



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Keith Bain

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First Session

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021

Sixty-fourth General Assembly

First Session

9:00 A.M.

SPEAKER

Hon. Keith Bain

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Angela Simmonds, Lisa Lachance

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. We'll begin with the daily routine.

PRESENTING AND READING PETITIONS

PRESENTING REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

TABLING REPORTS, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PAPERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House this morning to acknowledge a very sad incident that occurred yesterday while fishermen were heading out for the first day of lobster fishing.

Crews with the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre announced yesterday that a search was underway for a missing fisherman in the waters off southwestern Nova Scotia early in the morning. The captain of a vessel, a Mi'kmaw fisherman from Sipekne'katik First Nation, is the subject of the search.

Mr. Speaker, as minister, I want to say on behalf of our Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and our government that our thoughts and our deep support are with Chief Mike Sack and the people of Sipekne'katik First Nation during this troubling time. This incident must bring great shock and distress to the Sipekne'katik community, and we want them to know that we sincerely share in their concern.

This is distressing to all fishermen and to all Nova Scotians who share in our province's heritage of harvesting from the sea. It is dangerous work and the people who do it take some risk so that they can provide for their families and their communities. It is an honourable occupation that takes courage and very hard work, and safety, unfortunately, is an always important yet unavoidable concern.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Royal Canadian Air Force for their joint efforts in this search. We don't have all the facts as yet and we expect to know more information as time goes by. It is a sad day for all fishermen and for all Nova Scotians when we hear news like this.

I am sure that all members of this House join me as I express to the people of the Sipekne'katik First Nation community our warmest wishes of support at this time.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for a copy of his remarks before the proceedings today. On behalf of the Liberal caucus, our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends connected to the 54-year-old Nova Scotian who has not yet been found.

Of course, with the Sipekne'katik Band, we are there for the Band's Chief Sack. This is an honourable profession, as my colleague has said. Historically, over generations, Nova Scotians have been on the sea and Nova Scotians across the province benefit from the ocean and how we get our food and recreation. It's a tough like of work. It's dangerous even on a good day.

We are there to support our fishers across the province, women and men who risk their lives to go out to support their families and their communities in our province and our coastal communities.

Again, on behalf of our caucus, our thoughts are with the group and the search and rescue teams who as well go out there and risk their lives to help find these people. There have been too many occurrences recently and beyond in this field. We're there for Nova Scotians in this matter.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Mr. Speaker, as fisheries and aquaculture spokesperson for the NDP, on behalf of my caucus I also want to convey that our thoughts are with the family and community of the fisher who is currently lost at sea. Particularly his home community of Sipekne'katik, as many have mentioned, who must be suffering unimaginable sorrow at this moment as they wait.

Too often in this Chamber, as the Leader of the Official Opposition said, we have stood to mark these moments which brings back to all of us, I think, the danger and challenge of this life that so many Nova Scotians rely on and so many of us benefit from.

We know that every hour that someone is missing is deeply painful and we thank everyone who is stepping forward in the search. We are reminded of that interwoven spirit of Nova Scotians when we see these search efforts and we see how communities come together across all kinds of imaginary lines, to help people in times of distress - whether it's on the water or supporting those waiting for news.

Our thoughts are with the family and the community. We hope that a resolution is found and that it's a positive one.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES OF MOTION

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care.

RESOLUTION NO. 11

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

Whereas continuing care assistants have worked tirelessly over the past 19 months to protect the people they care for from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas continuing care assistants are compassionate, dedicated health care providers who have provided and continued to provide a high level of care to some of our most vulnerable citizens; and

Whereas these health care providers have made a significant difference in the lives of many Nova Scotians, including those they care for and their families and loved ones;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House take the opportunity presented by Continuing Care Assistants Week in Nova Scotia to recognize the many people who work in this vital and rewarding profession and thank them for their important contribution to the fight against COVID-19 in Nova Scotia.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

RESOLUTION NO. 12

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

Whereas Mike Crosby was a businessman, entrepreneur, author, salesman, realtor, and chef, and a man of unrelenting ambition and curiosity; and

Whereas Mike's greatest passion was fishing - Atlantic salmon fishing, in particular - and he was the president of the Nova Scotia Salmon Association; and

Whereas Mike Crosby, who passed away on October 12th, will be greatly missed, especially by his family, in whom he had the greatest pride;

Therefore be it resolved that this House of Assembly recognize Mike Crosby for his numerous achievements in sport fishing conservation and for providing opportunities and employment to the many people he inspired across Atlantic Canada.

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

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care.

RESOLUTION NO. 13

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

Whereas older Nova Scotians have spent a lifetime building our province, teaching young people, and making our communities better places to live; and

Whereas older adults are the fastest-growing segment of our population and contribute a lot to the well-being of our province; and

Whereas the past two years have shown us that older Nova Scotians are resilient and have been at the forefront, showing their strength, experience, and ability to lead, with many working on the front lines of the pandemic in health care and in giving roles;

Therefore be it resolved that all members of this House recognize the significant and important contribution that older Nova Scotians have made and continued to make to our province and our communities.

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

[9:15 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: There has been a request for waiver.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 18 - Entitled an Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994-95, the Workers' Compensation Act. (Hon. Iain Rankin)

Bill No. 19 - An Act Respecting Parks and Protected Areas. (Gary Burrill)

Bill No. 20 - An Act to Amend Chapter 42 of the Acts of 2005, the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act. (Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin)

Bill No. 21 - An Act to Implement the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (Lisa Lachance)

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

NOTICES OF MOTION

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH: EFFORTS TO HELP THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITY - THANKS

HON. BRIAN WONG: Mr. Speaker, October is Dyslexia Awareness Month, which aims to increase awareness of a hereditary lifelong condition.

Ten to 15 per cent of Canadians live with dyslexia, a neurological disorder. The Mark it Read campaign brings awareness to the importance of developing programs and supports that provide equal education opportunities for students with learning disabilities. With early identification, effective instruction, and support, children with dyslexia can learn to read and succeed at school and in life.

To support this occasion, Province House will be lit up in red - the colour of dyslexia awareness - on Sunday, October 17th, joining communities across Canada in raising awareness about the most common learning disability in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in thanking all those who are dedicated to bringing awareness of dyslexia so every individual with dyslexia has the supports to thrive along with their peers. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin. (Interruption) Bedford Basin, sorry.

**CHILD LOSS AWARENESS DAY:
ENCOURAGING SHARING OF GRIEF - RECOG.**

KELLY REGAN: I want to assure the Speaker that the member for Bedford South is honourable as well. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, October is Child Loss Awareness Month, and today, October 15th, is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. Dr. Abigail Brenner says losing a child is the singular most devastating passage anyone will endure during a lifetime.

I believe there are things we can do that will make a difficult time easier for those who experience this loss. For example, when a person is in the midst of a miscarriage in a hospital or emergency room, perhaps we could put a symbol on the door or cubicle to let people know that there's a person inside who's going through a very difficult time.

We've discussed this here in this House. Perhaps a butterfly photo or a drawing. What we can do is acknowledge that a child existed, however briefly, that the child was loved, that their loss is keenly felt, even if we never got to meet them.

For too long, parents who have lost babies before or at birth suffered in silence, and on days like today and months like this month, we should encourage all those who mourn their loss to share it and to know we share in their grief and their pain, too.

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

**MAHONE BAY ISLANDS CONSERV. ASSOC.:
ISLAND STEWARD CHAMPIONS INIT. - RECOG.**

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show support for Mahone Islands Conservation Association, and recognize John Meisner, current Chair, and Michael Ernst, founder Chair, who work tirelessly to protect these islands.

MICA has partnered with the Province since 2005 to acquire and protect the islands, which lie within the constituency of Chester-St. Margaret's.

While island titles rest with the Province, formal stewardship agreements between the Province and MICA ensure the islands are conserved with MICA as the steward, and are available for traditional public use in perpetuity.

To help spread the stewardship load and increase local engagement, MICA has recently initiated Island Stewardship Champions for each island, with over 20 Stewardship Champions. I look forward to the continued success of this relationship.

