal at an Olympics, but Stacey Saunders from Stellarton did it three times. She won gold in the 100-metre as a member of Team Nova Scotia at the Special Olympics 2018 Summer Games in Antigonish. She also won gold as a member of the 4-by-100-metre relay team, and she won a silver in the shot put.

Her enthusiasm for life in her community is contagious. She's a wonderful young lady and we wish her all the best as she tries to make Team Canada for the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi.

She also competes in floor hockey, basketball, and ice hockey. She is a tremendous athlete and an even better person.

I would like to ask all members of the House to give Stacey a round of applause. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

SCH. OPTIONS COM.: RECOMMENDATIONS - REVIVE CONSULTATION

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to note in the House that it has now been two years since the School Options Committee forwarded its recommendations to the Halifax Regional School Board and since the Halifax Regional School Board voted to accept the recommendations of the School Options Committee that reviewed five schools in the Citadel High School family of schools, four of which are located in Halifax Needham.

The volunteers on the School Options Committee devoted hundreds of hours to carefully examine our community school assets and needs, and hundreds of community members came out to a series of public meetings that were well-facilitated and carefully listened to each other, to school board staff, before helping to shape those recommendations.

I want to acknowledge that that hit a high mark for consultation process and urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to try to resuscitate that spirit of consultation.

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

JORDAN, BERNADETTE: CAREER ADVANCEMENT - CONGRATS.

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to congratulate Bernadette Jordan, Member of Parliament for South Shore-St. Margaret's on her recent appointment by the Prime Minister of Canada as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions.

MP Jordan, first elected in 2015, will assist the Honourable Karina Gould with the duties of her ministry. The Democratic Institutions file includes defence of the Canadian electoral process from cyber-threats.

An important task facing MP Jordan when the House of Commons resumes, as it has resumed, will be shepherding Bill C-73. This legislation proposes changes to campaign financing, ensuring electoral transparency and security, as well as making the Commissioner of Elections Canada more independent from government.

I ask the members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating MP Bernadette Jordan on her appointment as the Parliamentary Secretary for Democratic Institutions.

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

PORT. HAWKES. ROTARY CLUB: DIST. GOV. CITATION - CONGRATS.

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, the incoming secretary for the Rotary Club of Port Hawkesbury, Adam Cooke, attended the Rotary Club District 7820 conference in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador in June.

At the conference, Adam Cooke was presented with the Rotary Club District 7820 District Governor's Citation on behalf of the Port Hawkesbury Rotary Club. Mr. Cooke presented the Port Hawkesbury club with the citation at their May 29th meeting.

The Port Hawkesbury Rotary Club, along with all other Rotary Clubs in Nova Scotia, aims to provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and advance goodwill and peace around the world.

I would like to congratulate all members of the Port Hawkesbury Rotary Club for their District Governor's Citation, and to commend them for the valuable volunteer work they do in the Strait area.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Chebucto on an introduction.

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the members' attention to the west gallery for a moment where it is great for us today to be joined by three guests: Liam Power, Brandon MacDougall, and Richard Helperd.

I will say two things about the three of them. One, that they are all members of the Young New Democrats, and two, this is their first visit to the House this afternoon. I'd like to ask everybody to make them welcome. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

LONG LAKE PROV. PARK ASSOC.: SPRYFIELD DAYS - CONGRATS.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, on the weekend of July 14th, the Long Lake Provincial Park Association hosted Spryfield Days. The entire weekend was filled with family-friendly events that brought residents of the community together for lots of fun and laughter with the beautiful setting of Long Lake Provincial Park.

Spryfield Days kicked off with a Long Lake Park Family Chocolate Run, followed by a family fun day with entertainment, bouncy castles, and a barbecue. A highlight of the weekend was the fun duck boat race. This fundraiser was for the park. It involved people building boats with duct tape and racing the boats on Long Lake Provincial Park. I can tell you that it's not easy to build a boat from tape and cardboard. There's a chance that you're going to sink. I know this first-hand, because I spent most of my time in the water.

I would like to congratulate all the members of the Long Lake Provincial Park Association for hosting such a successful and fun weekend. Spryfield Days brought residents of the area together to celebrate our community pride and everything that is great about the community where we live, work, and play.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

RHINDRESS, HAZEL: CANCER SURVIVOR - COMMEND

MS. ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Hazel Rhindress of Amherst. Two-year-old Hazel is a brave little girl who has already beaten cancer that threatened to take her eyesight.

Soon after she was born, Hazel was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma, a rare form of cancer of the eye. With laser treatments and eight rounds of chemo at her young age, she had to travel to Toronto SickKids and also have treatments here at the IWK. She recently got the good news that she is cancer free and got to ring the bell at the IWK. She can now do what most toddlers do and have a healthy life.

Mr. Speaker, it is a true pleasure to wish Hazel and her family the very best after this tough fight.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MULLINS-ROBERTS, MONIQUE: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the work of Monique Mullins-Roberts. Monique is a woman at the heart of the Dartmouth community. She's the coordinator of the Dartmouth Community Health Board, where she works to identify health priorities in the community and promote community health. She organizes regular face-to-face meetings with Dartmouth-based service groups, creating a sense of community that allows them to work together co-operatively.

Monique also sits on the board of directors for the Public Good Society of Dartmouth, where she is a highly-engaged member. She has been a key and essential organizer and promoter of the Connections That Work program, which enables their outreach worker to help members of the community. Monique also plays a central role in organizing public meetings to try to address issues around affordable housing, which ultimately led to the establishment of the Dartmouth Housing Help office.

I only have time to touch on a few of her accomplishments, but whether you need her to operate a circular sander or give an interview to the media, Monique's enthusiasm and knowledge always shine bright.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

KNICKLE, BRENDA & BLAINE: INTL. STUDENT PROG. - RECOG.

MS. SUZANNE LOHNES-CROFT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Brenda and Blaine Knickle of Blockhouse, who have opened their home and hosted international students for over 20 years. Since 1998, the Knickle family has welcomed over 35

international students ranging from ages 10 to 19. Each year, the surrounding community embraces the students, involving them in various community events from church suppers to selling apples for the local Lions Club. Brenda says, “It takes a village to raise a child, and we certainly come together to do just that.”

Brenda broadened her involvement with the Nova Scotia International Student Program in 2001 and became a homestay coordinator with the organization. Through this position, she was able to meet a lot of incredible families in our community and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you and all members of this House of Assembly please join me in recognizing Brenda and Blaine Knickle for hosting numerous international students over the years, and thank them for their contribution in shaping the lives of the students they host.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

COLLINS, MARK - PASTOR: CAREER ADVANCEMENT - CONGRATS.

MR. TORY RUSHTON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rev. Mark Collins, pastor of the Church of the Nazarene in Oxford.

On June 1st, Rev. Collins was elected at the district assembly to represent the Canada Atlantic District for the Church of the Nazarene as the new district superintendent.

Rev. Collins is the lead pastor at Oxford Church of the Nazarene, a position he has held since 2010. He previously pastored in New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Alberta, as well as serving on the Canada Atlantic District Advisory Board since 2014.

I congratulate Rev. Collins on being chosen as the new district superintendent for Canada Atlantic. I am sure he will carry out his duties in this position with as much integrity and faithfulness as he has always shown.

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

**EQUITY WATCH PRESS CONF.:
GENDER DISCRIM. - RECONSIDERATION**

MS. LENORE ZANN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was happy to sponsor an Equity Watch press conference here at Province House about gender discrimination. Two veteran women firefighters employed for years by the Halifax Fire Service expressed their shock and anger at a recent decision by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. Kathy Symington and Liane Tessier both had their original complaints of gender discrimination and harassment dismissed by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

Symington is an experienced firefighter. She joined the service 20 years ago as one of only five firefighters on the force. Liane Tessier won her own case in 2017 - noting this was an insult to all women who face systemic gender discrimination - the fact that Symington's concerns were dismissed.

I'm very happy to report today that within 24 hours of our press conference, Ms. Symington has received a letter from the Human Rights Commission saying that they will now investigate her whole complaint. Mr. Speaker, this just proves that when women get together and work together, we can get things done and change the status quo.

Congratulations to Ms. Symington and to Equity Watch.

[1:45 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings South.

BAMBRICK, DAVID: MEN'S PARA SHOT PUT - CONGRATS.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize athlete David Bambrick of Wolfville, Nova Scotia. From April 4 to 15, 2018, David represented Canada in men's para shot put at the 2018 Commonwealth Games held in Brisbane, Australia.

David has represented Nova Scotia at the 2013 Canada Games but this is the first time he has been selected to the National and Commonwealth team. On the night of David's event, there were close to 25,000 people cheering in the stands. Despite this potential pressure, he was able to throw his best distance in over two years of 11.74m, which secured sixth place.

David is busy training for the 2020 Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham, U.K., and is thankful for all the support of Nova Scotians. I would like all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating David Bambrick on his athletic achievements and making Nova Scotia proud as he represented Canada this year.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

CHISHOLM, NOLAN: EYE SAFETY ADVOCATE - COMMEND

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, Nolan Chisholm's life changed in an instant. While mowing the lawn, a piece of debris ricocheted off his house and struck him in his left eye, leaving him blinded in that eye.

Nolan has not let this serious injury hold him back. He still participates in the sports he loves. Nolan is an advocate for everyday safety and recommends the constant use of

safety glasses. This includes a focus on wearing safety glasses at home and not only in industrial settings.

His message of eye-related safety has him sharing his message to various groups in the community and in the media. Nolan's commitment to the health and safety of others and using his negative experience to share his knowledge is an inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, Nolan is a fine young man, very kind, and I am proud to thank Nolan for all that he does.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DART. N. LIBRARY: NEW OUTDOOR SPACE - WELL DONE

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, in the continuing spirit of back-to-school topics and recognizing a fatigue for talking about issues around busing, I rise today to express my excitement about the grand opening of the new outdoor library space and playground at the Dartmouth North Library.

The Dartmouth North Library has always been a place where the residents, especially local youth, can come by and borrow a book or just hang out after school. The staff at the library are incredibly friendly and welcoming and are amazing at responding to the needs and ideas of people who use the library – and now it has just become a whole lot more awesome.

The expansion into an outdoor library space is one of the very first built in Canada and sets a benchmark for other community libraries. It includes a beautiful space for reading and lounging, and a little outdoor theatre where people can come together to enjoy movies or hear performances from local musicians and spoken word artists. There's Wi-Fi throughout and an amazing and challenging playground which, depending on the kids that play in it and the parents who own those kids, can elicit pure joy or pure fear.

The introduction of the outdoor space addresses a great need for Dartmouth North, especially for today's youth who are finding even fewer accessible places to play and learn.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

JSTRONG MOSQUITO BASEBALL: PROV. CHAMPS - CONGRATS.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, from September 7th to 9th, in Hants North, Yarmouth's JStrong Mosquito A Gateways played in the Under-11 Tier 1 Baseball Provincials, and came home as provincial champions. The weekend included some nail-biters and comebacks, and ended with Yarmouth winning the championship game over the Hantsport Shamrocks by a score of 11-4.

I'd like to ask this House to join me in congratulating the JStrong Mosquito A Gateways team: Charlie Gosling, Brady Newell, Nolan Hill, Liam Moses, Caiden Swindell, Max Gates, Karter Bian, Liam Surette, Dylan Goudey, Caden Duncan, Drew Muise, Bryce Fitzgerald and Damien Cottreau, along with coaches Duane Fitzgerald and Jeff Gates and manager Kristy Surette, on becoming provincial champions. They have made their families and communities proud and I wish them all the very best in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou Centre.

WOOD, COLIN: WALK THE WALK FOR AUTISM - COMMEND

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, Colin Wood's son Connor, from Stellarton, was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. The Stellarton family immediately began advocating for young Connor. Colin was the walk coordinator for the first Walk the Walk for Autism in Pictou County in 2012, a position he still holds.

Beginning with only 112 walkers, the first walk raised over \$12,000. Six years later the walks have raised more than \$300,000 in total for autism programs and services for Pictou County families.

This year's event was enjoyed by more than 600 walkers and raised more than \$80,000. Presently 102 volunteers, including an eight-person executive, have the goal of supporting children with autism to give them the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

BRIDGEWATER PHARMASAVE: 20th BUS. ANNIV. - CONGRATS.

HON. MARK FUREY: Mr. Speaker, Susan and Cameron Cochrane are celebrating their 20th Anniversary as owners of the Bridgewater Pharmasave. Susan, a pharmacist for 32 years and Cameron have taken the store through two expansions since they purchased it.

Bridgewater Pharmasave employs 43 people, including five pharmacists, a registered pharmacy technician and four nurses, many of whom have been with them since 1998.

Health care service is the focus of the business and being active and living a healthy lifestyle is a priority for the Cochranes, who enjoy many sports, including golf, hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and taking their dog Rusty out for exercise every day.

Congratulations to Susan and Cameron Cochrane on their 20th Anniversary as owners of the Bridgewater Pharmasave and for reaching this major milestone.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

CHUTE, SAMUEL: GLIDER PILOT SCHOLARSHIP - CONGRATS.

MR. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, the Glider Pilot Program is known as an extremely difficult course to complete, involving many hours of ground school and flight training. Forty cadets from Nova Scotia wrote the entrance exam and only 15 were accepted for a scholarship.

Samuel Chute, a 17-year-old student, and flight sergeant at 507 Flight Lieutenant McLean in Aldershot was one of those students. He completed his glider pilot's scholarship this summer and received his wings on August 21st.

Mr. Speaker, Sam has been in the cadet program since 2013 and is considered an exceptional cadet by his peers. I invite my colleagues to congratulate Sam on his accomplishment and wish him all the best in the future.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

WONDER'NEATH SOC.: CHARITABLE STATUS - CONGRATS.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Wonder'neath, the Open Wonder Society, for receiving charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency. Wonder'neath, founded and directed by artist Heather Wilkinson and Melissa Marr has welcomed more than 10,000 community members, from many babies to many grandparents, to their open studio. Anyone who can make it up the stairs of their rented space is welcome to paint, draw, sculpt, sew, needle-felt, knit or just snack and visit.

They have partnered with neighbourhood schools and with agencies like Northwood and ISANS to bring art to more people in our community.

I look forward to seeing how Wonder'neath will evolve, now that it has charitable status, and pledge to always do my best to extend them support as they bring community together through art-making.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford.

BATHURST, DAVID: VOL. OF THE YR. - THANKS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, David Bathurst was named Bedford's Adult Volunteer of the Year at a reception back in May. Most of David's volunteer work has been with his church, All Saints Anglican, where he has been a member for 30 years. He served on Parish Council for 25 years, serving two terms as warden, during which time he played a major role in undertakings like the roof project.

David subsequently stepped up to be the parish treasurer for five years and then became envelope secretary. He set up their preauthorized debit program and had the lead role in computerizing the parish office.

David also volunteers as a Sunday morning greeter, scripture reader and eucharist minister. He volunteers at the annual Lobster Supper and the Christmas Dinner. He organized the first Men's Fellowship Breakfast in 2009 and often shares his photos of parish events.

David has also been involved in a variety of other causes and organizations in Bedford - minor hockey, minor soccer, Boy Scouts and the Salvation Army Toy Drive and he contributes to and raises money for many worthy causes. David has touched many lives with his volunteer work and his strong leadership and organizational qualities have brought so much to our community.

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

UCT, SYDNEY COUNCIL: COM. VOL. - THANKS

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the UCT Cape Breton Council #883 for recently celebrating 50 years of service. United Commercial Travellers is an international non-profit organization whose members make a difference by volunteering in local communities or by choosing UCT for their insurance needs, or both.

UCT's non-profit status means that instead of paying dividends to shareholders, their insurance operations help support members' local community service efforts across the U.S. and Canada. UCT's Sydney Council #883 gives back to the Sydney community by supporting causes and charities in our own backyard, like the Special Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to thank all the UCT members past and current for all the dedication they give to Sydney and surrounding areas.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth on an introduction.

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: I would just like to bring the House's attention to the west gallery where my mother, Joanne Bishara, is in attendance. She's a retired teacher, but a teacher in more ways than one. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

SMITH, KATHLEEN: WILSON FAM. SCHOLARSHIP - CONGRATS.

HON. KAREN CASEY: The Wilson Family Scholarship is awarded yearly to support its employees and their children and grandchildren as they further their post-

secondary education at university or community college. The recipients have achieved success at school or a trade and are involved in their communities through volunteering, sports or the arts.

Kathleen Smith of Great Village, Colchester North, is a recipient of the 2018 Wilson Family Scholarship. She was a member of the Cobequid Education Centre soccer team and volunteers at her church and with Timbits soccer. Being able to maintain an honours average while working part-time at the Great Village Wilson's is an indication of her organizational skills and her academic ability. Kathleen is enrolled at Saint Mary's University with the goal of becoming a teacher, a truly great profession.

Congratulations and best wishes to Kathleen as she begins the next stage of her academic education.

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

HATT, SAMANTHA: SUMMER AMBASSADOR - CONGRATS.

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Samantha Hatt, who has just completed her second stint as the Queens Summer Ambassador, employed by the Region of Queens Municipality.

In this role, she spends the summer attending festivals and events throughout the county, visiting local attractions and passionately promoting our region. Sam brings her vibrant personality and her conscientious work ethic to this position and has done an exemplary job as summer ambassador.

Congratulations, Sam, and thank you for all you have done to promote Queens County and the tremendous work of our volunteer organizations. Best wishes for your career going forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

THORPE, RONALD: BERWICK SPORTS HALL OF FAME - CONGRATS.

HON. LEO GLAVINE: I rise today to congratulate Ron "Doc" Thorpe on his induction into the Berwick Sports Hall of Fame.

Doc was born in Kentville and attended Acadia University before earning a medical degree at Dalhousie. A successful softball coach, Doc led teams to multiple championships at the provincial level in the 1960s before going on to earn accolades as a high-level curler throughout the 1970s. Doc also served as president of the Nova Scotia Curling Association and the team physician for Nova Scotia on a number of occasions.

As the MLA for Kings West, I want to offer my sincere congratulations to Ronald “Doc” Thorpe’s family on his induction into the Berwick Sports Hall of Fame and thank him for his service and dedication to the sports community in Nova Scotia.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

GORD’S SPORTS SHOP: 35 YRS. IN BUS. - CONGRATS.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: I rise today to congratulate Gordon Macdonald, owner of Gord’s Sports Shop, on recently celebrating 35 years of business.

Gordon Macdonald’s passion is racing snowmobiles. He has been racing for over 40 years. From 1972 to 1993, Gord has many Canadian regional and national championships to his credit and the Eagle River World Championship in 1994. He then began a drag racing career that also lasted over 20 years. Gordon has been a Canadian record-holder in ice drag racing, winning four national championships in 2004. He is also a three-time King of the Hill winner.

It’s a pleasure to congratulate Gord Macdonald and his staff and acknowledge the many long hours they have worked to make Gord’s Sports Shop in Sydney such a long-standing success.

[2:00 p.m.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

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

PREM. - HUMAN TRAFFICKING: VICTIM SERVICES - PROMOTE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last session I raised the issue of human trafficking. It is an issue that one police officer called a hidden epidemic in Nova Scotia. One brave mother recently came forward to explain the devastating impact human trafficking has had on her daughter and her family. I will table that story.

When I raised this issue with the Premier last March, he said it will take all of us to move this issue forward. But the mother says that victims of human trafficking don’t know what services are even available to them.

I will ask the Premier: Will he commit today to make an effort to ensure the appropriate departments promote services available to human trafficking victims to the appropriate agencies and organizations?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I believe that has been ongoing through the Department of Justice, through HRP, and RCMP across the province, but I will make sure that we reiterate that to them.

MS. MACFARLANE: Statistics Canada says that Halifax actually has a higher number of police-reported human trafficking violations between 2009 and 2016 than cities like Hamilton, Edmonton, Calgary. Unfortunately, there have been only a handful of convictions.

Tony Paisana, a criminal lawyer in Vancouver, says the number of convictions could be improved by better support systems for victims. I'll table this information.

I would like to now how the Premier plans to act now to get justice for these victims of human trafficking and how he plans to improve these services?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, Mr. Speaker. We continue to invest in victim services, ensuring that there is a relationship between the Department of Justice and public policy initiatives that have gone out to law enforcement agencies across the province.

As I said to my earlier question, we'll continue to make sure that that information has gone out. I believe that has been ongoing and continues to be ongoing between the department and the Department of Justice. I will assure the honourable member that the Minister of Justice and I will recommit to making sure that that information is in the appropriate agencies.

MS. MACFARLANE: I thank the Premier for that answer, I appreciate it. But many victim services in Nova Scotia only assist people actually of a certain gender or above a certain age. Heather Harman, the CEO for Halifax's Open Door Centre, says the lack of direct services for trafficking survivors led to the centre's help program. Harman says one of the most significant ways to turn this around is to raise awareness with our youth.

I will ask the Premier: Will he ensure that all victims of human trafficking in Nova Scotia receive the services and supports they need, regardless of their age or gender?

THE PREMIER: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. She is right, Mr. Speaker - through the Department of Justice Victim Services, there are certain criteria around that. With that in mind, we know there are some who have been caught in this human trafficking situation who are under the ages.

That is why the Department of Community Services is working to ensure we are providing the supports around those young people. Supports not only, quite frankly, to give them the support to get healthy again, but to ensure that we are protecting them from those who want to continue to drive these people into the human trafficking network. We're going to continue to make sure that we make those investments to help protect our children.

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

PREM. - NURSING HOMES: BEDSORES INCREASE - ALARM

MR. GARY BURRILL: A few months ago when nursing homes in the province were required to report on incidents of bedsores in their facilities, people were alarmed to learn that there were 152 cases of stage 3 and stage 4 bedsores in the nursing homes of the province. This week we in the NDP were alarmed to learn, as a result of a Freedom of Information inquiry, that counting stage 1 and stage 2 bedsores in July our nursing homes in Nova Scotia reported a total of 621 bedsores.

Now bedsores are preventable injuries. Does the Premier not also find it alarming that we've got 621 incidents of bedsores in the long-term care facilities of the province?

THE PREMIER: It's why we've put together, Mr. Speaker, that committee of experts to go out to deal with, to talk to long-term care facilities in dealing with this very issue. We're looking forward to coming back with their advice, based on evidence and we look forward to getting that report.

As I said earlier to the honourable member, that report will be in near the end of November. We look forward to that as we begin to build our budget towards next year to ensure that if there are recommendations associated with that, that we can deal with them.

MR. BURRILL: When we face in the province a problem of this magnitude, we naturally look to the government and see what has been done to alleviate it. I would not say that taking \$5 million out of the funds of nursing homes over the last four years was the way to improve this situation, and I would also not say that holding staffing levels constant over the five years of this administration has been a very good way of addressing this problem, either.

My question to the Premier is: Does he think that his government's approach to funding nursing homes has led to improvements with this bed sore problem?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for his question and his opinion and his thoughts about what we should do. I will hang on to that until I hear back from the experts in the field and I will put his thoughts in and around the advice we receive from those experts and I am sure we will come up with an approach.

MR. BURRILL: A great deal of information is available on this problem at the moment. We know, for example, that in Ontario the incidence of bedsores is 2.7 per cent and they are working hard to get that down by two-thirds to a benchmark of one per cent, but in Nova Scotia the incidence of bedsores today is three times that - almost 7 per cent - and we don't have any publicly-posted benchmarks whatsoever about this.

My question to the Premier: In a province with a bedsore incidence rate that equals one in 14 of the residents we have in our province's nursing homes, why in the world do we not have any benchmarks for dealing with this problem?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As I said to him in my first answer, we have reached out to a panel of experts who will put together recommendations about how we address the issues of bedsores and other issues in and around long-term care.

I want to ensure the honourable member that we are taking this issue very seriously and will look forward to the recommendations coming back from the experts.

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

PREM. - PRIVACY COMM: MORE INDEPENDENCE - PROMISE

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE; Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier told reporters he made a mistake in 2013 when he said the Privacy Commissioner should be given more authority and more independence.

He said that now that he knows more, he thinks the office has all the power and independence it needs. Apparently, he learned the Commissioner needs less independence than every other privacy commissioner in the country. They all are independent officers of the Legislature.

My question to the Premier is: What information has the Premier learned about Nova Scotia's Privacy Commissioner that warrants giving her less independence than her colleagues across this country?

THE PREMIER: What I learned is that when you had a responsible, reasonable government in place, they look and take the recommendations that come forward from the officer and implement them.

MS. MACFARLANE: So, let's just refresh here. Back in 2013, on the eve of the election, the Premier signed a letter saying that if he was elected, he would make the Privacy Commissioner an independent Officer of the Legislature.

Yesterday he told reporters that despite that written promise, he did not run on that commitment and doesn't understand why he should be held accountable to it. He reiterated that despite what he said in 2013, he has no plans to make the Privacy Commissioner an independent Officer of the Legislature.

My question to the Premier is: How are Nova Scotians supposed to know which promises the Premier really means? The ones in his platform, like a doctor for every Nova Scotian, or the ones he signs his name to?

THE PREMIER: I appreciate the question from the honourable member. Again, as I go back to tell the honourable member what we discovered in late 2013 was when you have a reasonable government in place and you respond in an open and transparent way to provide information to Nova Scotians, it is not necessary, quite frankly, to have someone as the officer.

I will continue to make sure that we make the decisions and information available and, as I said, we hit the recommendations that the officer has continued to bring forward and I look forward to continuing to make sure that we provide good government to the people of Nova Scotia.

I am sure the honourable member would remember as she asked me a question last week - the Province of Nova Scotia upgraded to AA- from A+ overall improvement in the finance of the province, the highest credit rating in the province. That's data that I want to say before you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure, I'm sure she also knows today we made an announcement around the cultural help

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, as they say . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order, please. The time allotted for the answer has expired.

The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

H&W - NURSING RATIOS: STAFF RATIOS - BETTER FUNDING

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. I heard last week from a Glace Bay resident who is at the end of her rope when it comes to the staff ratios in nursing homes. Her mother who has dementia has suffered four unwitnessed falls in her nursing home over the course of the past three months. Each of these falls could have been prevented had there been appropriate staff on hand. Unfortunately, that was not the case and, as a result, this elderly woman has been hospitalized four times since July.

The minister has had two health budgets to make improvements. Why hasn't he increased funding to bring staffing in our nursing homes to a safe level?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. As the member would know, we've convened a panel of three experts with experience in the area of long-term care. They are going to be looking at a variety of aspects within the long-term-care environment to provide some recommendations. I would expect to hear back from them by the end of November. I'm pleased to let the member opposite know that over the past three or four years, in fact, the overall budget for long-term-care services and in continuing care has increased not decreased as she has asserted.

MS. MARTIN: Actually, Mr. Speaker, the budget for long-term care has decreased by \$5 million and that's no comfort to this daughter whose mother has fallen four times in a Glace Bay nursing home. While I look forward to the result of the minister's expert panel, with all due respect, had this government been listening to the voices of residents and their loved ones, and nursing home staff and administrators for the past five years instead of cutting \$5 million from the budget, they wouldn't have to need to convene one.

Rather than showing some leadership, this government has been allowing seniors to suffer preventable injuries like bed sores and falls and that is disgraceful. Will the minister apologize to the residents of long-term care and their family members for neglecting their well-being?

MR. DELOREY: I thank the member for the question. I believe the steps we've taken to investigate and respond to the concerns around pressure injuries in our long-term-care facilities has been well received. I've been out to a number of long-term-care facilities this summer to speak to staff within those facilities as well as the administrators to hear how the work that's been done, the educational information, the materials, additional supplies - all positive steps forward to help them providing enhanced care to the residents of our long-term-care facilities and this work is ongoing and continuing.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: So, Mr. Speaker, as I'd said, the work that's ongoing will continue. We have the long-term-care panel that we appointed a few weeks ago. I look forward to their feedback and recommendations on how to improve the quality of care within our long-term-care facilities.

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

PREM. - NSLC CANNABIS SALES: U.S. TRAVEL BAN - RESPOND

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: My question is for the Premier. We all know how this Liberal Government insisted contrary to professional advice - including from the NSLC - that the collocation of alcohol in cannabis retail was the best thing for Nova Scotians. Now, it appears that decision could have real legal repercussions for anyone working for the NSLC.

Last week, an official from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency indicated that any Canadian involved with cannabis will basically risk a lifetime travel ban from the United States and the official stated if you work for the cannabis industry, that is grounds for inadmissibility and I'll table that.

Working at the NSLC wasn't always a risk factor for a U.S. travel ban, but this government's decision to collocate means it will come October 17. So my question is: What does the Premier plan to tell NSLC employees from retail staff to executives who are denied entry to the United States because of cannabis and alcohol collocation?

[2:15 p.m.]

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear with the honourable member, cannabis is going to be legal and someone is going to be selling it in the Province of Nova Scotia. We chose to use the NSLC. We'll continue to work with our partners, both at the national level and when they deal with the U.S. Government to ensure that we continue to have smooth passage between our two borders.

Hopefully we'll get a NAFTA deal that will deal with goods and services and we'll continue to make sure that we build on our partnership of growing towards them. The honourable member would know we're now in our third consecutive year of record numbers of tourists from the United States. I want to tell her that that vessel that they voted against each and every time, has been in port, and is part of that down in Yarmouth. We're going to continue to make sure that we build on those relationships.