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

EISENHAUER, ERIC: 100th BIRTHDAY - BEST WISHES

HON. BEN JESSOME: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the House to join me in wishing Mr. Eric Eisenhower, a lifelong resident of Hammonds Plains, a happy 100th birthday today.

He was born in Hammonds Plains to Mr. Harrison and Jenny Eisenhower; he was one of six children. They lived in the family home and moved throughout his lifetime just across the street. He was a Sub-Ranger with Lands and Forests from 1957 to 1982, and he also worked on the family farm for many years, raising cows, pigs, and chickens.

He and his wife, Muriel, have been known as active members throughout the community as volunteers, most notably with St. Nicholas Anglican Church, and more recently he was recognized for his volunteer work with the Bedford-Sackville Meals on Wheels at 98 years old. He has been a hard-working man all his life. I saw him mowing his lawn this summer.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the House to join me in wishing Mr. Eric Eisenhauer a happy 100th birthday. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

BGC CAPE BRETON: PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH - THANKS

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the work of a youth centre in my riding that does amazing work with children and youth, the BGC Cape Breton.

The BGC Cape Breton is affectionately known as The Club. Dedicated trained staff provide a safe and accepting environment under the direction of Chester Borden. The staff encourages every member to learn, grow, and become engaged in the community and achieve their goals.

The vast programs provide youth with so many opportunities to grow and learn about themselves and the community and develop new skills to take them on their life journey. The dedicated staff has provided a positive road map for the children and youth who attend the club.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss while speaking about the club if I did not mention our beloved - and former Speaker of the House - the Honourable Gordie Gosse. Gordie served as executive director of the Whitney Pier Youth Club for 10 years, and his memory and legacy are still very much with the club.

I ask the House to join me in expressing to Chester Borden and his staff our appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Richmond.

WORLD SPINE DAY: EFFORTS TO AVOID SPINAL PAIN - RECOG.

TREVOR BOUDREAU: Mr. Speaker, World Spine Day takes place each year on October 16th. An estimated 1 billion people worldwide suffer with spinal pain. It affects people across the life course and is the biggest single cause of disability on the planet.

This year's theme is BACK 2 BACK and focuses on ways in which people can help their spines by staying mobile, not overloading their spines, and adopting healthy lifestyles such as weight loss and smoking cessation.

I would ask all members of this House to join me in recognizing the efforts of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors on World Spine Day.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

DEVEAU, JOSANNE: MUN. OF CLARE VOLUN. OF YEAR - RECOG.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Every year the Municipality of Clare chooses a representative volunteer to represent the volunteers of our community.

It is rare to have as young a representative as Josanne Deveau, a 23-year-old university student with an impressive record of helping in her community. Josanne started volunteering at the Special Olympics eight years ago and is now the assistant coach for the track team and often helps out with association fundraisers.

She is also the female development director for the Clare-Digby Minor Hockey Association, as well as the assistant coach of its U7 team and the coach of the Western Riptide U11 team. She has been coaching hockey and soccer for years and was the youth representative for the Clare Community Health Board.

Josanne's parents have always emphasized the importance of giving back to her community, a lesson Josanne has learned well.

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

**BERNARD, KAYLA - HeART PROGRAM:
SUPP. OF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH - CONGRATS.**

LISA LACHANCE: I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of Kayla Bernard, the founder and director of the HeART Program based in Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, which helps youth of various ages explore art media to support their mental health and engage with their community.

Kayla works tirelessly to ensure the needs of youth are being met in as many ways as possible. When the pandemic started in 2020, Kayla pivoted from offering in-person sessions to creating HeART in a Box. In total, over 700 boxes were sent across Nova Scotia, reaching every county in every corner. Children and youth across the province were thrilled to receive boxes containing art supplies and project ideas, wellness exercises, and a couple of treats. They knew they were well cared for.

Kayla builds the HeART Program by engaging with and listening to youth. In 2021, she noticed the toll the pandemic was taking on schools and has created a school-based program. She also had day camps focused on back-to-school transition.

Please join with me in recognizing Kayla Bernard and congratulating her for impact on the community and her hard work in mental health.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton East.

**MCALLISTER, COLIN/RYAN, JUSTIN:
PURCHASE OF POINT OF VIEW SUITES - CONGRATS.**

HON. BRIAN COMER: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate entrepreneurs Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan on their recent purchase of the Point of View Suites in Louisbourg, Cape Breton.

Their hope for this resort is to add another wing, some tiny homes, and maybe some domes to attract the modern-day traveller. They have already started remodeling the current suites and oceanside beach house and relaunched the breakfast and brunch menu this Summer, which is a huge hit with the community.

The pair of celebrity designers from Scotland hope to use their design talents to revitalize the resort, eventually bringing people from around the world to this world-class community.

I stand here today to congratulate the new owners of this resort and wish them nothing but success.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Northside-Westmount.

**RATCHFORD, PAUL - CLIFFORD STREET YOUTH CTR.:
SUPP. FOR YOUTH - CONGRATS.**

FRED TILLEY: I stand here today to recognize Paul Ratchford. Paul is a Cape Breton Regional Police officer with a long history of volunteerism on the Northside. Mr. Ratchford has worked tirelessly for the past 14 years to ensure the children of North Sydney have a safe and comfortable place to call their own.

The centre provides so much for these children to experience that many of their peers get to experience. I had the opportunity to visit Clifford Street Youth Centre with Paul and meet many of the children who have grown up in the centre and who work there today, a testament to Paul's leadership.

Paul has been running this organization and he's also been tasked with keeping it open with an annual budget of \$30,000. Thanks to Paul's efforts and the generosity of the community, the centre has been able to remain open for now.

During the election, our Party had committed to funding for the organization to keep it running in perpetuity, and I would ask our government colleagues to please consider Clifford Street Youth Centre in their deliberations. Congratulations to Paul.

[9:30 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

**MOBILE OUTREACH STREET HEALTH TEAM:
HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS - RECOG.**

SUZY HANSEN: I rise today to acknowledge an amazing community service provider that is doing great work in the community of Halifax Needham: The Mobile Outreach Street Health team.

MOSH provides accessible primary health care services to people who are homeless, insecurely housed, street-involved, and underserved in our community.

The MOSH team is a collaborative primary health care team of two full-time nurses, a half-time occupational therapist, a half-time administrative support, and 12 hours of physician care per week.

Access to the existing health care system is difficult and even impossible to access for many people living on the margins of society. MOSH aims to meet in spaces where there is a greater level of comfort, taking primary health care to them, establishing relationships and building trust as a means to improve their health outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in acknowledging the tireless work that the MOSH team has been doing daily, and they truly are appreciated for the work that they do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Queens.

**ALEXANDER, NATALIE & COHEN:
FUNDRAISING FOR QUEENS PLAY PARK - RECOG.**

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge two young Queens County entrepreneurs. This past summer, with the help of their grandfather, 11-year-old Cohen Alexander and his nine-years-old sister Natalie built and set up a stand in their front yard in Liverpool. With support from their mother, they made and sold delicious

baked goods, iced tea and lemonade, aiming to donate all of the proceeds to the Queens Universal Play Park.

Cohen and Natalie not only learned about running a small business, they engaged the support of many in the community and, in the process, raised an impressive \$565.

Mr. Speaker, it is admirable that Natalie and Cohen took this project on over their Summer vacation. I ask that all members join me in applauding them for their generosity and setting an example of how we can work together to achieve great things for our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

MCRAE, EARL: 10th ANNIV. OF DEATH - TRIBUTE

BRAEDON CLARK: Mr. Speaker, today is the 10th anniversary of the passing of my father-in-law, Earl McRae. Earl was one of a kind, he had an exemplary career in journalism that saw his byline splashed across the pages of the *Toronto Star*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *Ottawa Sun* and the *Canadian Magazine*, among others. He interviewed everybody, from Robert Kennedy to the Beatles to Bobby Orr and he was the author of two great books - *The Victors and The Vanquished* and *A Requiem for Reggie*.