MS. MACFARLANE: Mr. Speaker, this Premier decided to ignore all consequences of co-location. Beyond risk to the public health, the Premier seems content to put the liberty of NSLC employees at risk. Workers in the cannabis industry, including anyone employed by the NSLC, will not be permitted to enter the United States. However, they can apply for a waiver from their lifetime ban for a mere \$585 U.S., and it takes only several months to process.

The Premier is such an international travel enthusiast so I'm sure that he would be irritated by this situation as well. Will the Premier commit to covering the costs of any travel ban waivers filed by NSLC employees, in addition to compensating them for the cost of any broken travel plans, as a result of co-location?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for the question. What we provided to Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation employees is another product to sell. Unlike the Leader of the Official Opposition, her Party, who were going to provide them with a pink slip when they privatized it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TIR - CRESCENT BEACH RD. (LUN. CO.): REPAVING - SAND REMOVAL

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. A road in Lunenburg County, Crescent Beach Road, has been tendered for repaving. This road runs along Crescent Beach.

The project requires that before repaving can commence, approximately 60 truckloads of sand will need to be removed from the beach. Mr. Speaker, this is something I thought would have happened in the “old days.” I can think of a beach behind the house I grew up in where a lot of sand was removed and the beach was ruined, so I can’t imagine it happening in this day and age.

Did the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal receive permission from his colleague at Department of Lands and Forestry before tendering the project? If so, could he table that document?

HON. LLOYD HINES: I’d like to thank the member opposite for the question. I would just say that in Nova Scotia and in this government we value the beaches of Nova Scotia. I would point the member to his own constituency where a wonderful beach has been converted into two of the most successful golf courses in the world and rated internationally, which is a good example of the proper use of resources in communities.

MR. MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I can assure him that in the construction of those two courses that there were not 60 truckloads of sand removed from the beach, but I do agree with him that they have been very successful, those courses.

Crescent Beach is about 50 metres wide and that includes a two-lane road. There is open ocean on one side and a saltwater marsh on the other. Needless to say, the roadwork will be done very close to that water.

Yesterday in response to a question on this topic from the member for Dartmouth North, the minister stated the Department of Environment advises on many of these considerations. However, a spokesperson from the Department of Environment has stated on this issue that the Environment Department does not require environmental assessment for a repaving project.

Can the minister and the Minister of Environment or the Acting Minister of Environment explain what input the department has given to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on the repaving of Crescent Beach Road and why an environmental assessment was not warranted?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, this doesn't trigger an environmental assessment. There are certain requirements in terms of how long the road is and the width of the road. In terms of Lands and Forestry, it doesn't violate the Beaches Act either.

As we said, our government is embarking on consultation for a coastal protection Act. That will be forthcoming in the next year or so. It's important that we recognize that sometimes people have built houses and, indeed, roads in some of these areas that are open to sea level rises and things of that nature. In this particular circumstance, there is sand that is going over the road. The road is not in an ideal location, but we have to provide safety for the patrons who are going across that road.

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

H&W: STRAIT RICH. PALLIATIVE CARE - MIN. RESPONSE

MS. ALANA PAON: Mr. Speaker, in the last sitting, the stories of Danny Latimer and Liz Cole made their individual journeys to access palliative care in Cape Breton-Richmond real. The Latimers and Coles heard the Premier loudly and clearly when he said that what happened to them was completely unacceptable. The Premier committed to ensuring that the appropriate meetings would happen with Strait Richmond Palliative Care, and he personally accepted the plan needed to meet the needs of the palliative care patients in the constituency.

Rather than meeting with the Strait Richmond Palliative Care Society, the minister, on the eve of this sitting, instead sent them a letter directing them to contact the staff at the NSHA. Would the minister please explain why, after five months, the best he could do for the Strait Richmond Palliative Care Society was to advise them to call the Health Authority?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: As the member would know, the Nova Scotia Health Authority is responsible for front-line operations and delivery of health care services throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, the most efficient and appropriate course of action for the individual group to discuss both the current level of service and opportunities for changes or desired changes would be directly to the Nova Scotia Health Authority because that would be step one. The Health Authority would assess that in the context of their overall review of palliative services.

MS. PAON: Perhaps the minister needs to be reminded that actually he is responsible, ultimately, for the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

In their meeting with me, the Cole family specifically spoke of the stark differences in palliative care services in the 10-year span between the death of their father and then their mother earlier this year. They previously did not have to fight for a bed to care for their dying father, as they did their mother. They did not have to endure the pain of seeing their father not have the same access to services as their mother.

The Integrated Palliative Care Strategy: Planning for Action in Nova Scotia was released in May 2014, and it included 37 recommendations to improve and enhance access to palliative care services in Nova Scotia. It's 2018. Would the minister please detail how many of those 37 recommendations have been accepted and implemented?

MR. DELOREY: As the member would know, the Health Authority has been working to improve the palliative services throughout the province. We have a number of initiatives within this province, which include a combination of services within hospitals. There's a hospice framework that has been developed. We have communities pursuing those options in their community. There are at-home palliative options as well, Mr. Speaker, which are supported community-based and in addition, feature services being provided in partnership with EHS to provide paramedic supports in communities across the province. We're working with front-line health care providers working within their scopes of practice to provide the supports that families need in providing end-of-life care.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

L&F - CLEAR-CUTTING: LAHEY RECOMM. - CLARIFY

MS. LISA ROBERTS: My question is for the Minister of Lands and Forestry. This past week gives the impression that the minister's department is in disarray. First the minister says staff need more time to review Bill Lahey's recommendations. Then staff send an email to industry advising on ways to reduce clear-cutting on Crown land. Now the minister is distancing himself from that letter, saying no decision has been made and especially no decision that would cost industry money.

Can the minister clarify whether his department agrees with Mr. Lahey that clear-cutting on Crown land must be significantly reduced?

HON. IAIN RANKIN: I thank the member for the question. We have yet to respond to the full report in its entirety.

Of course, staff will continue to communicate with licence holders, and that's what that email is about. There has been some advice and some talk about some recommendations on how they would go towards ecological-based forestry. It is a mandate within the department and has been for some time to look for ways that we can reduce clear-cutting where warranted.

Clear-cutting or over-storied removal will continue to be part of the forestry industry, as acknowledged in the Lahey report. We look forward to continuing to work with staff and our stakeholders to ensure that we are protecting the environment and at the same time growing our industry.

MS. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, the Lahey report found that the department has not been considering wildlife as part of our forests and it called for that to change. As confirmation that the change is required, last week we learned of a proposed cut on Crown land in West Hants that threatens vital winter habitat not just for deer, but also an area where we know that endangered mainland moose and at-risk American martens also find refuge during the winter months.

The minister and his department are sending mixed messages about whether, and when, we can expect forestry practices to change. My question is: Why can't the minister commit right now to acting on Mr. Lahey's recommendation that impacts on wildlife be properly assessed?

MR. RANKIN: Indeed, wildlife is part of the 45 recommendations to talk about in our current pre-treatment assessments. Our biologists go out and we look at any opportunities that we can to mitigate any potential impact to our wildlife, and, in particular, endangered species. I know that this particular stand has had modification to its original pre-treatment assessment. It is up for public submissions. I look forward to those submissions and we'll make the decision based on the science.

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

PREM.: ROSEWAY HOSP. - COMMITMENT

MS. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Unfortunately, I rise again on behalf of my constituents who are concerned about how this government is undermining health care at the Roseway Hospital.

Last week I rose in this House to ask the minister specifically about the future of Roseway Hospital. He has deferred and he has talked around the issue. To be honest, maybe it's not his decision to make, given the minister sat quietly by and watched the Premier deal the fatal blow to both Northside General and New Waterford hospitals.

My question is: Will he give me his word today that, for as long as he is the Premier of Nova Scotia, the Roseway Hospital will be an open, full-service hospital? A simple yes or no is all I'm looking for.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I want to thank the Minister of Health and Wellness for the tremendous work that he has been doing across the province. I want to assure that member and all members

of this House, the Minister of Health and Wellness, as all members of this government, has input into decisions that are made by our government.

The fact of the matter is that I am the Premier. When we make a decision that has impact, the way it was, when we're making the kind of investments we were, I was going to go down and stand in that community to make that decision. In no way does it say that the Minister of Health and Wellness is not part of that and it's unfortunate that this early on in her career, she has chosen to go down the path of trying to insult the Minister of Health and Wellness.

MS. MASLAND: I was simply just asking a question, not being disrespectful.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. It's not just noise that my constituents don't have a family doctor. And it's not just noise that my constituents have to travel hours away from their homes to sit 10 and 12 hours to access an emergency room because the one at home is closed. It's not just noise that my constituents are worried about an essential foundation of their great community being dismantled piece by piece by this government. These are not cherry-picked concerns. These are real-life concerns from my proud constituents of Queens-Shelburne.

My question to the Minister of Health and Wellness, again, is: Will he join me and the people of Shelburne County at the people-over-politics rally on September 22nd so he can hear from the concerned residents? A simple yes or no; it's not an essay question.

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for bringing the concerns of her constituents (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing the concerns of her constituents to the floor of the Legislature. I'm pleased to remind the member that, in fact, her community is not being ignored. In fact, we're investing. There is a collaborative care practice centre being built in her community. It should be opening its doors very soon to make new infrastructure available to the physicians within that community providing primary care to her residents of that area.

The Nova Scotia Health Authority continues to work with recruitment initiatives, for locum supports when there are temporary vacancies to be filled. As a province, we've invested in enhancing the locum opportunities to make it more attractive to attend to these temporary vacancies throughout the province. We are working with our partners, not just for her constituents but all Nova Scotians.

[2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

H&W - CAPE BRETON: STATE OF HEALTH CARE - RESPOND

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Health and Wellness. I draw the attention of the House to the dysfunctional state of health care in Cape Breton. This past Saturday morning, a young girl from Sydney Mines - four years old - wound up with a foreign object in her eye. The Northside General emergency room was closed and the Cape Breton Regional Hospital emergency room was backed up, so they had to travel over 40 minutes to the emergency room in Baddeck. They sat there and waited to see a family doctor, and finally they did.

After hearing this story, can the minister tell me that his so-called investments in Cape Breton health care have improved the system?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as the member may be able to appreciate, I'm not aware of every incident or presentation that Nova Scotians make in emergency rooms throughout the province, so I'm not familiar with the specific circumstances the member is referring to.

What I can highlight for the member is that of course there are significant investments coming to Cape Breton: building new collaborative practices and primary health care infrastructure in both North Sydney and New Waterford, expanding long-term care bed capacity - doubling in those communities. In addition to that, there are expanded investments to upgrade the emergency departments of both Glace Bay and Cape Breton Regional. Those are just some of the investments we're making to support the health care needs of Cape Bretoners.

MR. ORRELL: Mr. Speaker, he says he's going to double the emergency rooms in both of those hospitals. They can't keep the ones they have now open, so doubling them isn't going to do any good. But let me heighten his awareness, Mr. Speaker - if only that story had ended where it was.

Because this young girl is a four-year-old, the doctor she saw thought it best she be sedated in order to have this object removed from her eye. He called the regional hospital to get a doctor to sedate her, but they didn't have one available. So then the doctor started calling every regional hospital to find someone who could sedate this little girl. Finally they found someone at the IWK. The family managed to scrape together enough money for the gas and food to bring this little girl to Halifax for a five-minute procedure.

Will the minister please explain which part of this fiasco meets his standards of acceptable health care in Nova Scotia?

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in the first question, I'm not aware of the specific circumstances that the member has brought to the floor. What I can advise the member . . . (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has the floor.

MR. DELOREY: Certainly, as a father of four young children, when being referred to the IWK, I take that and the services they provide there - recognized top-notch pediatric care for Nova Scotians. I appreciate the work that's being done there, and any time my children have been referred up to the IWK, I've taken that opportunity to go there and get the care that the health care providers believe is necessary at that facility.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

ENVIRON. - DARTMOUTH LAKES: ALGAE ISSUES - PREVENT

MR. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Environment. During one of our many heat waves this summer, the residents of Dartmouth were disappointed to learn that Lake Banook and Lake Micmac were closed to swimming due to the presence of blue-green algae blooms. Both of these lakes are enjoyed by thousands of people and their pets year-round. They are tourist locations, revenue generators, and host to world-class international sporting events. These lakes are very important to the people of Dartmouth and beyond. Their closures because of a potentially-serious health risk were very disappointing.

My question to the minister is this: What specific action has the department taken this summer to maintain the health of Dartmouth's lakes?

HON. LEO GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, in that regard, the information that I have at the moment - based heavily, of course, upon HRM's responsibility for monitoring the lakes within HRM - is that the current levels are perfectly fine, and were for the most recent Canada Pan Am Games that took place in Lake Banook.

MR. HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, This summer saw many beach closures across the province. One can only assume that with climate change things will continue to heat up and this will only become more problematic. With Lake Banook hosting the world canoe championships and other paddling competitions, it is more important than ever that we have healthy, swimmable lakes.

My question is this: What preventative action is being taken by this government to keep our lakes swimmable and open for business for next summer and beyond?

MR. GLAVINE: Mr. Speaker, the member raises an important question. We know that because of the extreme heat waves that we've been having during recent summers the growth of blue-green algae has become problematic, also, of course, the bacteria count and so on in the lakes. I know that provincially there is monitoring of those beaches where Nova Scotians are on a lake system. That is carried out through the summer months. In terms of HRM, I would certainly say to the member, we as a department need to work with HRM with those future needs that the quality of water in the lakes require.

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

ENERGY & MINES - DONKIN MINE: FISHERY DISPUTE - RESOLVE

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy and Mines. Yesterday, fishers in Port Morien blocked the entrance to the Donkin Mine because they say that the mine's coal shipping plan is going to put the lobster fishery at risk. This comes after a 200-person meeting of concerned fishers and community members last week.

Lobster fisher Don Messenger told media and I quote: "These bays are a major breeding grounds . . . We've put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into getting this fishery into a sustainable state . . . and we could lose everything." I'll table that.

Government has a role to play in coordinating development so that creating jobs doesn't create community conflicts between industries. I'd like to ask the minister: What is he and his government going to do to help bring a resolution this conflict?

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. It is true we have two industries that are very important to our communities that have coexisted for generations. We have hundreds of families who are supported by our very successful fishing industry and we also have over 125 families directly supported by the mine, not including the spinoffs that come with it.