Earl won three National Magazine Awards for his sports journalism. He was nominated five other times. He co-founded the Elvis Sighting Society, an Ottawa charity that raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and received thousands of strange letters - I'll let that one sit there.

In 2002 Earl was awarded the Friendship Award, the highest civilian honour that can be bestowed by the Royal Canadian Legion, in recognition of his long-standing support of the military. This was deeply personal for Earl as his own father, Private Earl Piché, was killed in action in Germany in April 1945. Most importantly, he was a loving and devoted father to his four children - Jill, Neil, Dave and the youngest, my wife Caitie.

Earl was one of the best and brightest and I miss him dearly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Standing Ovation)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DEVET, ROBERT: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, last night friends and admirers of journalist and publisher Robert DeVet gathered to celebrate his life and mourn his loss. Robert died suddenly on September 27th and his death is a terrible loss for his family, friends and many for whose voices he amplified in his writing and editing. Robert was truly the people's

friend and the tyrant's foe. This was reflected in the gathering of people outside the old library last night: folks from the labour movement, the peace movement, the environmental movement and anti-racism movements. With honouring speeches and loud group chants, it felt much like a demonstration, which I think Robert would have liked.

A former Service Nova Scotia employee and Halifax Media Co-op editor, Robert was the person - with assistance from his cat - behind the Nova Scotia Advocate, an online publication that was a voice for the many Nova Scotians who were too often ignored.

Mr. Speaker, the best way to honour Robert is to enact laws and policies that do right by the people and struggles to which Robert devoted many years of his life, fighting poverty - not the poor - honouring Mi'kmaw treaty rights, tackling systemic racism, ending homelessness and fighting for this burning planet.

Rest in power, Robert.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

RIVERPORT & DIST. FIRE DEPT.: 75th ANNIV. - RECOG.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, please join me in honouring the Riverport & District Fire Department for faithfully serving and protecting our communities for 75 years.

It was a genuine honour for me to be able to attend their 75th anniversary celebrations and be present that day for the official opening of their newly-expanded fire station.

I ask all members in the Nova Scotia Legislature to join me in recognizing the past and present volunteers of the Riverport & District Fire Department and thank them for their faithful dedication and service.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Annapolis.

**MACLEAN, MAUREEN:
RECIP. OF 2021 VALLEY ARTS AWARD - CONGRATS.**

CARMAN KERR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2021 Valley Arts Award recipient, Maureen MacLean of Middleton.

This award is presented by the Deep Roots Music Co-operative to the person who has made a significant long-term contribution to the arts in the Annapolis Valley. Maureen is certainly very worthy of this honour.

After studying music at Mount Allison University, she went on to teach music both privately and in schools, including 25 years at Middleton Elementary School. She has served as conductor of the Middleton Choral Society for more than 40 years, was involved with the Nova Scotia Choral Federation Choir camp, is a charter member of the Valley Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, and served as organist at various local churches.

I invite all members of the House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Maureen MacLean on receiving the 2021 Valley Arts Award. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cape Breton Centre-Whitney Pier.

**HEAD, JIM “FRED”:
RECIP. OF 2021 HOCKEY N.S. AWARD OF MERIT - CONGRATS.**

KENDRA COOMBES: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jim “Fred” Head for being the recipient of the 2021 Hockey Nova Scotia Award of Merit.

The Hockey Nova Scotia Award of Merit is presented annually to an individual who has served hockey faithfully and made a significant contribution to the game. That description aptly describes Fred and what he has meant to both the game and his players. Since 1983, Fred has been a hockey volunteer in the New Waterford area, generously sharing his time and knowledge with players and hockey families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Fred on receiving our 2021 Hockey Nova Scotia Award of Merit. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Cobequid.

MACKEIGAN, CARL: COM. SERV. - THANKS

HON. STEVE CRAIG: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank Carl MacKeigan of Lower Sackville.

After Carl’s retirement as a firefighter, he was looking for ways to fill his days and the Silver and Gold Seniors’ Drop-In Centre in Lower Sackville became his daily outing. The centre provides a place for seniors to get together while offering various programs such as exercise, sewing, quilting, bereavement support, and income tax assistance.

In 2015, Carl became president of the volunteer-based Sackville Seniors Advisory Council, which looks after the drop-in centre, and he continues in that role today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all Members of the House of Assembly join me in congratulating and thanking Carl MacKeigan for his dedication and commitment to the seniors of our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sydney-Membertou.

KENNEDY, LINDA: DEATH OF - TRIBUTE

HON. DEREK MOMBOURQUETTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize someone in our community we lost in the last year who would be very familiar to the MLA from Sydney River-Mira-Louisbourg: Linda Kennedy from Catalone.

Linda was actually the original owner of Point of View Suites in Louisbourg with her loving husband, Tom. Linda passed away this year. She was a huge champion for the community of Louisbourg. She was a huge champion for Cape Breton Island. Anybody who ever went to the Beggar's Banquet in Louisbourg - that was put on by Linda. I see you smiling, Mr. Speaker.

She was such a wonderful human. On a personal note, her son was the best man at my wedding, and I was the best man at his wedding, so she was like a mother to me as well. To Tom, Gerry, Rob, and the rest of the family, I want to pass along my love and support. Linda was a true champion for Cape Breton, and she'll be missed.

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

HEARTWOOD CTR. FOR COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVT.: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE - CONGRATS.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development. For over 30 years, this organization based in Halifax Citadel-Sable Island has focused on community and youth empowerment and helped young people build their skills in becoming strong leaders.

HeartWood believes that our communities are strongest when youth are engaged in meaningful ways. HeartWood's multi-faceted approach to education and skills development focuses on hands-on learning, community partnership, and inclusion to empower young people of all backgrounds. Their capacity-building and consulting work also increases the ability of organizations and government to work with young people.

I now invite all of the members to join me in congratulating the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development on their work in empowering the leaders of tomorrow and for all of their contributions to organizations across the province.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg West.

**SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER OF THE AWESOME FDN.:
COM. PROJECT GRANTS - RECOG.**

HON. BECKY DRUHAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the trustees and volunteers of the South Shore chapter of the playfully-named Awesome Foundation.

The Awesome Foundation provides micro-grants to community members or community groups working on awesome projects. Each month, a group of 10 trustees contributes \$100 towards a no-strings-attached grant of \$1,000 given to a person or organization to support a great idea.

Projects may be in the arts, technology, community development, mental health, and more. Recent grants provided by the South Shore Chapter of the Awesome Foundation went to Hinchinbrook Farm in support of Mini, a therapy horse, and to South Shore Sexual Health to publish a book on sexual health.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite members to congratulate the volunteers and trustees of the South Shore chapter of the Awesome Foundation for supporting awesome ideas and giving back to the community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Timberlea-Prospect.

DUPUIS FAMILY: NOVA SCOTIA STRONG AWARD - CONGRATS.

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Dupuis family in Timberlea being recognized with the Nova Scotia Strong Award. Marcel, his wife Jenny, and their four children, Lily, Henry, Beau, and Sophie, were honoured by the Government of Nova Scotia with this first-of-its-kind award at the 47th Provincial Volunteer Awards on September 20th of this year.

Described as “community builders,” the Dupuis family members are constantly working in our community by fundraising, helping local businesses, connecting people, assisting others to find jobs, and numerous other small daily acts of generosity. The Dupuises are well known in Timberlea for undertaking and achieving outstanding feats that touch other people’s lives in a meaningful way, such as donations to shelters, contributing food to seniors, arranging bottle drives for refugee children, and raising money for the IWK Foundation, the Cancer Society, and Souls Harbour Rescue Mission.

Although this family takes on large-scale volunteer projects, they are quick to recognize that simple acts of kindness can have enormous benefits and sincerely touch the lives of friends and families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Marcel, Jenny, Lily, Henry, Beau, and Sophie Dupuis for their outstanding contributions to our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth East.

**SQUARE ROOTS PGM.:
PRODUCE DELIVERY TO NEEDY FAMILIES - RECOG.**

HON. TIM HALMAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday my colleague for Clayton Park West did such an outstanding job recognizing the Square Roots program that I thought I'd do the same for Dartmouth East.