I've had conversations with the leadership at the mine who have opened up and have been in constant communication with the liaison committee and the community with the fishers and what I've encouraged both groups to do as we've coexisted for generations is get back to the table and talk.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Speaker, Port Morien community members and others have proposed a solution themselves. Many fishers agree that everyone would be happy to see the coal transported by rail. That's a solution that with a little vision and leadership could have various positive spinoffs for Cape Breton. Charlie MacLean from the Scotia Rail Development Society said there is a business case for the Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway and he supported moving the coal by rail to the Sydney port. The province

still subsidizes the rail line owners to keep unused tracks in place to maintain the possibility of a revival.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Business: What is he and his government doing to support the reviving of the Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Obviously, if there was any development on rail, that wouldn't be the current owner, Genesee & Wyoming. This would obviously be a new rail line that would go from Donkin to the Sydney piers.

In follow up and support of my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Mines, there are a number of options on the table here. We've worked across party lines, with provincial officials, federal officials. There are lots of conversations here. The way to get this done is through diplomacy. We've got to continue the discussions. We don't need anything to derail the conversations that are taking place. So, rail and marine and truck, all of these things are options.

The discussions are happening and unfolding as we speak and we're going to continue that dialogue. We can get this together. Again, this is mining and fishing. This is what we do best and we'll make sure we come to the right resolution so everyone wins and we continue to build and grow the Cape Breton economy.

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

H&W - HEALTH CARE CRISIS: SPECIALIST VACANCIES - RESPOND

HON. ALFIE MACLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Today, Dr. Mark Taylor was available for media interviews about new specialist positions. Three of those positions have been filled but six are still not and I guess the minister will add those six to the more than 130 doctor vacancies already advertised on the NSHA website. People need a family doctor, Mr. Speaker, before they can get a referral to a specialist.

My question to the minister: When there are already scores of doctor vacancies, how does the minister propose to fill the six specialists announced when he is unable to fill the 130-plus that need family doctors?

HON. RANDY DELOREY: I thank the member for drawing attention to this very positive announcement made today in Nova Scotia, this very positive announcement that shows our commitment to listen to front-line health care workers who identified these are priority areas within the speciality services, Mr. Speaker, to provide top-notch care to Nova Scotians that they need in these specific areas.

As the member noted, three of the nine positions have already been recruited. These positions continue to be recruited, the other six positions are at various stages. There is a lot of good uptake and interest in them, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to having them all filled so we can provide these specialist services and health care to all Nova Scotians.

MR. MACLEOD: Well, you know, I'd like to be able to thank the minister for an answer, but I've never, ever gotten one from him, so I wouldn't know what an answer sounded like.

Mr. Speaker, if today's announcement was actually such great news, it would have been a minister replying to the media, not Dr. Taylor. Today is just another example of this minister's pattern of pushing responsibility and accountability for health decisions on to others. But Nova Scotians are not fooled, they know the buck stops with this minister.

The Premier of Nova Scotia appointed the member for Antigonish as Minister of Health and Wellness, not Janet Knox. So, when is the minister going to take responsibility for the health care crisis in the Province of Nova Scotia?

MR. DELOREY: I'm amazed to stand here and respond to a member criticizing investment in health care, providing specialist services, . . .

MR. MACLEOD: How many thousand Nova Scotians are without a doctor?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. DELOREY: . . . an investment that sees nine new specialist positions to provide care to Nova Scotians.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg will come to order.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These positions are identified, about half for the IWK, providing specialist care to our youth in the province. I'm sure that member can recognize (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The honourable member for Northside-Westmount will come to order. The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. DELOREY: I'm sure even the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, can recognize when a positive thing happens in this province, like this investment (Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I'd really like to ask all members to respect the Chair, and if there's a question, please respect the answer. If I have to speak "Order" one more time, we'll be asking for members to leave their seats.

The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, this investment was positive. I've stated before that recruitment services are the responsibility of the Nova Scotia Health Authority, for the Health Authority to stand up as these positions will providing services there. I think it was very much appropriate that they would be available to speak to the media as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Inverness.

TOURISM N.S.: ROOM NIGHTS SOLD - MEASUREMENT

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Tourism Nova Scotia.

Room nights sold are an important measure of success for the tourism season. How is the government measuring them in this era of Airbnb?

HON. GEOFF MACLELLAN: I do thank the member for the question. Obviously, the shared economy is playing a significant role in room nights and accommodations here in the province, measuring them by way of counts, the same way that we've done the traditional accommodations.

Clearly it has been something that has been on record and sort of keeping track of in the last couple of years in particular and in the last tourism season. It's a major conversation right now with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, Tourism Nova Scotia, and all stakeholders.

There's certainly some work to do with respect to the industry and with government policy to ensure that we're reflecting both the need to protect the investments of traditional accommodations providers and of course realize the reality that the shared economy is here and it will play a big role in the tourism sector for many years to come. It's important to reach the goal set out by the Ivany report.

MR. MACMASTER: The Fall tourism conference is approaching, and I know the minister will be there. I want to ask: How will the minister balance the concerns of the licensed accommodation operators who want what they call a fair playing field with the need to allow Airbnb property listers the ability to grow tourism industry revenues?

[2:45 p.m.]

MR. MACLELLAN: That's the trick. That's the goal. It's balance. The tourism accommodation sector that we have here in the province has put in their blood, sweat, tears, and equity. They've taken all the risk to build the tourism sector to where it is today. We need them and we rely on them. They are very much a part of why we have been so successful in the last number of years.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the shared economy and the way that it works vis-à-vis online social media and the platform that exists, there's no way of halting that or slowing that down. Regulation is going to be important, taxation, registration, some of the monitoring that traditional accommodation providers are subject to, like occupational health and safety and those types of things. It is reflective of a balance.

We have a committee that has been struck and working on final recommendations so that we do protect the traditional accommodation providers.

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

**PREM. - RED TAPE REDUC.:
CAP & TRADE/CANNABIS COSTS - EXCLUSION**

MS. ALANA PAON: My question is for the Premier in his role as Minister of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness. We all agree that unnecessary red tape hurts Nova Scotian families and businesses every day.

This government's Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness is pursuing a target of a net reduction in red tape to the tune of \$25 million by the end of this year. They want us to believe that government intends to replace every new dollar in regulatory costs to business with an equal dollar reduction in regulatory costs.

However, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has pointed out that this policy does not apply to regulatory requirements developed in response to federal initiatives which may significantly add costs and are a burden to businesses in Nova Scotia. I'll table that document.

My question for the Premier is: Will the significant cost of cap and trade and the legalization of cannabis be excluded from the red tape reduction efforts of this government?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank those at the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness for the great work they have been doing. The amount she has referred to, I think, is over the four-year commitment.

I also want to thank those at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business who have been great champions of our government and this province and the great work that has been happening around this file. We're going to continue to make sure that we continue to harmonize regulations across the region. We're very proud of the work we have been able to do internally.

As she would know, we led the charge of ensuring that the regulations around apprenticeships went national. We're going to continue from our vantage point to ensure that goods and services can flow in and out of our province. We continue to make sure that our workers who are going to work in a neighbouring province as contractors are able to do it in a smooth transition.

I'm looking forward to continuing to make sure that our voice is heard on the national stage when it comes to regulation.

MS. PAON: Mr. Speaker, as we know, this government continues to hide their cap-and-trade plan and its true cost to Nova Scotians. Nova Scotians are worried about how much legalization and enforcement of the new cannabis regime will ultimately cost us. These are among several significant costs facing this province being imposed by this government's friends in the Trudeau Government.

These plans and their costs will no doubt be accompanied by bales of fresh red tape that this government refuses to quantify at this time. Will this government commit today to include the costs of any new federally mandated regulatory requirements in the red tape reduction?

THE PREMIER: I want to thank all those Nova Scotians who, over decades, have continued to ensure that we do our part to ensure that we continue to improve the environment. We're leading the country in greenhouse gas reductions. We're already at 2030 levels, where the national government wants us to be, below 2005. We believe we'll continue to be at 50 per cent by roughly 2030. We're looking forward to continuing to make sure that we continue to protect the environment in our province.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that the honourable member understands that this government has made sure that when the plan was put together, the hard work of Nova Scotians have already committed to is reflected in our plan. I have come out very clearly that we're opposed to a carbon tax in our province, and . . . (Interruption)

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

The honourable member for Dartmouth North on an introduction.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw the House's attention to the gallery opposite where we have Katrina Jarvis visiting us today.

Katrina is a Bachelor of Social Work student who is doing her work-term school placement in the Dartmouth North MLA constituency office. Welcome, Katrina. (Applause)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: 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 New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 22.

Bill No. 22 - Care and Dignity Act.

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

MR. GARY BURRILL: Mr. Speaker, the Care and Dignity Act which we are proud to bring before the House this afternoon, in summary, mandates legislatively a guaranteed minimum level of staffing care in long-term care facilities, thereby ensuring that residents receive the care they need.

Specifically, the bill mandates a minimum of 4.1 hours of care per resident, per day. This care is to consist of personal nursing and support services to be not less than one hour and 18 minutes per day from a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse, and not less than two hours and 48 minutes of care per resident, per day, from a continuing care assistant.

Secondly, the Care and Dignity Act moves to the level of legislation from the level of guidelines the requirement that a registered nurse be present at all times in homes where there are 30 or more places, and the requirement that a registered nurse be available for continuous eight-hour periods every 24 hours in the case of homes where there are less than 30 residents.

The day after the presentation to the public two weeks ago of the Care and Dignity Act, the government announced the formation of its expert advisory panel to recommend improvements in long-term care. In that context, I'd been asked in those days: Well then,

has this particular bill been superseded by the formation of this panel? Is the need for the Care and Dignity Act obviated by the advisory panel's appointment? The opposite, however, it seems to me, is the case.

The fact that the government has taken in, in this way, registered, and acted on the need is to offer a response to the crisis in long-term care; in fact, this is an amplification, an underlining, and a bringing into focus of why it is that this legislation is so important and required.

The Care and Dignity Act and the formation of the expert long-term care panel share a common context: the rising crescendo of concern in Nova Scotia, particularly in the last few months about the quality of long-term care in the province, especially as this has been given voice by the families and by the supporters of the families of Chrissy Dunnington and John Ferguson who passed away while in long-term care in Halifax and in Sydney from bedsores.

Out of the context of the disclosures around these cases, government investigations were initiated and these investigations subsequently revealed that as of June 2018, there were 152 nursing home residents in the province with stage 3 and 4 bedsores which are entirely preventable injuries, the frequency and the severity of which can be taken as a measure of the adequacy or inadequacy of staffing levels to provide the required positioning and re-positioning of residents or patients.

Now, professionals in long-term care policy repeatedly will make clear that in order for anyone to have a solid understanding of this problem, there's one thing that you need to have a grasp of clearly, and that is the changing and very fluid acuity and frailty of the nursing home population of the province just in the past few years. Of course, this intensifying acuity and fluidity has a number of different dimensions, a number of different factors, that account for it.

One is the simple fact that as a population we are, everywhere, living longer. The same time, this increased acuity is related to the expansion of home care that we've seen in recent years, since that expansion means only logically, that people coming into nursing home care are arriving now at a time of greater need for care in their lives. Also, the shortage of an adequate number of nursing home places in the province plays a role about this.

When a very old person is required as hundreds are every year after becoming no longer able to stay at home, to spend months and months in so-called alternate levels of care in a hospital as they wait for long-term care placement, it only stands to reason that when the day comes that they move to that placement, that they're not as young or as strong as they would have been had that call come and that placement taken place earlier in the story.

The effect of this overall change on the character of life in nursing homes in general has been, just in the last period, quite dramatic. One facility with which I am familiar, for example, pointed out to me recently that they had made some calculations about the population of the facility and realized, based on these calculations, that the turnover rate of their population had increased from 45 per cent to 60 per cent just in the last two years.

The extent of this dramatic change in the makeup of nursing home populations was brought home to me recently in a conversation I had with the chief financial officer of a prominent long-term care facility in the province. I was discussing with him the effect of the government's cuts to funding in nursing homes over the last four years and how that was experienced in their home, and he explained to me one thing I hadn't thought about.

He said that those cuts make it harder for us these days to make that up with our own institution's fundraising. It's harder than it was a few years ago because residents in these last couple of years have been coming into our home at a much later stage in their life than they used to. Consequently, they're resident with us for a shorter time than they used to be, and the effect is that they don't form the same kind of bonds and the same kind of connections. They don't come to think of the facility as home, nor does their family think of it in that way, as often as had been the case a few years ago.

He said, from his point of view, that means there's just not the same fundraising opportunity amongst the families of residents and of former residents as had been the situation before these dramatic changes I'm speaking about in the population of nursing homes at the level of acuity and frailty that have happened in just the last couple of years.

The enormous difficulty that is being faced by nursing homes in Nova Scotia at the moment is that this intensified acuity, this increased fragility and greater need for staff support, has not been met by a corresponding increase in staffing funding for the homes. The staff-to-resident ratios, those guidelines, the ones that are in effect today, are the very guidelines and ratios that were in effect decades ago. The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union drew attention three years ago to the developing seriousness of this problem with their 2015 report *Broken Homes*, a report which is, on its own merits, an excellent report, but one of the key things in it is that it establishes the truth.

The point is that when this matter of the professional composition of care staff, care levels, and staff-to-resident ratios, when these matters are set in law, as opposed to being set in guidelines or as opposed to being set in regulations, that when these matters are set in law, the actual incidents of reported harm to residents in long-term care facilities have been demonstrated in a number of jurisdictions to be decreased dramatically and sometimes by up to two-thirds.

Now there's a great deal of research about this, it's vast and it's conclusive. I will table in a moment the *Journal of Aging & Social Policy* 2009 study of the reduction in harms to residents that followed the passage of legislatively-mandated minimum staff

levels in the years up to 2007 in Florida. I will also table the list of parallel research from the Broken Homes Report.

Now all of this is well established in the field. Where it is not well established is in public policy here in our province, which in the mandate of this current government, has gone in the opposite direction from the direction of the investments that in light of the changed situation I've been outlining, are in fact required. The government has moved rather in the opposite direction, the direction of significant nursing home net funding cutbacks. The government to a significant extent, that is, I am alleging, has balanced its budget by imbalancing the level of staffing required for people in long-term care. The government has balanced its budget by imbalancing the internal budgets of the long-term care facilities of the province.

Now this is a wrong, ill-considered choice. The quality of care which is provided to the residents of long-term care in our province is more important, is to be estimated more highly than the budget surplus of the Government of Nova Scotia.

I think of a conversation I had not very long ago with the administrator of a very highly considered nursing home in the province. I was speaking with him about this present piece of legislation, the Care and Dignity Act, and explaining its provisions and asking what kind of an impact or effect in his institution these kinds of provisions might be expected to have. He works in a pretty major institution, has quite a number of different wings. When I asked him about this he paused for a minute and he spoke in the way that people have when they are really going to say something of consequence to you. He said, "If we just had one more CCA in each wing it would make all the difference."