I'd like to take this opportunity to bring recognition to an amazing group of volunteers who have made the Square Roots program possible in Dartmouth East.

Every other week, we have volunteers who join us on Friday nights - that's where I'll be this evening - to help prepare over 200 bags of fresh produce. Then on Saturday mornings, we have volunteer drivers who deliver the produce to families in need around Dartmouth, Cole Harbour, and Eastern Passage.

When COVID-19 brought additional challenges to families, we saw so many community members step up to help their neighbours. A big shout-out to my pal and colleague, Tony Mancini, for leading the charge in this initiative.

Because of these volunteer contributions, this program has been able to run successfully in East Dartmouth for more than a year and a half. I ask that all members of the House join me in recognizing these great volunteers for their time in helping our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

**STONE, MELISSA:
WORLD CLASSIC POWERLIFTING CH'SHIP WINNER - CONGRATS.**

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Melissa Stone of Yarmouth, who is now officially a world champion powerlifter. She won the World Classic Powerlifting Championship in Sweden in September. She also won gold in the bench and deadlift events and silver in squats.

It takes a tremendous amount of commitment and training to be a world champion, and Melissa should be proud of her accomplishments. Please join me in congratulating Melissa Stone on her hard work, dedication, and accomplishments in the sport. Her

community is very proud of her and we all wish her the very best in the future and look forward to seeing what she accomplishes in the sport of powerlifting.

[9:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Sackville-Uniacke.

**SACKVILLE-UNIACKE STUDENTS AND STAFF:
PINK SHIRT DAY OBSERVANCE - THANKS**

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, September 9, 2021, was Anti-Bullying Day/Pink Shirt Day, where students and staff in schools throughout Nova Scotia wore pink on the second Thursday in September.

In 2007, Grade 12 students Travis Price and David Shepherd observed a young student being bullied simply for wearing pink. The two Central Kings Rural High School students then bought and distributed 50 pink shirts to fellow students throughout the school.

There are few things less acceptable in our society today than bullying. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the students and staff of all the schools throughout Sackville-Uniacke who took the time to wear pink in awareness of anti-bullying day. I look forward to the day when we all can say the quote from Dr. King: judge one another only on the content of our character and that we respect each other regardless of how we look or what we wear.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

**CLOUTIER, LOUISE/PUG. COMS. IN BLOOM:
PUGWASH OPEN AIR GALLERY - CONGRATS.**

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Louise Cloutier and Maureen Leahey, along with everyone working with the Pugwash Communities in Bloom for their work with the Pugwash Open Air Gallery.

The Pugwash Open Air Gallery, a cultural project under the umbrella of Pugwash Communities in Bloom, encourages the development of artistic excellence and stimulates awareness of and interest in visual arts. This is accomplished through the acquisition and installation of an accessible outdoor art gallery comprised of reproductions of artwork by local contemporary artists, youth to seniors, on the exterior walls of buildings in the village. In phase one, seven installations were erected in the village.

This community endeavor has garnered national recognition from the Canadian Communities in Bloom, winning both the Outstanding Achievement for Youth

Involvement and the Outstanding Achievement for Heritage Conservation Awards for 2021.

Today I would like to congratulate Louise and Maureen and the Pugwash Communities in Bloom team for their recognition and for their work in the community of Pugwash. Pugwash is the village that is on the move, and I look forward to seeing more exciting things happening in this unique place in Cumberland and Nova Scotia.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Needham.

NELSON, STEPHEN: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

SUZY HANSEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand and rise and acknowledge a community member in Halifax Needham who's been a community mentor for a number of youth in our community: Stephen Nelson.

He has been the director of the Community YMCA on Gottingen Street, and he also worked tirelessly as a coach within that community centre. During that time, he's mentored and coached numerous youth and was a community advocate in my riding of Halifax Needham. Stephen Nelson, who is also known as Dee, also spent seven years with the LOVE program before that.

Stephen, or Stevie Dee, is an important role model for our youth, and is an obsessed change-maker for his community. I ask that all the members of his House recognize Stephen Nelson's commitment to change for the better of youth in the community at large.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings North.

**HARVIE, SUSAN: RYAN'S PARK DEVT. PLAN FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - RECOG.**

HON. JOHN LOHR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring recognition to Susan Harvie of Kentville. Susan's dream of building a community for her son Ryan, who has autism, is becoming a reality as Ryan's Park.

Susan has spearheaded and developed a plan for a small pocket community for her son Ryan and other people with disabilities. Ryan's Park will have 22 townhouses circling a courtyard. Some homes will be barrier-free and others built with specialized building-accessible environments. Susan Harvie's dream of creating an all-inclusive living environment for Ryan will benefit the entire community of Kentville.

Please join me today in recognizing Susan Harvie as an outstanding community advocate for persons with disabilities.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

**PARIS-HOYTE, SHAWNA:
PIONEERING FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK - RECOG.**

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Shawna Paris-Hoyte, who's doing amazing work in the community and province. She's a recipient of the Order of Nova Scotia, is a Black Nova Scotian, and a distinguished lawyer, social worker, and educator. Shawna has practised law in Nova Scotia for 26 years and social work for 17 years, teaching over three decades at the Dalhousie Law School and also the Dalhousie Law Clinic.

Shawna is a trailblazer, mentor, role model, inspiration, and leader in her profession. She is the first person in Canada to introduce the concept of forensic social work as a recognized subspecialty area of social work practice in Canada.

Since 2019, Shawna's development, implementation, and instruction of forensic social work, a practice-based professional development course, has provided for hundreds of social work students and practitioners. As a forensic social worker, Shawna is currently utilizing her skills to provide legal aid to the marginalized populations and represent a grassroots organization in the Mass Casualty Commission's public inquiry on issues of gender-based violence.

I am pleased to call her a friend and a mentor and a woman who continues to inspire me. I ask members of the House of Assembly to join me in recognizing an outstanding accomplishment by Shawna Paris-Hoyte.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

DEDICATED BIKE LANES: IMPORTANCE - RECOG.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I just wanted to talk about my morning commute this morning. I was running late and I decided to take my bike from Dartmouth to downtown Halifax, over the bridge. It took me 15 minutes, door to door.

It was a beautiful morning. I rode over the bridge. I reflected on how lucky I was to have a body that would allow me to do this - I acknowledge that. I wanted to say that it was my first time using the dedicated bike lanes along Wyse Road, over the bridge - that's always been there - and then back down on Hollis Street.

The last time I did that commute, I hit a pothole and I had a terrible crash and went to the hospital, thinking I broke my ankle. This time I felt super-safe and super-seen and legitimate, in a weird way. I felt legitimately allowed to be on the road with my bicycle, amongst traffic.

I just wanted to say this because I think that it's important for our health to be able to cycle to work safely, the greenhouse gas emissions reductions. I encourage the government to think about how we can implement dedicated bike lanes throughout the province, for all commuters.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Pictou West.

**PICTOU LOBSTER CARNIVAL TEAM:
ROCK THE DECOSTE CONCERTS - RECOG.**

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: I congratulate the member for Dartmouth North for having the energy to bike this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the hard-working committee and volunteers of the Pictou Lobster Carnival. The carnival, which began in 1934, had never missed a year until last Summer, 2020, when they were forced to cancel due to the pandemic. This year, however, they were determined to offer events that would be both safe and appealing to Pictou County residents.

Teaming up with the deCoste Centre, a local entertainment venue, the committee decided to run a series of concerts of local performers titled Rock the deCoste! which were all sold out. In addition to the entertainment, there was a small parade and an antique moving car show.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate in our small community of Pictou to have the annual Lobster Carnival and its dedicated team of volunteers. I look forward to having a full carnival next July 2022 and welcome all of you.

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

SMITH, MARY & KEN: FOSTER PARENTING - THANKS

HON. PATRICIA ARAB: I am honoured to be able to rise today to highlight the life-changing work of Mary and Ken Smith. Mary and Ken have dedicated their last 16 years to ensuring our most vulnerable constituents are loved, protected, and cared for. This amazing couple retired in June of this year after fostering an incredible 58 children and adopting two of them into their family.

Ken and Mary don't just foster: They integrate these kids into their home environment. They see these children not just as fosters but truly a part of their extended family. When these kids' lives are turned upside down - sometimes in the middle of the night - Mary and Ken provide a safe space, a hug if needed, and maybe a plate of cookies.

Fostering children is critical in Nova Scotia. There are approximately 1,000 children in care at any given time. Currently, hundreds of children in Nova Scotia are in need of foster care to provide them with emotional support, shelter, understanding, and hope.

I ask all the members of this House to join me in thanking Ken and Mary for being truly remarkable citizens, offering a stable home with patience, understanding and love to children in our community, and to encourage anyone who can to follow their example.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Guysborough-Tracadie.

**SHUPBACH, GABRIELA:
RECIP. OF ST. MARY'S DIST. VOLUN. OF YR. AWARD - CONGRATS.**

HON. GREG MORROW: I rise today to recognize Gabriela Shupbach from Sherbrooke. Gabriela was chosen by the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's as their Volunteer of the Year for 2021. Gabriela has been dedicated to developing and coordinating the Sherbrooke Main St. Farmers Market. This market provides an opportunity for residents and artisans to buy and sell locally.

The market continues to grow yearly and not only does it provide a shopping experience but also a much needed safe outdoor meeting place for the community to connect. As well, it has become a place where local musicians volunteer their performance time to collect donations for the food bank.

Gabriela was part of the Nova Scotia virtual volunteer awards celebration that was held in September. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Gabriela on her commitment to the community of Sherbrooke and the Sherbrooke area.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Halifax Atlantic.

**WILLIAMS LAKE CONSERVATION COMPANY:
DAM REPLACEMENT SOLUTION - RECOG.**

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize one of the oldest advocacy and community groups in all of HRM, the Williams Lake Conservation Company. The group was set up to protect Williams Lake, a beautiful spot in HRM. It is a unique and beautiful ecosystem in the heart of Purcells Cove, which many of us have learned to swim in.

Mr. Speaker, the group did something very special and unique during the past election. They got an all-party commitment to replace the failing dam. The Progressive Conservatives, Liberals, and NDP all presented a video committing to the community to repair and/or replace the dam.

I look forward to the group working with this government and Nova Scotia Lands on a solution to protect and fix this beautiful jewel in our community.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Kings West.

**MCINTYRE, MICHAEL:
RECIP. OF PHARMACIST OF YEAR AWARD - CONGRATS.**

CHRIS PALMER: I rise today to recognize a local pharmacist in my constituency, Michael McIntyre.

Mr. McIntyre is the Pharmacy Manager at Wilson's Pharmasave in Berwick. The Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia recently awarded Mr. McIntyre with their Pharmacist of the Year Award.

This award recognizes a Nova Scotia pharmacist who has demonstrated an active interest in the promotion of the profession of pharmacy by personal example and by participating in endeavors having a direct impact on the profession.

As well as going above and beyond to support his customers and colleagues, throughout the pandemic Michael has been posting informative weekly videos with COVID updates on the local pharmacy's Facebook page.

It is an honour to congratulate Michael on receiving this well-deserved recognition, and I ask all members in this House to join me.

THE SPEAKER: The honorable member for Kings South.

**REDCLIFFE, KELLY MARIE - RECIP. OF 2nd ANNUAL MINISTER'S
AWARD OF EXCELL. - CONGRATS.**

HON. KEITH IRVING: The Wolfville Farmers' Market is the hub of our community each Saturday morning where citizens purchase local food. Not only does the market provide our community access to fresh vegetables, locally produced meat and dairy products, and other value-added food products, we have the opportunity to know personally the passionate producers of the food we eat.

With International World Food Day tomorrow, October 16th, this is the perfect opportunity to highlight the community member who has led the growth of our market for years. Kelly Marie Redcliffe, Wolfville Market manager, recently received the Second Annual Minister's Award of Excellence. Kelly has been devoted to keeping the market thriving and recently evolving their services through the pandemic.

I ask all members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly to join me in congratulating Kelly Marie Redcliffe on receiving the Best Ambassador of Local Award and thank Kelly for dedication to making local foods accessible to our community.

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

SHAW, CAELAN: YOUNG ACHIEVER SERVICE AWARD - RECOG.

DAVE RITCEY: I rise today to recognize a compassionate young woman, Caelan Shaw, recipient of the Village of Bible Hill Young Achiever Service Award.

Caelan is known as a go-getter who always takes the initiative to make positive change in the community. From her work as Youth Spokesperson for Girl Guides of Canada, Caelan has contributed to many meaningful local projects, such as quilting for first responders from the Portapique tragedy and actively mentoring females in sport as a VIP coach.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Caelan on her Young Achiever Service Award and thank her for her many contributions to volunteerism.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

**EDGAR, JUDIE & JIM: CREATION OF DAFFODIL GARDEN
FOR CANCER SURVIVORS - RECOG.**

LORELEI NICOLL: I am honoured to stand and recognize Judie and Jim Edgar of Cole Harbour, both cancer survivors.

Everyone knows the Edgars. They had a dream of creating a daffodil garden in honour of those who survive cancer. Their vision came to fruition on September 25, 2020, when the first such garden in Atlantic Canada was completed on Alderney Drive.

The cancer survivors' Daffodil Garden is located right there on Alderney Drive, on the Dartmouth waterfront. It's a beautiful gathering space and inspires and gives hope and courage to those impacted by a cancer diagnosis.

This month, 13,000 daffodils will be planted by a team of devoted volunteers in the hope of a glorious display for all to enjoy and celebrate in the Spring of 2022. I correct that: we did do it, and I did participate, and so did other members and colleagues in this House.

I ask that members of the House of Assembly join me in recognizing Judie and Jim Edgar for this great achievement.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland South.

FAMILIES & STAFF OF MLAs: SUPPORT TO MEMBERS - RECOG.

HON. TORY RUSHTON: As we all enter this House for our first week of debate and discussion here, there are many new MLAs, many experienced MLAs who have entered this House, but more importantly there are many people who are left back home, and our constituency assistants.

With the few seconds left, I just want to give a recognition to all of our family and staff who are back home to support us here in this House.

[10:00 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The time for Statements by Members has expired.

Before we get into Oral Questions put by Members to Ministers, yesterday the honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park was asked to table some documents, and she wishes to do that now.

The honourable member for Fairview-Clayton Park.

PATRICIA ARAB: Yesterday in Question Period, as you said, I did promise to table documents of the Premier's statements of "walking the walk." To save paper, I only did those times in Question Period up to when I asked the question, but I will table those.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORAL QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS TO MINISTERS

THE SPEAKER: The time is 10:01 a.m. We will go until 10:51 a.m.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - HOUSING: NON-MARKET UNITS - ACCEPT

HON. IAIN RANKIN: In the Throne Speech for this new government, the focus is on building healthy communities. According to the Nova Scotia Housing Commission, part of building healthy communities is having access to housing.

I want to ask the Premier if he is willing to accept that with the housing issue needing more supply, that part of that supply - what is critical to have - is some permanent, non-market, affordable units on the mix?

HON. TIM HOUSTON (The Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for this question on this important issue. There are many parts to solving the housing crisis. It will take time, and there will be lots of ideas that are required.

We certainly understand that there's a lot of anxiety right now. People are undersheltered, people are without shelter, they're totally homeless. We know it's a complex issue. We're sincere that we want to solve it, and there will be many moving parts to this solution. I look forward to talking more about that.

IAIN RANKIN: What I'm trying to get at is specifically if he understands that it can't just be market-oriented units on the mix. There are a number of community organizations that are willing to step up to partner. There are a lot of developers that are willing to step up to partner to build the type of housing that we need. Experts say they estimate that we need over 30,000 units on there that are permanently non-market, affordable housing units.

I want to ask the Premier: Does he agree with this number of 30,000, and what is his responsibility in this matter? Does he agree that the province should be leading this? Thirty thousand, and is the Province the lead in jurisdiction in this matter?