This is precisely the difference that we in the New Democratic Party seek to have made with the Care and Dignity Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

MR. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I want to start by talking about an announcement that was made on September 5th. We all recognize how important our seniors are and that we should make sure that they have the best possible care and that they are given options.

On September 5th the government made an announcement that there will be a three-panel group formed to look into seniors and the seniors' homes and to come forward with some recommendations. Those three experts would be: Janice Keefe, Director of Mount Saint Vincent University's Centre on Aging; Dr. Greg Archibald, a family doctor and a wound care expert and head of Dalhousie University's Department of Family Medicine; and the third would be Cheryl Smith, who is a nurse practitioner and an educator - one of her areas of expertise is dementia.

One of the criticisms I've heard is that the expert panel does not have front-line service expertise. I would say that being a doctor and a registered nurse practitioner would give you a lot of front-line expertise.

Some of the stuff they'll be working through is identifying evidence-based solutions to improve the quality of care in long-term care facilities. I think everybody, depending on your region - we have an idea of what we can do to improve the lives of seniors in our community.

I've heard from a lot of seniors in my community, especially from some of the rural areas like Sambro, West Pennant, East Pennant, and Ketch Harbour, who are saying: I don't want to be put in a long-term care facility. I want to stay at home. I want to stay with my family. I want to be supported either to stay at home or to go with a loved one, because they have generation after generation of family members there. We've had some seniors, especially in the Sambro area, who have lived to 100 years old and never left their home. If you'd told those individuals, some of whom had some very big mobility issues, we want to take you and put you in a long-term care facility, they would have refused.

Why did they stay in their homes? How did they stay in their homes? We were able to work - not just me, but the MLA before me - with some of those families to get funding to help fix their homes so that they could stay there. This government has made a large investment in programs to allow seniors, especially low-income seniors, to stay in their homes.

We understand. We're not saying this is perfect. We're not saying that this is the option for everyone. The member opposite, the member for Halifax Chebucto, makes some really valid points. We recognize that something is needed, especially when it comes to wound care and staffing and issues like that at the long-term care facilities. Once again, that's why we brought together this expert panel, and like I said, everybody has their opinion, but we want to get the science and the facts behind it. We want to hear, after extensive consultation, from those administrators the member opposite talked about, to see exactly what it is they need and then react to it.

I guess that's where, the last couple of years, when we've talked about the health of our seniors, it always comes back to the long-term beds and the long-term care. It's not the only way. We will invest, and we will continue to invest, in those long-term care facilities, but it's not the only way to do things.

I heard earlier today - I think it was during Question Period - that \$5 million was removed from the budget. In fact, in 2018-19, an additional \$5.5 million was added to the budget to help seniors stay in their homes longer, including more home care support and expanding the Caregiver Benefit Program. That brings a total of \$69.5 million since 2013 that has been invested in these programs.

Why is the home care benefit program so important? It's important because it allows us to essentially give back to our parents - our parents who spent so much time and money and energy to help raise us properly. A lot of people can't exactly afford it. This is a help for sons and daughters and grandchildren to give back to their loved ones and to make sure they're able to stay in the community.

So to say that we haven't made investments is a bit of a silly comment. The budgets are in black and white. They're on paper. It's not hard for anyone to see where the investments have been made. But there are points being made opposite. More needs to be done.

I also bring attention to the 2017-18 budget, where we invested another \$3.2 million to increase the food budgets and enhance recreational programming for residents in nursing homes. This \$3.2 million has remained in the budgets going forward. We are making substantial investments in our seniors.

I'll go back to the enhancement of the Pharmacare Program a couple of years ago. It allowed more people to keep more of their money and get the valuable drugs that they needed. I know at the time there was a bit of controversy about it. We took the feedback from the public and the stakeholders, and we changed the position. I'm sure most members across remember that, although they probably won't admit that more people now are on Pharmacare cheaper and saving more money than the previous investment. But those are things that help our seniors; those are things that show our seniors how much we appreciate them.

I have to say that myself as an MLA we receive, I receive a lot of positive feedback on the home giver program and also the Pharmacare and people are happy. They're happy that they have options now, that they are able to stay with their loved ones and are able to fix their homes. I think of a - and I'm not going to say any names - but I think of a lady, a senior couple living in Ketch Harbour and there was a tragic accident, kind of a fluke accident where she fell down and, you know, she actually lost her ability to walk because of the accident. She thought for sure that she would end up in a long-term care facility, which she didn't want to. The government stepped in through the help of Housing Nova Scotia and fixed up her home to allow it to be accessible and to allow her to live at home and stay close to her kids, her grandkids, and her great-grandchildren.

So, I would say to the members opposite, I understand and, you know, I do respect your position on this, but I would say before we get into "he said she said" and back and forth I think we need to let this panel do its work, bring forward its recommendations, and I think everybody can agree that this is a positive thing.

We need to allow outside eyes to look at our system, to talk to those who are directly involved. We can all agree that when some of those horrific stories about the wounds came out, you know, it was startling and it was good to see all Parties react the same way and

government moving forward to ensure that these long-term-care facilities have the standards in place and that they're being monitored and they have to report this back.

I mean, that's a big thing, that's a huge prevention tool if you have to report these conditions back, but at the same time we have to realize that some of the recommendations may come out that we need more staffing, that we need more resources put into these homes. The people, the individuals who do these jobs - I had my foster mother, who passed away well over a decade ago. I was at Melville Lodge recently and they still remember her, but that was her job and I understand how much they care for the people they take care of. We, as government, have to reciprocate that and care for the people that care for our loved ones.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

MR. EDDIE ORRELL: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and say a few words on this Bill No. 22, the Care and Dignity Act. I listened to the member for Halifax Atlantic. I hear the people in his office are happy with the care that the seniors are receiving. That's probably true about the ones that are receiving care, but not everybody can stay in their home for the duration of their lifetime - and I know there have been things put in place that will allow that to happen, but when somebody needs nursing home care, now, they are sicker and they enter the nursing home needing more care.

If he was a little older he would realize that when nursing homes were built 30 years ago they were built with parking spaces for the residents when they went there. In this day and age, there's no such thing as parking spaces for the residents. They don't go there being able to drive their own car. They go there because they've outdone the care they can receive at home and now they need to go get that nursing home care that they need and deserve, and they like to know that that care is there when they need it.

I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, on the Northside we have about 50 people waiting in the Northside General Hospital for a nursing home bed and the government is going to build 50 new nursing home beds on the Northside and that's going to eliminate all the problems with nursing homes on the Northside. Another group of people, I think it's 35 in New Waterford, and someone said between 50 and 60 waiting at the Regional Hospital. This is clogging up our system - it's clogging up our outpatient system and our acute care beds.

Then we heard that we're going to close down two of the hospitals in Cape Breton down as well. There are 45 acute care beds in the Northside. Where are they going to go? They think they're going to go to Cape Breton Regional because the 50 people there waiting for a bed are going to go into one of the homes that they're going to build. That home is already filled with the people who are waiting in the Northside. Around and around and around in a circle we go, and we don't get any further ahead.

[3:15 p.m.]

People want to stay in their own home, that's a great idea, like I say. When they're sick, and when the family cannot look after them anymore and they can't get the amount of care they need at home, that's when the nursing homes are needed. Madam Speaker, I don't know of any new nursing home beds that have been built in the five years that this government has been in power. We still have a pile of people waiting to go to nursing homes.

What's the answer? We've decreased the wait-list for nursing homes. How did they do it? The people who aren't completely ready yet but were on that list because of health care issues, but their families are stepping up and the home care workers are stepping up - they don't need to go yet, they're taking them off the list. That's not managing a wait-list - that's just taking people off the list who will go back on again eventually. But at that time, the stats don't show it.

Our hard-working seniors have raised their families. They have contributed their whole lives. They were our hockey coaches. They were our Girl Guide people. They deserve to live their lives out with dignity and care. I think that's the purpose of this bill, to make sure that people can and will live out their lives with dignity and care.

I listened yesterday when the Premier said, talking about the FOIPOP commissioner being an independent body of the government, he said made a mistake. But he's not stubborn, Madam Speaker, and he's going to realize that he made that mistake. We have a promise in 2013 for a doctor for every Nova Scotian. That hasn't happened. They don't realize that. They haven't said they made a mistake on that promise. If we would only admit there's a crisis in health care in the province - deal with the doctor shortage, primary care shortage, the nursing home bed shortage.

They've taken money out of the budget over the last number of years. I heard the member for Halifax Atlantic brag about the \$65 million they put into home care. That doesn't help the person who needs to go to a nursing home when they need to go there.

We have parents, and we have grandparents. Someday, they're going to go to a nursing home. If I look around the Chamber here, I see a lot of white hair, and I see a lot of no hair. We're all going to be there. Hopefully, we're all going to make it to that stage eventually, and some of us are going to need that care. I don't want my parents, my grandparents, or my loved ones waiting in a hospital, at the expense of a hospital stay, when they can get the care in a nursing home. They get socialization. They get entertainment. They get trips out. If they're healthy enough, they get all this. We want them to do that.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the actions of this government have made it more and more difficult to give those living in our seniors and long-term care facilities the lives

they deserve. If we think about 2016, all members would realize that after two rounds of cuts to nursing home budgets, things started to happen.

I think we were all shocked, I know, I was, to see the residents of Northwood on television saying their food was tasteless and unappetizing. The people who ran Northwood told us that with the cuts made to their budget, they couldn't cut their power bill. That's something you have to pay. The staffing levels couldn't be cut - they were at a bare minimum as it was, they couldn't cut that. They couldn't cut maintenance on the building if there was a leak in the roof or something. The only thing they could cut was the food budget.

I also heard families of them on there talking about how they had to bring in some of the staples like fresh fruit and even butter. I've heard stories of a nursing home in Glace Bay cutting portions of fish, one single portion of fish, in half so they could feed people on that budget. That's not the care and dignity we need. That's not the care we want.

I think everybody in this place, everybody, was angry when they learned that the provincial food budget for Northwood worked out to about \$4.70 a day - not a meal, a day. Madam Speaker, that anger was nothing compared to the rage we felt when we heard the story about the late Chrissy Dunnington and the member for Halifax Atlantic mentioned that.

Let me refresh the memories - Chrissy died when a pressure sore the size of her fist became infected. Chrissy was loved and her family was one of the attentive families. They worried she was spending too much time in bed. They were concerned she wasn't positioned correctly in her wheelchair and her teeth weren't getting brushed.

Madam Speaker, that's not right. We wouldn't want this for our own family. Who would want this for their mom or dad, to live out the last days of their life? If long-term care facilities don't have enough money to feed the residents the food that tastes good or the food that is good for them, they need more funding.

We're talking about bedsores and we're talking about this three-member panel. Not anywhere in that mandate of this three-member panel is there a way that they can look in to see if we have a sufficient amount of beds in this province to meet the demand. One of the biggest issues facing us right now, but because we had an issue with a bedsore we're going to start to study that more.

You can't blame the staff for that, Madam Speaker. Staff do their best with what they have. They don't have the proper equipment. There might not be enough lifts in the area to get the person up the amount of times they need it. Maybe the beds aren't there. The airflow beds are expensive, but they reduce pressure sores. If they don't have the staff to turn people every day or on a regular basis, they need that equipment to do it. They need

specialized chairs with seating forms that are assessed and made for that person specifically.

It's not just staff that needs to be put in this place, it's resources. Maybe they don't have the proper gauge, the proper medicine to heal these wounds. It's great to see that they're going to have to report back on this stuff but where is it binding that the government will have to act on those recommendations? We've seen report after report come to government get put on a shelf and not ever be addressed until the next issue comes along. When that next issue comes along we'll pull that old report out again, we'll look at the new one, we may make a few changes.

You know, that's what this bill calls for, Madam Speaker - care and dignity. That's the minimum that people in this province who were productive members of society, who raised their children, who contributed to society as a whole to make it a better place deserve. We're not asking for the moon, we're asking for the proper number of beds, the amount of care and the proper amount of whatever it takes to make sure that our family members, our loved ones, can live their days out in dignity and comfort. It's not asking for the moon, it's asking for things that these people have worked for and that they deserve.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre.

MS. TAMMY MARTIN: I feel as if I'm going to repeat what my colleagues beside me and in front of me have said but I believe it's worth repeating: this is a severe crisis in our province and we need to pay attention.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia has no minimum legislated standards for care to provide to the residents. We don't have anything legislated that will guarantee a level of care.

Regulations set out the requirements for the amount of time a nurse is on duty but not the amount of time that a nurse must spend with a resident. I don't know if people were aware of the social media post that suggested you try to do your own care in six minutes, because that's what long-term care workers are dealing with - they are doing care in six minutes. I don't know about anybody else in this House but I certainly cannot do my own personal care in six minutes. Imagine doing that for eight or 10 or 12 or 14 people every single day and knowing that you are cutting their service, their right, short.

There are no rules for how many CCAs are allowed or how many residents CCAs are allowed to have. Each home receives funding for CCAs and typically the ratio is eight to one, but during sick calls, short staffed, that can go up as high as 12 to 14. Why aren't we talking directly to the staff? They are the ones who know. They are the professionals - the CCAs, the LPNs, and the RNs. They're the ones who know what these seniors require.

Can you imagine if a senior is not bathed or groomed on a regular basis? I, for one, can tell you from my experience in long-term care that what they're dealing with is disgraceful. Seniors shouldn't have to be given special permission to have a bath or to be shaved. I have an uncle in long-term care right now who was probably the most manicured gentleman I have ever met in my life - dressed properly, manicured - and the other day when I saw him, he had dried food on his face. Sadly enough, it was the same dried food on his face that my mother had seen earlier that day. I had seen him in the evening and with no fault of the staff. It is the fault of this government for not putting the resources in to care for these residents.

Imagine not being spoken to or engaged for hours or days. Again, I will use my personal experience. My uncle sometimes sits in the same position until he starts crying because his bum is so sore. Imagine. How do we think that this is correct, or that this is right? How does anybody in this room believe that that's the way our seniors are supposed be treated? After what they've done for us: they've birthed us, they've paved the way for us, they fought in wars for us. They saved our country. They defended our country and their sitting on their bums and they're crying because they're sore. I just can't wrap my head around that.

Imagine not being bathed, as I said, and sores develop. We have no idea what's on his backside and as his niece, I don't want to know for fear of how I will react, because something is making him very sore and we are very, very suspicious that it's a bed sore but sadly, we can never find staff to ask. We have asked for him to be laid down every day from two to four. My mother typically goes up around two-thirty or three o'clock and he is in the same position, sitting strapped to a chair. That's inhumane. I wouldn't treat my dogs like that.

Aside from the comments made across the floor about my question today, saying that the money was put back to long-term care, we can look at the budget and we know that \$8 million was cut, Madam Speaker, to the budget of nursing homes, to long-term care. Three million was put back, absolutely, but \$5 million is still short. We should try to eat on \$4.60 a day. This House should try and take that on and try to eat three meals a day for \$4.60 and let's see how it goes. I would dare say that we wouldn't last a day.

When you look at the cost of acute care verses long-term care and how many patients are waiting in acute-care beds, the cost is significantly higher to house a patient in an acute-care bed. Yes, it would an upfront initial significant cost to build those beds as my colleague said, but in the end, we would be saving thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. I know I brought this up in the last session. I don't have the numbers in front of me right now, but I know it was a significant amount of money.

Anybody that walks into a long-term care facility sometimes will see, as I have many times, the same residents sitting in the same position in the same hallways in front of a TV not actually watching it. They have no loved ones. They have nobody to come and

see them, so they depend on the staff and the recreation staff for interaction. Sadly, the staff can no longer do that. This is emotionally and physically draining on staff to work short, to work with less than the required apparatus, as my colleague said, like lifts. As I've mentioned before the Maple Hill Manor in New Waterford is fundraising to try to put in the proper equipment because this government has not funded them.

A specific situation in long-term care, as I spoke about this morning, a Glace Bay resident has called me and said that her mother has called her, crying, from her room telling her that she needs to pee and nobody will come when I ring the bell. The daughter lives 50km away and is riddled with guilt. Riddled with guilt. Imagine receiving that call.

[3:30 p.m.]

The next call she got, she had fallen, and nobody came. She rang the bell, and nobody came. When the same daughter went to the hospital for the fourth time with her mom, the same diaper that they put on her in the emergency room was on her when she got back to the long-term care facility more than 12 hours later.

So, you wonder why they have infections or why they have UTIs, why they have bedsores. It's because, as I've said many times in this House, they are only allowed a certain number of diapers per day, regardless of the mess. Those diapers are under lock and key.

Sometimes I seriously don't know - I don't know how much longer I can even do this job and know this because it's disgraceful to think that we allow this as government.

As the people who sit in this House, we are not doing anything to change it. How do people sleep at night? At the end of the day, what's more important - seniors' lives, the lives of our loved ones or a balanced budget? Really, that's what it comes down to.

For me, a balanced budget isn't anywhere near worth the life of a loved one. My grandmother, my uncle, my mother - someday, God knows, but at what point do we put an invaluable price tag on the life of a loved one because right now that's what we're doing. We are saying, no, we have a balanced budget, we have a surplus budget.

We don't care that there are 1,100 people waiting for placement in long-term care. We don't care that there are 1,000 people waiting for a transfer closer to home in long-term care because that's what it is - 1,000 people waiting to be closer to home, to their loved one who they were with for 50 or 60 years and then all of a sudden, boom - they're four hours away and they don't get to see their loved one anymore. I don't think there is any amount of money, in my opinion, that is worth treating our seniors like that.

Government can say that they have decreased the wait-list - you know what? We all know why. It's because the rules changed. Nobody has dropped off unless they have

died. Nobody has dropped off the list. They've been kicked off the list because the government changed the rules and to that - I don't know why we have to fight for this. Why isn't this a constitutional right? Why isn't this a legislative right that we have for our seniors?

Nova Scotia needs serious legislation around long-term care and I urge, empathetically urge, for everybody to hear this fight - hear this plea and let's work together to fix the long-term care mess in Nova Scotia.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 25.

Bill No. 25 – Ombudsman Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

MS. LISA ROBERTS: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to a related bill to Bill No. 22, which we just discussed. This proposal from the NDP is a proposal to revise the Ombudsman Act to empower that office to conduct investigations when family members, or indeed residents, of nursing homes do have a complaint or require investigation of what has happened to their loved one in a nursing home.

As my colleagues have spoken, we do have a nursing home population that is considerably more frail and considerably more vulnerable than the nursing home population in the past. One thing that comes with that is a very restricted ability on behalf of nursing home residents to advocate for themselves.

As my colleague the member for Cape Breton Centre just spoke of, it is sometimes difficult for families to get to the bottom of what is happening with their loved ones, even if they are concerned about their care. Of course, if it's your mother, your father, your spouse who's in a nursing home and you're concerned that they're not getting the care that they deserve and they require for their health and their dignity, sometimes pushing for that care can leave a family feeling vulnerable. Of course they don't want to have worse care in the moment, so sometimes families don't feel empowered to ask all the questions or to demand the answers. That is where an expansion of the statutory mandate of the Ombudsperson of Nova Scotia could be helpful.

In 2014, the New Brunswick statutory mandate was officially expanded to include oversight over nursing homes, special care homes, home support services, and other sorts of facilities that are mandated and provided under the Department of Social Development in that province. It's time that we followed suit in Nova Scotia.

Currently the Ombudsman Act in Nova Scotia gives the Ombudsperson jurisdiction over government departments and agencies, but it's not clear that they have the mandate to investigate complaints. While the regulations do give them that authority, it only takes an Order in Council to remove it. That's not fair for nursing home residents or their families. They deserve a guarantee that they have somewhere to go for help.

I was just looking again at some media reports about the family of Chrissy Dunnington, who were looking for answers after she died at age 40 of complications as a result of a pressure sore - a bedsore that was stage 4 and resulted in sepsis. They were looking for answers and not being fully briefed on what the department was finding out, and being surprised by things, like not understanding who put a "do not resuscitate" order on her file, because they hadn't done that. Where did that come from? They weren't able to get the answers.

As an MLA, I myself know, in my relations with departments, if one is not inside government, it's really hard to get a clear sense of who is who within departments, and who can give you the answers. Of course, to some extent, the role of departments is to respond to the government of the day, and there isn't necessarily that sort of impartial stance that an office like the Ombudsman can have to really investigate, to be equally responsible to a family that has launched a complaint to the department or the minister or the nursing home.

Families with relatives in long-term care are already facing a challenging situation. They've already had to put their trust in others to make sure that their loved ones are safe and well cared for. That on its own is a hard step to take. We need legislation to expand the role of the Ombudsman, to provide Nova Scotians with a guarantee that there is somewhere for them to take their concerns and who will listen.

In the United States, nursing home ombudspersons are widespread. In fact, most states have several trained ombudspersons per county ready to take complaints and guide those seeking assistance through the process. Here in Canada, Ontario has a Patient Ombudsman dedicated specifically to resolving issues in health care. In 2015, the Saskatchewan Ombudsman's Office reported receiving 79 complaints about seniors' care and went on to make an in-depth report based on a specific case, with recommendations for homes across the province.

I think whenever we empower an independent office, an office that is somewhat arm's length from the government, to take on a role that allows it to investigate, it accomplishes something on its own, but it also accomplishes something because other agencies know that it has that power. I look to the example of Northwood, for example, which is a non-profit with a very active board with many community volunteers, that was founded with a mission of serving seniors. I'm not sure what the genesis of it was, but they were motivated and took the step of investing in equipment and investing in training and setting goals for themselves such that they have reduced the incidence of bedsores from 12

per cent a few years ago to less than 2 per cent today. I'm again so grateful that they are a facility with its roots in Halifax Needham. I'm consistently impressed by how committed they are to their mission and how they work to carry that out, despite the many challenges they face, as do other nursing homes.

I think, in part, it was because of that community responsiveness and that volunteer board that they are motivated to take that step.

Every nursing home in the province hasn't had that mission and there have been external factors, like we've discussed, budgetary factors and there are the simple challenges that come with the increasing frailty and vulnerability of our residents. We need to do everything possible to protect the most frail and vulnerable residents of Nova Scotia. Certainly, at this point in time, some of the most frail and most vulnerable are seniors living in long-term care.

While I hope and I pray truly that there would not be calls for many investigations of such horrific cases as Chrissy Dunnington's, the fact is that when there is a need there ought to be a place for a family to turn. The simple fact that there is a place for a family to turn hopefully would mean there would be fewer cases where it would be necessary.

For that reason, I really hope that government members will consider this bill and perhaps we can see a version of it move forward, if not our bill during this session perhaps another version in another session because it's our job to do the best we can and I think this would be a tool that would enable the Government of Nova Scotia to do a better job by its citizens.

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

MR. HUGH MACKAY: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 25, an Act to Amend the Ombudsman Act and we've certainly heard speaker after speaker in this House this afternoon speak to the importance of looking after our seniors and those in the care of the government and that's why this government is going to take action.

Madam Speaker, under the Ombudsman Act, the Ombudsman is established as an independent Officer of the House of Assembly with all the powers, privileges and immunities of a commissioner appointed under the Public Inquiries Act. The primary mandate of the office is to investigate complaints arising from the administration of provincial or municipal laws. The Office of the Ombudsman may also initiate investigations of administrative activities, practices or matters referred to it by a committee of the House of Assembly.

In recent years, Madam Speaker, the mandate has expanded to include a proactive role in relation to the province's programs and services for youth, seniors, adult

correctional facilities, as well as systematic and policy reviews. The Act allows members of the public and employees of specific government bodies to file allegations of wrongdoing.

Madam Speaker, this office plays three key roles as an oversight agency. First, pursuant to the Ombudsman Act or the Office of the Ombudsman, or as my colleague, the member for Halifax Needham referred to, the ombudsperson helps in resolving complaints made by citizens about their public services, specifically the administration of law by provincial departments; municipal administrations; and agencies, boards and commissions who may be subject to a review by this office.

[3:45 p.m.]

Secondly, through effective relationship building and co-operation with public bodies such as the Department of Community Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Wellness, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and the IWK, Ombudsman representatives provide dedicated services to children and youth as well as seniors and adult inmates. The mandate for children, youth, and seniors is one of the broadest in the country, including those jurisdictions with its separate child or seniors advocate.

Thirdly, in December 2011, the role and scope of the Ombudsman's responsibilities expanded with the proclamation of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act. Pursuant to this Act, the Office of the Ombudsman receives and investigates disclosures of wrongdoing made by the public or provincial government employees, and this Act provides an avenue for whistleblowers, we might say, that previously did not exist.

If members of the public or employees of a specified government body feel that they have been treated unfairly by a provincial or municipal government body, or if they have a complaint about a Nova Scotia Government service, the Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman may be able to help them.

Madam Speaker, the mission of the Ombudsman is to promote the principles of fairness, integrity, and good governance. The core business of the office under the Ombudsman Act is the investigation and resolution of public complaints involving provincial and municipal government. Under the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act, the office investigates allegations and wrongdoing involving provincial government.

I'll highlight several services and processes in the Office of the Ombudsman - Investigation & Complaint Services, where the Ombudsman representatives review and investigate concerns about services provided by provincial and municipal government organizations. This unit addresses departmental services, adult corrections, municipal services, and many other inquiries and complaints. The youth and seniors services Ombudsman representatives review investigative reports from the concerns of children,

youth, parents, guardians, and those working in government child and youth residential care services and custodial facilities. This unit also examines issues affecting senior citizens, particularly those who reside in provincially licensed long-term care facilities. They also promote dispute resolution processes and operate proactively to advise our services and identify and address issues or concerns before they escalate.

There's the complaint resolution process, which is typically the first point of contact with the Ombudsman assessment officer. This is the first step in a multi-tiered approach to effectively and efficiently resolve complaints or requests for information. Many complaints are resolved by assessment officers providing quick information and referrals. Issues that require further review are assigned to an Ombudsman representative and are processed as administrative reviews. Most administrative reviews result in resolution for the parties involved, while some may require more in-depth investigation and become formal investigations.

Ombudsman representatives meet with youth in care and custody during regular scheduled site visits and provide face-to-face assistance to address issues or complaints as soon as possible. Ombudsman staff similarly conduct site visits at a number of government regulated or licensed facilities across the province such as long-term care facilities, adult correctional facilities, youth correctional centres, as well as a variety of other groups and organizations that may benefit from understanding the role and mandate of this office.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Correctional Services. In Nova Scotia, as we know, there are four adult correctional facilities holding both sentenced inmates as well as those remanded to custody pending trial. These facilities are: Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, Southwest Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, and the Cape Breton Correctional Facility.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the NDP introduced Private Member's Bill No. 25 to amend the Ombudsman Act, and the proposed bill would expand the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to receive and investigate complaints regarding the administration of nursing homes and residential care facilities. The Ombudsman does investigate complaints about provincial or municipal government departments, agencies, boards or commissions, as I have said, and it currently has jurisdiction to receive and investigate complaints about the administration of nursing homes and residential care facilities that are licensed or receiving government funding.

It does not have jurisdiction to address complaints about long-term, private care facilities but as various speakers have referred to today, including the Premier, the Minister of Health and Wellness, and my colleague, the member for Halifax Atlantic, government has struck an expert advisory panel to recommend improvements in long-term care. This panel of experts will make recommendations on aspects of long-term care, and we're looking forward to receiving these, as mentioned, by November 30th.

Madam Speaker, the Office of the Ombudsman continues to serve Nova Scotians as an independent oversight body. Ombudsman representatives continue to seek out those who may benefit from these services.

Madam Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks, gratefully, by congratulating and thanking the hard-working men and women of the Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Argyle-Barrington.

HON. CHRISTOPHER D'ENTREMONT: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand for a few moments to speak to this bill and of course to my colleague, the member for Chester-St. Margaret's. It really is a pain when we can't get our words out. I know he had a good thought on the Office of the Ombudsman and I hope that at some point he'll get the opportunity to get up and speak again but, a little bit of water. I know the Minister of Internal Services was very gracious in getting him a cough drop there too. It's always one of those situations in this House of Assembly.

Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand for a few moments to talk about the Ombudsman Act. In the comments earlier - these are all tied together - in the comments on Bill No. 22, my colleague spoke of the need to ensure care and dignity in the delivery of long-term care. I think I want to start first in thanking and underlining the great care that is being given by the long-term care facilities in my constituency, which of course is Bayside Homes in Barrington and Nakile Home for Special Care in Argyle. But we have a lot of seniors who end up a little further away, Villa Saint-Joseph du lac in Yarmouth, Hebron would be more appropriate, Surf Lodge - unfortunately, we do see people who travel as far away as Surf Lodge, which is Lockeport, and of course many of our seniors end up in Shelburne.

That's a whole issue that I do want to discuss in a few moments, but they do provide phenomenal service and I want to thank each and every one of the nurses, the CCAs, the administrators, the groundskeepers, the workers who are in those facilities that provide such good care for our seniors. I know that a majority, many of these homes, are doing the best possible service that they can for our loved ones.

Not all of our residents, of course, are taken care of to the way we think they should be taken care of, whether a loved one or not. These principles matter to residents of long-term care facilities. They impact everything from daily meals to medical check-ups to whether or not a resident has had a good night's sleep. I want to take a moment to consider what a concerned family member or friend is to do when they suspect the care and dignity afforded to a loved one is lacking. It's not always clear to Nova Scotians where they should turn when they suspect services are not being delivered to the standard that we all deserve.