THE PREMIER: The province can lead, should lead, and will lead. We will walk the walk when it comes to fixing this housing crisis. (Applause)

But I want to assure the member that the solution to the housing crisis does rest in more supply. That means supply across the spectrum. I completely agree with that. That will be a part of our focus as well.

IAIN RANKIN: He can certainly talk the talk. It remains to be seen if he can walk the walk. (Applause) I appreciate his acknowledgement that it's going to take some non-market-oriented units.

There are ambitions to spend a lot of money in health. He said yesterday in Question Period that he will spend whatever it takes.

I want to ask the Premier: Given that housing is a human right, given that people are on the street now, will he spend whatever it takes to ensure that all Nova Scotians will have a safe, warm place to live by this Winter, and ensure that they have all wraparound services? Will he spend anything it takes to make sure that that happens?

THE PREMIER: We're certainly all on the same page. We want that for Nova Scotians. We'll do what we can, that's what we say. I'm certainly proud of the work that the minister is doing on this file.

We feel the urgency. We know that there's a lot of work that's required to be done, and we are committed to getting it done.

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

PREM.: HOUSING CRISIS - PLANS

GARY BURRILL: Continuing in this same vein, I'd like to ask the Premier about the situations of some people who came forward during the campaign this Summer to speak publicly about their housing struggles.

One of these is a man named Mike Sangster who had been in his apartment for 25 years and, not long ago, received a notice that said his rent would go up by \$850 a month when the temporary rent cap ended. This filled him with fear. He has now made a move and left his community and is living with his sister.

I want to ask the Premier as he continues to speak about the impending plans that the government has for addressing the housing crisis: What about these plans will help someone in the situation of Mike Sangster?

THE PREMIER: I'm familiar with that situation and many others. Of course, as we travelled the province on the campaign and since and even before, we heard the heartbreaking stories from Nova Scotians.

There are many, many good landlords in this province; there are some other ones as well. It's in our interest to protect tenants. Some things are there in the Residential Tenancies Act and stuff, but certainly it's our sincere intention to do everything we can to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords.

We need to really get to the root of what's happening here in the housing crisis. We need more supply. As we just chatted with the member about, we need supply across the spectrum. I take that very personally as well. I feel that anxiety that they feel.

GARY BURRILL: I'd like to ask about a man named Terry Madden. Mr. Madden lives, like many people do, on a fixed income. Like lots of people, year over year, he has experienced successive rent increases.

The last one that came, before we got into the temporary rent cap last year, put him in a situation where he had to give away his cats because he wasn't going to be able to feed

them anymore. That means that he's in a place where there isn't any more room to squeeze out of his situation and out of his finances.

I want to ask the Premier: With the plans that are about, as he speaks, to come forward about the housing crisis, what in those plans is going to help Terry Madden?

THE PREMIER: These are serious issues and I appreciate the member bringing them to the floor. There are programs in the government - rental supplements and stuff - that may help some people. We understand that the housing crisis is much, much broader than that.

What I want to tell the member is we take this very seriously. We were renters my whole life. I've had these discussions with my parents, about the anxiety they felt about what might happen to the rent, whether we would be able to stay in our home.

These are real concerns that Nova Scotians who are renting feel. They feel them across the province. As the government for Nova Scotia and as the Premier of this province, what they feel, I feel. We will do what we can.

GARY BURRILL: It seems to me that sometimes when the government and the Premier speak about the imperative of increasing supply, that the issue of the immediacy, the right-nowness of people's needs is being overlooked.

I think about the situation of a woman named Fatuma Seid who lives with her daughter in Fairview. She had been living in her apartment for 18 years since she came to this country from Ethiopia. The building is being sold. She and all of her neighbours are being evicted. When I spoke to her last, a couple of months ago, she still hadn't at that point found a place to live and was running out of weeks to find a place.

I want to ask the Premier: What in his housing plans that are about to be brought forward will bring about immediate help, today, for those who are in Fatuma Seid's situation?

THE PREMIER: What I would say to the member is that the plan is coming out next week - I believe on Wednesday. I'm sure there's no question that there'll be some feedback on the plan from the members opposite, and that's okay. This is an evolving issue that will continue. What I will say is we'll put a plan out there.

We recognize the immediacy of the needs of people. We also understand that we have to have a long-term vision for how we really get out of this cycle that we're in now. We'll do what we can in the initial plan to address both of these aspects for short-term, medium-term, and long-term, but the plan will continue to evolve.

We're happy to work with the members opposite and work with Nova Scotians to do what's right for Nova Scotians. That's our only focus. That's our objective.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

PREM. - HOUSING: HISTORIC BLACK COMM. - COMMIT

HON. IAIN RANKIN: It's good to have a timeline on what the plan is and when we're going to get the plan, so we're getting somewhere.

I'd like to submit that when the plan comes out that the new government considers equity. We should always be looking at that, especially when it comes to the foundation that people need of housing.

I'd like to table a letter that I received, as an MLA, from the historic community of Beechville, where they have asked to work with the new government on land that is owned by Housing in their community.

My question for the Premier is: Will he commit to earmarking funding, specifically to work with historic Black communities across the province, with community-led planning, with non-profit planning, and co-operative style units across the province with the historic Black communities?

THE PREMIER: Yes, absolutely I look forward to working with the community and work with the member as well and take a read through the letters, certainly, for sure.

We're going to do what we can. There's a lot of need. We're happy to work with the community, happy to work with the member to make sure we advance the situation in a positive way.

IAIN RANKIN: It's great to get some answers today. I also wanted to submit that our Party made a commitment to Upper Hammonds Plains to protect the community's unique cultural heritage with housing supply.

My question for the Premier is: Will he provide resources to support alternate ways of housing development ownership models, including resident-run co-ops and community land trusts for African Nova Scotian communities?

THE PREMIER: Happy to work with the member on that and the community on that to make sure the resources are there to move things forward.

I can't say it enough. I know this will be a topic of Question Period for the days to come, for sure, because it's an important issue to Nova Scotians. We all know that. There's a lot of work to be done. The message that I want Nova Scotians to receive and understand:

We will do the work that is necessary. We're not going to look away from the needs of Nova Scotians. There's a lot of work to be done. We will do whatever we can to get it done because it's an important issue.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition on a new question.

PREM. - LONG-TERM CARE: 4:1 STAFF RATIO - TIMELINE

HON. IAIN RANKIN: Good questions on housing. I'll move to health care. A bold promise was made in the campaign to add an additional 2,000 staff in order to ensure that every Nova Scotian had the long-term care ratio of 4:1 care hours per resident a day.

My question for the Premier is: What is the timeline to ensure that we have those 2,000 new employees in the long-term care sector?

THE PREMIER: We moved on from plans to timeline for plans and that's okay. It's a good thing. I was very honest with Nova Scotians during the campaign period and since that these things will take time and Nova Scotians accepted that. I was very honest that they'll cost money and Nova Scotians accepted that.

Now it's up to us to execute on both of those initiatives - health care, housing, there's a lot of work to be done.

In terms of the specific request question about recruitment, we do accept the Nurses' Union's recommendation on the 4.1 hours of care. That's a standard we should be meeting in this province.

We have a long way to go to get there. I'm very proud of the work that Dr. Kevin Orrell is doing with the new office around recruitment and lots of initiatives that I've seen from the various ministers under the umbrella of overall healthy Nova Scotians. I am very pleased with the work and the initiatives I'm seeing.

We know we need to recruit people to this province, but we can't recruit anyone in this province until we can retain them. That's why we're so focused on supporting the health care workers we have here right now.

IAIN RANKIN: We're looking for specifics. I don't accept that they have a plan to get to 2,000, especially when we have to have programs in place that are two and four years for new nurses, so there's a commitment. Obviously, there's a goal of some kind to get to 2,000 CCAs and nurses.

We're asking for a plan and we're asking for a timeline. Yesterday the Premier did not commit to finding a doctor for every Nova Scotian, but he has said that he'll find a bed

for all those in long-term care. He said that in the past and the commitment was to build 2,500 new beds in three years.

My question to the Premier today is: Does he still intend to meet that commitment of 2,500 beds in three years?

[10:15 a.m.]

THE PREMIER: They're going make me say it, Mr. Speaker, but what I will say is we will walk the walk on every single commitment that we made in our platform. We didn't make any - when we put our platform together we did something unique. We actually researched and said only what we would do. We actually researched and said only what we knew would be long-term solutions for this province. We didn't live in the moment for a political sound bite. We didn't try to distill things down to four-word solutions.

We have to be honest with Nova Scotians, and I'll tell you something. We went through a process in this province which was the most significant consultation process you can have in a province. It's called a general election and Nova Scotians responded in a very, very significant way. They said we like what you're saying, we trust you're going to do the best you can. Go and do it, and that's exactly what we'll do.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

H&W: AMBULANCE CRISIS - ACTION

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: One of the major health care commitments that was made was a result of the ambulance crisis that the members opposite have spoken about for months, and that the paramedics union have spoken about as well. We have had shortages of paramedics and ambulances on the road.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Wellness: What steps have the minister and the Department of Health and Wellness taken to address the ambulance pressure in the system?

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, in the 44 days since we formed government, we have travelled around the province and talked to thousands of health care workers and heard their ideas. We've increased virtual care to redirect people away from the emergency room, to ensure that they have access to things that do not require urgent care. We are in the process of hiring 28 non-paramedic drivers to increase the ability for people to walk up, to transfer back and forth and free up paramedics to respond to 911 calls, and the consultations continue. Again, we will continue.

ZACH CHURCHILL: I agree those are all good initiatives that began under the previous government that I'm glad the current government is continuing with. Of course, we have the Fitch report as well, and we have implemented 40 out of those.

I want to know in particular if the government is going to continue with the implementation of the Fitch report, specifically two programs that we brought in place before the election. One was enhanced resources at the QEII to deal with off-load pressures there, as well as removing the non-emergency transport from paramedics so that they can focus more on emergency response - are those initiatives that this minister is also moving forward with as well?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We continue to stand up the off-load team at HI. We do know that there are a number of shortages which we are working with, and redeploying staff to those areas. Dartmouth General certainly has shown success in that manner.

As I mentioned before, we have separated the 911 calls from the transportations - yes, we absolutely will continue those commitments.

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

PREM. - TRUTH & RECON.: STAT. HOLIDAY - COMMIT

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I was glad to see that one of the first actions of this government was to designate September 30th as Truth and Reconciliation Day but was dismayed the Premier stopped short of making it a paid day for all workers. Taking this extra step would confirm that the Premier recognizes the weight and importance of this day by ensuring that everyone in Nova Scotia is able to pause and consider the legacy of colonialism, and our past, present, and future relationship with Indigenous peoples.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to turning this important day into a statutory holiday so that all Nova Scotians could have the opportunity to stop and reflect?

THE PREMIER: I thank the member for the question. There's always a lot of discussion around statutory holidays and the ramifications, but I will say that this was an important day. I'm very proud that we as a province recognized it, and I'm proud of the work that the minister is doing.

There are lots of things we can do in this province to respect the traditions and the cultural importance of the community, and we'll continue to work on those things.

LISA LACHANCE: Mr. Speaker, naming a holiday and attending a flag raising are, more or less, straightforward options. Many of the contents of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report's calls to action fall squarely within the jurisdiction of

this province and others and will require significant focus and dedicated work - work that must be undertaken.

Indigenous people represent about 6 per cent of the population of Nova Scotia but comprise 12 per cent of youth in correction facilities and 7 per cent of adults sentenced to jail. This is why the TRC report calls on governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade and to issue detailed reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.

Mr. Speaker, what specific actions will the Premier be taking to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system of Nova Scotia?

THE PREMIER: These are important issues. There's a lot of work to be done. What I would say is that I wouldn't minimize - the member may minimize some of the actions that we've taken as a government, but I know that the community hasn't.

There's lots of work to do, certainly around justice issues. No question. I just ask the member to recognize that the actions we've taken, the steps we start to take - they're part of a process. They're part of a long road. Please don't minimize the steps we've taken right off the hop.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

S<C: CCA TRAINING GRANT - UPDATE

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care has a mandate letter and on it are 11 items. In that mandate letter for the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, the Premier directs the minister to reinstate the CCA training grant that was cancelled in 2013. I will table that.

I know the minister is familiar with this particular plan because she has indicated that she wrote the Progressive Conservative seniors' plan in their platform, and it's in there. I will table that.

Could the minister provide the House with an update on that item?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that important question, especially considering that this is Continuing Care Assistant Week.

I am more than delighted to update you on this wonderful initiative that will be coming forward. We will be making an announcement, and as soon as that day happens, this House will be the first ones to know.

KELLY REGAN: In fact, that program was reinstated in 2019. I'll table the news release about that. It was also further expanded in 2020. I'll table that as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the minister that members of the Liberal Party stand at the ready to assist the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care should she need any further assistance accomplishing the instructions in her mandate letter.

My question to the minister is: Is she aware of any other items in her letter that are actually already complete?

BARBARA ADAMS: I thank the member for the question. My mandate letter is always right in front of me. I literally have my hand on it right now. In terms of the former government bringing in the CCA grant registry after us pressuring you, it was a drop in the bucket. It was talking the talk of 150 seats. We are going to walk the walk and bring it back in a much bigger way.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues in my mandate letter was to make sure that spouses and their family member were united in long-term care. I had already introduced legislation to do that, so that is already done.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin on a new question.

S<C: ACCOMPLISHMENTS - DETAILS

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, one of the other items in the mandate letter for the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care indicates the minister is to "ensure that no couple who is able to be together will be separated in long-term care." I will table that.

I was going to ask the minister on the status of that item, but I want to make sure that she understands that just because you introduce a bill that is never passed in this House doesn't mean you've actually done something.

I apologize for using the term "you." Just because a member introduces a bill, does not mean something is actually complete.

I was going to ask the minister if she could update us on the status of that item, but I can actually tell you that the Life Partners in Long-term Care Act was proclaimed and would take effect on March 1st. That is the news release that went out on February 4th of this year from this government, not from that government.

Does she have any other things that she thinks she accomplished?

HON. BARBARA ADAMS: There are quite a number of things that I introduced in this Legislature, including adoption disclosure legislation, including breast density

reporting on mammograms, including keeping spouses and veterans together in long-term care. I am very proud of what I introduced in this Legislature over the last four years.

I will also remind the member that just before we walked into this Legislature today, I spoke to the member and asked her if she would be willing to work with me, along with the critics for Seniors and Long-Term Care and the Independent member with my department to help move our initiatives forward, to hear their voices, and she indicated that she would, so I have already reached out to the member, and I look forward to her participation and help in meeting the issues outlined in my mandate letter.

KELLY REGAN: I know the minister would never want to take credit for someone else's work. I just wanted to let her know that those pieces of her mandate letter were dealt with - the most recent one that we discussed - two Premiers ago.

My question is: Could the Premier please explain why he . . . (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker, the Premier, yet again, is interrupting when members are speaking. He should at least do me the courtesy of letting me finish my question.

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The member for Bedford Basin has the floor.

KELLY REGAN: Could the Premier please explain why he included items on the minister's mandate letter that were actually already accomplished?

THE PREMIER: I'd be happy to, because sometimes what Nova Scotians are tired of - and what they actually weighed in on very, very strongly in August to say they were tired of - is superficial political sound bites. What they want are real solutions. This government has a lot of balls to pick up and carry. We'll pick them all up and carry them, including the things that the member thinks they accomplished that they didn't accomplish. We're going to do it properly, we're going to do it fully, we're going to do it in the interest of Nova Scotians, because on this side of the House ...

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. The Premier has the floor.

THE PREMIER: On this side of the House, we put people before politics. That's what we're all about.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

LS&I: PREG. LOSS - LEAVE

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague mentioned, today marks World Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, an annual day of remembrance observed

on October 15th for pregnancy loss and infant death, which includes miscarriage, infant loss, stillbirth, SIDS, ectopic pregnancy, and the death of a newborn.