We get a lot of calls in our constituency offices from people questioning the long-term care system. We won't say it's necessarily the funding that they're receiving, or what

have you; people are confused of where they're to bring their concerns to, and depending on where they are in that system, the answers can vary. I know the majority of the calls that I get in my constituency revolve around the issue of placement. We have seniors sitting at home, if they're lucky; most of them are sitting in hospital waiting for placement or they're in their second-choice or third-choice placement, so they're not necessarily near loved ones or friends so that they can have that quality of life of being able to chat and find out what's going on at home. We're getting a lot of phone calls and visits from those loved ones who are always concerned about the placement of their loved ones.

I can tell you the information that we receive as MLAs is pretty lax, as well. We don't get a whole lot of information when it comes to the placement of a loved one. All we can do, I think, is be able to advocate on their behalf, trying to push files forward. I do want to thank the staff of the Minister of Health and Wellness because we do bother them on a regular basis about placement. It's still a challenge even on that very basic component of placement in long-term care.

Where are people to go when there's a problem in long-term care? Should they call the Department of Health and Wellness if they suspect their loved one's - their father's, their mom's - medical needs were ignored or dismissed in a care facility. Or should they attempt to get in touch with the Health Authority instead? Many times, in my questioning here in the House of Assembly, the Minister of Health and Wellness does wash it off to the Health Authority, you should actually call there. In this particular case, when care isn't being received, where should we go? Can their MLA help if it's clear that a grandparent is being fed on less than \$5 a day, living off a diet of mostly canned or powdered food? We hear those things many times, especially from many of the smaller facilities that really have difficulty in finding ways to make those ends meet. It's because of the cut in budgets.

Madam Speaker, for concerned family members and seniors themselves, the Office of the Ombudsman is the first step in registering a complaint about government service delivery. I guess when we're exhausted with the answers, when we can't find the answers that we need - which in some cases are simple solutions, they're simple ideas - we just need to make sure there's the flow of information to those loved ones that when they call the 1-800 number, that there actually is a phone call back. Many of the issues can be solved but when they can't they have to call the Ombudsman Office.

It's effective, in part, because it's independent, as my colleague, the member for Chester-St. Margaret's was saying. It's independent from government. It's less likely to get mired in the bureaucracy and protection of interests that can occur when lodging a complaint with a department. A lot of times when we call in, we just want some basic information but you can understand that the department's concerned about the protection of information, the flow of that information. It is a challenge to get the things that we need to provide to a patient or a patient's family. We should be able to. Maybe all this information should be just up there on a website and people can make their decisions accordingly, but it's not so we have an organization called the Ombudsperson's office. The

Ombudsman already acts to investigate issues with services on behalf of seniors, so they do have a mandate to do these things, including long-term care delivery, Pharmacare, and even permits like driver's licences. They can get involved in many different aspects of government.

[4:00 p.m.]

The Seniors Services division of the Office of the Ombudsman stresses that the Department of Health and Wellness is primarily responsible for seniors in long-term care. So the minister's department is responsible.

There is lots of room to improve here. Perhaps by giving the Ombudsman the authority to notify and investigate the person in charge of a facility in the same way they would call a minister or a chief officer, we can promote better oversight for seniors.

We've seen recent examples of the Ombudsman's ability to hold government to account. In the case of Laurie Kendal Porter Jr., staff at the Department of Health and Wellness resisted a complaint that was made to the Office of the Ombudsman. They insisted - or the department insisted - that they did not have to turn over information about the confinement of an intellectually disabled man, and that they did not have to respond to complaints about Adult Protection Services mishandling the matter.

Thankfully, the Office of the Ombudsman disagreed and forcefully defended their legislative right to obtain information from the department. The office also dismissed the department's claim that they could hide behind privacy legislation.

Given the proper authority, the Office of the Ombudsman can be very effective in investigating and improving government services. I feel that this House should be open to a debate on how expanding the powers of that office could promote better care and more dignity for our seniors.

I'll finish off in my last minute. When it comes to the whole issue of seniors' care, we've been asking, and I will continue to ask in this House of Assembly, where is the Continuing Care Strategy? Where is the update to that strategy?

Things have changed since 2006, when the first one was brought in. We had somewhat of an update when the NDP were government, but here we are on the second term of this Liberal Government and we still have not had an update to the Continuing Care Strategy, which should encompass some of the issues that we have been bringing forward: the funding, the care levels, the care services, the distribution of the dollars that are available to us.

We should be able to provide a safe home for our loved ones when they are in a long-term care facility. I know I will continue to visit my friends and family in long-term care facilities to ensure that they have the care that they so well deserve in our system.

With that, I will take the opportunity to sit down and enjoy the rest of the debate.

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

MS. LENORE ZANN: Madam Speaker, I would like to speak today to the Ombudsman Act - or the Ombudsperson Act - Bill No. 25, which the NDP has brought forward today mainly because we feel that there is a lack of oversight when it comes to looking after our seniors in the province.

Of the stories that hit the news, there are hundreds more - if not thousands, possibly - that we have never heard about. As MLAs, though, we do get to hear a lot of stories not only from our constituents but also from friends who are going through dealing with the system with their loved ones. As somebody who has parents who are now older - my dad has just turned 86 and my mother is 80 - I am very concerned about what lies ahead.

The Ombudsman or Ombudsperson bill expands the jurisdiction of the Ombudsperson to receive and investigate complaints regarding the administration of nursing homes and residential care facilities.

What does a person currently do if they have a complaint or concern? They might start at the nursing home, bringing their problem to a staff member or even to a family council. They might write to the administrator to request some changes in their loved one's care plan or to register concerns that care is not being done appropriately. But unfortunately, problems can't always be solved at the level of the nursing home, especially if those problems have to do with things like understaffing and food quality.

We've heard a lot from workers in these institutions who tell us that there is a lack of staffing and that that is why there are so many problems today, not to mention the financial budget cuts to seniors' homes, which I think are just shameful.

A family member might take their complaint to the Department of Health and Wellness for resolution. However, unfortunately, many families have told us their complaints seem to just disappear into a void, a black hole, at the department. Individuals and families have horrifying stories of calls going unanswered, pages and pages of letters not being responded to, responses being received months or even years later. They have binders full of documentation and evidence of their struggle to get justice for their loved ones. Too often, there is no resolution for that struggle. Surely, we can all imagine what that feels like, trying to advocate for better care for our loved ones. The people who run the system just don't seem to be listening or possibly even caring.

If you can't afford a lawyer, you have nowhere to go. That feeling of abandonment, of helplessness, of hopelessness, is crushing, Madam Speaker. Imagine not being able to secure the kind of care that you know your mother or father deserves. Family members who are older are vulnerable, and we're trying to make sure that they get the care that they deserve. What happens if you're just hitting a wall? Where do you have to turn?

Now imagine doing things differently. Imagine we had an Ombudsperson with jurisdiction over nursing homes and other long-term-care facilities, somebody that you can go to with your issues, and you know that they're going to be dealt with. The concept of an Ombudsperson first originated in Sweden more than two centuries ago.

I have said many times on the floor of this House that after living and working in Sweden for a year, I realized that they are so far ahead of us here in the West - in so many ways, they are light years ahead of us. Maybe that's because they have a social democratic government, which actually cares about people. They put people first ahead of everything, and they believe in looking after the whole person from birth to death. That's probably why they have the greatest longevity in the world, and they have seniors who are the healthiest people in the world. I would say we need to take a page out of their book and follow them here.

The concept of an Ombudsman to use inquiries and structured investigations to determine whether a complaint is founded is very important. Along with the ability to make recommendations to correct unfair situations in individual cases, they can also address systemic issues. These are the important issues. They look for trends. They look for patterns in complaints to identify and make recommendations to address potential systemic issues and seek system-wide improvements to influence positive change. They're committed to achieving redress for the individual but also, where they identify systemic failings, to seek changes in the work of the bodies within their jurisdiction, both individually and collectively. Where they identify injustice, they seek to put this right.

Imagine that we had an office that was actively tracking complaints and concerns about long-term care and providing advice to the government based on the pattern they are noticing. If we had such an office, Madam Speaker, it might not have taken this government five years to consider improving staffing ratios in long-term care. It might not have taken so many unnecessary deaths as a result of complications from bedsores for this government to commit to reviewing how they fund the system. It might have given Nova Scotians more faith that their government is open to listening to their concerns whether they supported them at the ballot box or not.

Residents of long-term care facilities and their families deserve transparency. They deserve to know about how decisions are being made in these homes. They deserve to have their complaints and concerns addressed in a systemic way and within a certain amount of time rather than disappearing into an endless bottomless void. They need to know that someone is there to listen, someone is there who actually cares about their loved ones. That

is why I believe that we need to expand the role of the Ombudsman to cover issues in the long-term. After all, let's get this straight: We are all going to be there someday. We're all going to be in this situation.

As someone who came along at the tail end of the baby boomers, I know that baby boomers oftentimes make a lot of changes for the rest of society. Well, that's because they finally have to deal with it themselves and see, oh, I don't really want to be in this nursing home with nobody there to really look after me, and eating food that costs \$5 a week, or \$2 a day, or whatever. I kind of like having my quality meals. I kind of like having exercise and being looked after and having somebody paying attention to me and taking care of my needs, and I like somebody to have the time to stop and actually talk to me, which people in our seniors care right now are telling us that they're not getting. And the people who work there, God love them, they're telling us it breaks their heart that they don't have the time to give to the people in their care. They want to.

I just received a letter the other day from somebody working in a seniors' home who said, I used to be able to sit and talk to somebody for at least ten minutes - I can't even do that now, she said. We are cutting short our own workers in these places and what they can do and what they can provide and that is not fair to them because, oftentimes, they get the brunt of the concern and the outrage of the public when, in fact, it is the government's handling of it that is actually at fault.

I believe that our seniors, our elders, our parents, our grandparents deserve nothing less than to be taken as seriously in their so-called golden years because, like in Sweden and these other countries where they have other means of looking after their seniors, they believe that people are important not just when they're "productive" - not just when they are able to contribute financially to the system. They've been contributing financially to the system their entire lives and now they deserve a system that is working for them, and that's where we come in.

That is our job and that is why I'm here standing today to say I support this bill very much. I'm glad that our Leader brought it forward and I will continue to fight tooth and nail for the seniors in my constituency and all across Nova Scotia until something is done and we can have a very good system for not only the youth but also our seniors, elders, grandparents, parents, great-grandparents for years to come.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, would you now call Bill No. 36.

Bill No. 36 - Police Street Checks Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

MS. SUSAN LEBLANC: Madam Speaker, we are debating this bill today because we still have not stopped the ongoing practice of police street checks, a practice that is known to be a discriminatory practice and has a negative impact on the lives of African Nova Scotians.

So, I want to begin by noting that the New Democratic Party is an all-white caucus and we are in a majority all-white Legislature. I'm not trying to speak from any moral high ground today. I want to acknowledge the privilege that has brought me to this position and given me this platform to speak, and I continue to benefit from the histories and ongoing practices that make it easier for me to be in this position that I'm in today.

I, in no way, want to speak for the African Nova Scotia community. I think striving to follow the principles of "allyship" however means that white people like me need to speak up and amplify and affirm African Nova Scotian voices on issues of racism and not shy away from that duty.

I think being white is doubly important that I use this platform to understand, to amplify, and to act on the concerns and the ideas coming to me and to our caucus from African Nova Scotian people. So the New Democratic Party caucus and I are using the tools we have to say this: We need to turn the attention of this whole House to stopping discriminatory police street checks in Nova Scotia.

I'm going to talk about how we have known the discriminatory impacts of street checks in Nova Scotia for a long time and we have done nothing about it. Consecutive governments have delayed taking action or ignored this issue - and that includes the NDP Government, so I am calling that out. Not to try to call out this government or anyone in this House in particular, but to call us all out because we all bear responsibility and I want to challenge us to do better and to act now. I think we can recognize that inaction in the past does not need to justify inaction in the present.

[4:15 p.m.]

So, we are debating this bill today because we still have not stopped discriminatory practice of police checks that negatively affect African Nova Scotians more than anyone else in this province. It has been 15 years since Kirk Johnson won his human rights case resulting from a street check. It has been over a decade since Halifax Police began collecting statistics that showed that Black Nova Scotians are three times more likely to be street checked. It has been over a year and a half since the CBC broke the story on that statistic and before that, and since, many, many African Nova Scotians have been calling for an immediate end to street checks.

When the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent toured Canada and stopped in Halifax, it recommended ending carding and street checks. We do not have any excuse for why police street checks are continuing when we have

known their harmful impact for so long and we also know that they do nothing to help prevent crimes in our community. Social worker Robert Wright has signed a letter along with many other African Nova Scotian people over a year and a half ago calling for an immediate end to street checks. He said that every time an African Nova Scotian is stopped and questioned when they have done absolutely nothing illegal, it is a reminder to a Black citizen that their full citizenship is not yet accepted in this society.

The petition circulated by the Working While Black organization says that the discriminatory impact of street checks on Black Nova Scotians causes psychological drama, perpetuates negative correlations between criminality and race, decreases trust in the judicial system, and disempowers Black communities to live safely and free of racism. Every day that we let street checks continue, we perpetuate these harmful impacts.

I appreciate that study and consultation can make sure that we have solutions that are specific to Nova Scotia, but there is no reason something that is known to be harmful and discriminatory to Nova Scotians should continue while that study continues. I appreciate that the Scot Wortley study is being thorough and thoughtful, but we know that the report will be finished now at the earliest in January and I wonder how long it will take the government to act on that report.

Many community members have expressed to me that they are experiencing consultation fatigue. They are asked again and again to take time out of their lives to share the negative experiences of police checks that they have had over and over again. And they do this without seeing any results. A year ago, journalist Julia-Simone Rutgers wrote about this. She wrote, "Over and over again the city's racialized communities are asked to chronicle the dehumanizing violence they live every day. Over and over again they oblige, but nothing changes. Why can't we hear them?"

I understand the intention of an online survey Mr. Wortley has recently released, but I am concerned that it is yet another demand on African Nova Scotian people to prove their trauma. Fifty questions to describe a person's feeling of being targeted by police because of their colour. I also don't see what security measures are in place to guard against the online survey being filled out disingenuously.

Because I don't think we need to be asking African Nova Scotians to testify again and again, and that we should listen and hear them the first time they speak, I want to repeat for the record again some of what we have already heard:

Sylvia Parris who is a past board member of the Halifax Police Commission and now she's the CEO of the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute. She called for an immediate moratorium on street checks.

Lana MacLean, a social worker, describes how her nephew was stopped by police biking down North Street on his way home from school. She talked about how early

exposure to police street checks sets up a dynamic of mistrust and makes Black Nova Scotians feel like they're criminals.

Ishmael Beals reports that he is pulled over at least once a month. A community member named Tom, who preferred not to share his last name, talks about being harassed and followed by police when bringing home his groceries. He said, "Maybe it's the organic bananas I buy."

Marcus James, founder of 902 Man Up, helped develop recommendations for the police back in 2003 that still have not been implemented. He talks about being questioned by police on repeated occasions when he is closing the North End Library after community meetings.

These are just a sampling of the many voices saying there is plenty of evidence that street checks need to end now.

The last time I had an opportunity to speak about street checks in this House, I ended with the words of Sgt. Robyn Atwell, a Black police officer in Halifax. I will end with them again, today, because they remain as true today as they were then.

Sgt. Atwell says, "This practice is wrong. It's not effective. End it."

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clayton Park West.

MS. RAFAH DICOSTANZO: I would like to thank the honourable member for raising this issue. I value the member opposite's perspective and have concerns for the safety and privacy of Nova Scotians. Since moving to Canada from Baghdad, I have learned to appreciate and value living in a country that has a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I truly do. I've had many experiences with my work that came to emotions of the differences between the life I would have had living in Iraq compared to the life I have here and the rights.

Madam Speaker, I believe it is important that all police interactions with the public are conducted within the law and that they are respectful of citizen rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We must always remember that democracy requires continuous work and review as our society continues to grow and evolve. We need to ensure human rights are protected, and also ensure communities are safe.

Madam Speaker, in January 2017, leaders from the African Nova Scotian community reached out to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission with concerns around the police information-gathering techniques, commonly known as street checks. They highlighted statistics that show some groups are over-represented in street checks compared to others.

There is no question these are concerning statistics and I join the African Nova Scotian community in wanting to know more. That is why I am pleased that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission launched a review of this controversial issue in September 2017. The commission has contracted an out-of-province, independent researcher to lead this review.

Dr. Scot Wortley is a criminologist with specific subject matter expertise and his appointment has been well received by the community group that brought forward the concerns about street checks. A member of his team includes a woman named Jessica Bundy. Ms. Bundy is a Ph.D. student at the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies and is from Nova Scotia. Ms. Bundy brings with her extensive work experience in the African Nova Scotian community, ensuring members of the community have their voices heard.

Dr. Wortley and his team have been providing regular updates on his review process. In May, they held focus groups and meetings with the Halifax Regional Police Department and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who are taking this issue very seriously and fully co-operating with this review. The Halifax Board of Commissioners, which provides civilian oversight for Halifax Regional Police, has also requested regular updates on the status of this review.

In July, Dr. Wortley and his team specifically focused on connecting with the younger population here in our province. They held focus groups that were specifically targeted towards youth, with group meetings held in Uniacke Square, Mulgrave Park, East Preston, and North Preston. These meetings were well attended and very informative. Dr. Wortley has been working closely with the Halifax Regional Police to obtain and compile 11 years' worth of data. This includes data from the RCMP as well.

Madam Speaker, as you can understand, this is an ongoing process, and there is a lot of data to review. Police have been fully co-operative during this process in helping the commission and Dr. Wortley access the information.

The commission has also launched an online public survey. The public survey will be available until early December and asks questions about the public's experience with police and street checks.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight work that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is doing to address and prevent consumer racial profiling. This commission launched a free online course in March 2017, and to date, more than 12,000 people have received this training. The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is now working with the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies to launch this program nationally.

The review of street checks by the commission and Dr. Wortley is ongoing and on schedule. A preliminary report is expected to be presented to the stakeholders this Fall, and the final report is expected to be released publicly in early January. As I said, I am pleased the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is currently conducting a review into the issue of street checks.

At this time, instead of proceeding with the legislation, I believe that it is important that we wait for the results of this study, and a decision on how to proceed can be based on the information and evidence provided. We know there is more work to be done, and we look forward to the report from the commission and Professor Wortley. With that, I take my place.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Pictou West.

MS. KARLA MACFARLANE: I'm very pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 36, Police Street Checks Act. I want to thank my colleagues who have spoken so far and spoken very passionately.

The practice of street checks was called into question, as we all know, in this Chamber in 2017, after a CBC investigation revealed that Black people were three times as likely to be part of a street check than white people. Everyone in this Chamber, just think for a moment what that would mean for you if you were Black - three times as likely. People who identified themselves as of any other culture than white were 1.9 times more likely to be stopped by police. When I heard this, I really, truly was astonished. It really piqued my interest, and I'm very happy to be able to say a few words with regard to this.

The public debate, as we know, has been continuing. At times, it has been very heated and often polarized. There is no question in my mind that we need to have an honest, open, transparent conversation that needs to continue. It has to be on an ongoing basis as we evolve.

There are two main points I would like to make. One is regarding trust. It's public trust. It's not there. I think that that's something that we all need to work towards. The other is around balancing the obligations and tools that peace officers must use to serve and protect and keep us all safe.

[4:30 p.m.]

I will begin with the second point and be really clear here that the PC Party definitely supports our police officers and all of our peace officers as well. We can't thank them enough for their commitment, their unwavering dedication to their job, and to protecting all citizens while they risk their own lives. We cannot do what they do. We're very grateful for their service.

Much of the time, they are required to enforce laws passed by multiple levels of government, so they're trying to juggle two. Just consider all the challenges that "clarify as we go" cannabis legislation has been. It's been a fiasco when I speak to the different levels of government, in particular the municipal - they're struggling. I can only imagine the challenges this bill has faced, as well as the challenges that are out there for both sides that are looking to come to some kind of compromise and improve this unfortunate circumstance that we have - this unfair situation.

Police on the front line of that countrywide social experiment of cannabis - we know that it's a multimedia world. There are so many informal tools available to increase accountability, and they are used quite often, on a regular basis. As tough as that is sometimes, though, I think that's a good thing. There needs to be a balance struck - not just fairness, but a perception of fairness, for all Nova Scotians. We collectively need to come together and get this right. The numbers found around police checks point toward a need to look deeper into this situation. There's no doubt.

I appreciate that there's a review happening, and I am happy to hear that they are including youth. It would be great if that review were a little bit more open and transparent to all of us, so that we could all look and have updates on it. It's great that it's coming out in January, but none of us know what's been conducted so far. That part is unfortunate.

As I just mentioned, the numbers found around police checks point toward needing to look deeper into this. In that regard, I agree with the member for Dartmouth South who presented and introduced the bill, in that there's a need for mutual trust between members of the public and police officers.

However, do the processes outlined in this bill have the potential to work toward addressing fears of systemic racism while balancing appropriate use of police tools? I'm not certain if it does, and I can't project if it will, but I know it all has to be considered. I would have to ask: How will the panel to be established by this bill address stereotypes of criminality? Will it limit police investigation tools? We owe it to the community, to all citizens, and to the police.

Nova Scotia, as we all know, has suffered systemic racism for way too long. It's our time to do something about it. Pretending otherwise is just a non-starter, and anyone who doesn't want to get involved is living in denial.

Perhaps that is why this bill in particular refers to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms quite frequently, even seeking to put wording into regulations. Perhaps, but surely our regulations do not need to explicitly prohibit officers from violating Charter rights. Nevertheless, I would like to conclude with a caution to all of us, but especially this government: losing the public trust is extremely serious. We're going down that rabbit hole right now. It's all about trust. Everything we do here should be in the public good for all

people. This bill should be well thought out, including any possible unforeseen, unintended consequences.

The Law Amendments Committee this week was a stark reminder of what can happen otherwise, for any of the members who participated in the Law Amendments Committee this week.

Our caucus is collectively still reviewing the bill and seeking input from one another. I think we have to think this bill through a little bit further to confirm that it will serve the community and the police together. The government should not just dismiss this bill just for the sake that it is being introduced by the Opposition. I hope that they give all consideration to this bill. We need to keep talking about this. On those few messages, I'll take my seat, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

MS. CLAUDIA CHENDER: Madam Speaker, thank you to my colleagues who have spoken to this. I'd also like to thank the number of spectators in the west gallery who have come to witness this debate and to see us discuss this important bill in the Legislature.

Madam Speaker, it's a privilege to serve in this Assembly. I often think about the diversity of background and experience in this Chamber. We have people born to means and those born with no means. We have members with deep, strong roots in Nova Scotia and family members who have served in this Chamber, and others who are grateful to have made their way here at all to build a better life.

We also have many shared experiences. Many of us have children and young children at that. Many or most of us have had the benefit of higher education and, with the exception of the sometimes delightful and sometimes challenging interactions that go along with living a public life, most of us are able to live free from unwanted interference or threat.

It's unlikely that most of the members in this room look over their shoulders when they walk out of their doors in the morning or when they enter their vehicles or when they lock up after work or when they walk home from the grocery store. Sadly, this is the reality for the majority of the African Nova Scotian population in Nova Scotia. We know that one in three African Nova Scotians will be stopped by the police at some point. This is compared to a higher number but less than one in 10 Caucasian Nova Scotians, and that's simply not okay.

What happens when people are stopped for no legal reason? They may just have a chat with an officer and that should be encouraged. Those conversations should be encouraged, but the problem is that after this chat their data is recorded and it is saved in databases that can then be accessed by other law enforcement officers across provincial

and even international borders. The existence of this information, even though it is there as a result of a random stop, increases suspicion in future encounters and may cause and has caused delays when crossing borders, results in differential treatment and generally creates a culture of fear and mistrust.

If a name is pulled from a law enforcement database and imagine, Madam Speaker, if you were a peace officer and you pulled a name from a database because you were checking because someone was crossing a border or on a traffic stop and a long string of interactions and information appeared, you would naturally have an assumption that there was something suspicious going on - why would this person have all of this information in a police database if there was nothing wrong? But you know what? They might just be Black. It might just be by dint of colour of the skin that they have when they were born. Again, that's not okay.

In my first term of law school, my instructor in criminal law was a former member of the RCMP. I'll never forget that in his introductory lecture, on the very first day, he spoke at length about policing. He spoke about how important the job was, how vital the job was to the functioning of our society and the respect in which we should hold that office. He also called upon us, as fledgling lawyers, to consider an intentional language choice. He asked that we always refer to officers, especially in court, as peace officers for that was the highest calling of law enforcement.

In calling on the government to end the practice of police street checks, we are most certainly not saying that police officers should not be in contact with the communities they serve, that in an effort to build trust and work as effective peace officers, we are encouraging them to continue to do just that, to engage and interact with communities as so many officers, especially community policing officers, already do. What is not necessary and what can lead to harm both to individuals and to relationships is for officers to record in databases every interaction that they have with someone when there is no reasonable suspicion to stop them. That data trail can cause serious damage to people's lives.

The bill we have put forward acknowledges that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms sets the standard for all interactions between government agencies and members of the public. It acknowledges that effective policing requires mutual trust between members of the public and peace officers, and our bill acknowledges the harmful, negative impact that racial profiling has on just that public trust in our justice system.

The bill we have put forward prohibits the collecting, releasing, or retaining of identifying information about an individual who has not been arrested or charged with an offence. The bill allows peace officers to interact with members of the public in the course of an investigation as long as that interaction is consensual. They can ask questions. They can engage with communities. They can canvass door-to-door. They can ask questions, but that interaction must be consensual and it must be perceived to be consensual.

The bill also requires the government to appoint a panel that includes at least one representative of the African Nova Scotian community to consult with the public and make recommendations about rules to govern the collection, release, and retention of identifying information about individuals who have not been arrested or charged.

The bill further calls for the destruction of all records of information collected through the process of street checks unless the panel opts to preserve the records for research purposes.

No person should be arbitrarily stopped. We recognize that and, clearly, given the data we have, these stops are not random or arbitrary. They are a product of systemic racism. Most of us assume that our interactions with law enforcement, short of detention or arrest, are consensual but, for racialized communities, this is often and even usually not the case. When a person is approached without any reasonable suspicion, they should feel free to leave the interaction and they should be informed that they are free to do that. Because people do not feel this way, they don't trust law enforcement, and a vicious cycle continues that has already been going on for far too long.

Police can and will be able to do their jobs with this legislation and they will continue to do them well. If there is reasonable suspicion of a crime, there is no impediment nor should there be to the detention of a person by law enforcement. I have the utmost respect for all of the people working in law enforcement in this province. As my colleagues have mentioned, it is a challenging profession, and I believe it is and can even more be a noble one. My interactions with the community policing officers in Dartmouth have been fantastic. They know the kids. They understand the communities and they do amazing work.

In putting forward this bill and calling for a moratorium on street checks, we are not being critical of the individuals who are out there doing this work. We are not talking about bad apples. We are identifying a long-, long-, long-standing systemic problem that requires a systemic solution. The role of government is to establish that balance between personal freedom and shared interest in safe communities. We are the ones who determine what is for the public good and we must act accordingly.

African Nova Scotians are overrepresented in our correctional facilities, have lower health indicators, and generally have had significantly more barriers to full participation in public life. Here is a big barrier and it is in our power to remove it. The debate over this issue in Ontario, where there is legislation, and here in Nova Scotia has had many legal experts weigh in. They have argued that this practice does violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the right to life, liberty, and security; the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure; the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned; the right, on arrest or detention, to be informed promptly of the reasons; and, most importantly, the right to equal benefit and protection of the law. These are the standards we expect to be upheld in all interactions between all levels of government.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms shouldn't need to wait for reports to come in to be protected. We want to be safe. We want law enforcement to have the tools they need to be the peace officers they were trained to be. We believe we can do this while respecting the freedom of all members of our communities and that we must do it now.

[4:45 p.m.]

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable New Democratic Party House Leader.

HON. DAVID WILSON: Madam Speaker, that concludes Opposition business for today. I'll turn it over to the Deputy Government House Leader for business for tomorrow.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader.

MR. KEITH IRVING: Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now rise to meet again tomorrow, Thursday, September 20th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Following the daily routine and Question Period, business will include Committee of the Whole House on Bills, Bill Nos. 2, 4, 10, 13, 16, and 23; and, with time permitting, Public Bills for Second Reading, Bill Nos. 38, 42, and 44.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do rise to meet again on Thursday, September 20th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

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

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

[The House rose at 4:46 p.m.]

NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER RULE 32(3)**RESOLUTION NO. 140**

By: Kim Masland (Queens-Shelburne)

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

Whereas this week a commemorative plaque bearing the late Cecil Day's name was installed on the site of the former Liverpool Advance newspaper; and

Whereas Cecil Day began at the Advance in 1931 and transformed it from an unfinished barn to a modern building on Main Street, increased the staff from three to 14, and built the paper's circulation until it was the highest in the province; and

Whereas Cecil won many provincial, national, and international journalistic awards, a feat all the more remarkable because he was stricken with polio as a child and missed six years of school;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of the Legislature recognize Queens County legend Cecil Day and acknowledge his many contributions to Queens County and to Nova Scotia.