I want the House to know that I stand here with that devastation and reality in the loss of my granddaughter less than a year ago. I am standing here because of the strength my daughter experienced and displayed during this time, and in talking to her, I said, what can I do now, standing in the House?

In the 2021 Labour Standards Code, the section outlining bereavement leave does not mention the right for employees to take even an unpaid leave when suffering the loss of pregnancy. My question is: What is the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration's plan to ensure that all parents in Nova Scotia have the right to grieve the loss of their unborn babies?

[10:30 a.m.]

HON. KARLA MACFARLANE: I want to extend to the member, on behalf of our government - I'm so, so sorry. That is an experience that no one should have to go through, but unfortunately, many families, many people in this Chamber - many women in this Chamber - have had to experience. I'm deeply, deeply sorry. I want the member to know that this is something that we will definitely look into.

LORELEI NICOLL: Mr. Speaker, in 2020, 3,063 babies were stillborn and 1,634 infants died within their first year after birth in Canada. Although pregnancy loss and infant death are tragedies that too many of us know all too well, it's an issue that parents find themselves isolated in their grief and in their workplaces and personal relationships, including the fathers.

Will the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration commit to ensuring that parents - both parents - are given the right to take leave from employment when dealing with the loss of pregnancy?

The IWK provided compassionate leave. We're grateful for that. No promise of fixing health care is going to bring back our little Ruby, but providing bereavement leave to those suffering loss - to all those suffering loss - will give them the much-needed time that they need to heal.

That is my question: Do I have a definite that this will be looked at and done?

KARLA MACFARLANE: The healing process for something like this is never-ending. I want to reassure everyone in this Chamber, and the member specifically that you have our full commitment to looking into this and following through. We'll include you in anything that we proceed with. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

NRR: OWLS HEAD SALE - STOP

CLAUDIA CHENDER: Thank you to the member for Cole Harbour-Dartmouth.

Mr. Speaker, changing topics, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. In the election there was no doubt that people across the province were angered by the backroom dealing that led to the delisting of Owls Head. We've all heard about it in this House and out of this House.

Many people expressed their anger, including the Premier, who said that the Liberal government's actions on this file were "really despicable." When a party uses words like "despicable," one would expect urgency in rectifying this situation.

My question to the minister is: When will the Progressive Conservative government actually make that Order in Council and stop the sale?

HON. TORY RUSHTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question. The issue of Owls Head certainly probably hit every constituency during the election. As we know right now, there's an appeal process going through.

I do want to make the announcement today and let the member opposite know that we are committed, because it is in a court process right now. Our government is committed officially today that we will allow the public have input on this decision. Thank you.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: That's quite different, actually - the announcement that was just made - from what we heard in the platform. In the election, the Progressive Conservatives promised to protect all remaining areas in the 2013 Our Parks and Protected Areas plan. Our caucus supports this plan, but it's puzzling, again, that this wasn't one of the first actions of the incoming Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. After all, in the platform document, which I have here, it is stated that all that is required at present is an Order in Council.

Again, my question to the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables. We're eight weeks in. When can Nova Scotians expect to hear news of that Order in Council?

TORY RUSHTON: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. We were always very adamant. We needed to understand the deal that was taking place. The deal with Owls Head is still within a court decision, but looking at the lands that are on that list, I've certainly directed staff to have a review of the whole list, not just parts of this list.

I will commit to the member opposite that we're going to make sure that the lands are protected on an ecological and biological will of the land, not the political will of the land.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Yarmouth.

H&W: MONTHLY REPORTING - COMMIT

HON. ZACH CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign this government made very large commitments, specific commitments when it comes to health care: to fix our ambulatory system, to fix our emergency rooms, to have 24/7 surgeries available for orthopaedic patients in this province, to have 300 doctors a year, and to get 2,000 new nurses and CCAs.

When this Party tabled a bill to ensure that there was reporting on recruitment efforts and vacancies, this government has yet to call that bill for second reading.

My question to the minister: Is the department committed to monthly reporting on recruitment figures and vacancies? Nothing will be possible when it comes to fixing the health care system if we don't deal with the labour shortages in it.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly. We've just stood up the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment. Of course we want to be transparent with Nova Scotians as we move forward.

Again, we've been in government for six weeks. We continue to look at how best to report that back to Nova Scotians so that they are very aware of how we're moving forward. You can expect reports. The frequency of those reports remains to be seen, but we do want to get back to Nova Scotians.

ZACH CHURCHILL: When our previous government made the commitment to attach every patient to a doctor, we did follow that up with a transparent registry. We were the first province in the country to do that. That is a registry that the members of the government right now used very effectively in opposition to point out when those numbers fluctuated, particularly when we saw increased numbers in patients who were unattached to primary care providers.

This is absolutely critical to tracking the success of the recruitment efforts and also the retention efforts, which the Premier earlier today said is absolutely critical to this. Monthly reporting is necessary so that this House, this government, and the public can track how well you're doing on these commitments - commitments that you said you're going to be held accountable for.

When can Nova Scotians expect these reports to begin, and can they happen on a monthly basis?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: We are committed to reporting on a regular basis about how we are doing to attach Nova Scotians to a primary care provider and ensuring that people have the care they receive in a timely manner, yes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Clare.

AAF: BILINGUAL ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE - OUTLINE

RONNIE LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, this government continues to talk about health care. We know Nova Scotians lack the health care services they need in a timely manner.

My question is for the Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie: What measures is he considering in his role as minister to ensure our Acadian brothers and sisters have access to services they need in French?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: D'abord, félicitations au membre de Clare et grand merci pour sa question. C'est sûrement certain que notre gouvernement a fait une priorité basée sur le système de santé durant la campagne électorale. On a présenté nos plans. Je suis très fier qu'à travers de mon office, on a travaillé avec la ministre de l'Immigration, du Travail et des Compétences afin de travailler sur un plan d'immigration francophone. Alors, c'est delà ciblé de recruter des néo-écossais afin de rencontrer la pénurie de main-d'œuvre et la pénurie qui fait face aux professionnels de santé ici en Nouvelle-Écosse. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: Order, please. I wonder if the minister will repeat that en anglais, please.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Thanks to the member for Clare and congratulations on his election. Obviously, we as a government had focused significantly on health care. We proposed plans and that's why I'm proud of our government's action to date.

What I'm doing personally as Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie is working in concert with the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration to develop and reinforce an immigration strategy to welcome new Nova Scotians to our province and to fill the gaps that were left to be filled, whether it comes to skills trade in our province, that also extends to health care workers from one region - from southwestern Nova Scotia all the way to Cape Breton. That's ongoing work.

RONNIE LEBLANC: Le gouvernement a comme priorité l'immigration. La question que j'ai pour le ministre des Affaires acadiennes et la Francophonie est: Qu'est-

ce qu'il va faire avec ses collègues pour faire sûr que nos communautés peuvent maintenir notre langue et notre culture dans les années à venir ?

THE SPEAKER: En anglais, s'il vous plaît?

RONNIE LEBLANC: This government has committed to bringing a high number of immigrants to our province. What is the Minister of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie doing in collaboration with his colleagues to help our francophone communities maintain their language and prosper in this province?

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Comme j'ai mentionné, on est en train de travailler sur un plan stratégique d'immigration francophone et aussi de travailler avec nos partenaires communautaires comme la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, l'Université Sainte-Anne, et le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. C'est un travail qui continue.

Je suis très fier de pouvoir annoncer dans l'Assemblée que je me suis rencontré avec la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse cette semaine pour discuter différents priorités. L'une c'est la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, une loi que le gouvernement progressiste-conservateur a présenté en 2004, et c'est quelque chose que j'ai promis à la fédération de travailler sur durant les mois à venir.

To the member opposite, thanks for the question. As I said previously, we're engaged with developing a strategic immigration plan for francophone communities. We're working with different community partners such as the Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Université Sainte-Anne, and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

I met earlier this week with the Acadian Federation to discuss a number of priorities, one of which is the modernization of the French-language Services Act, one that a PC government introduced in 2004. I committed to them that we will be, I will be, undertaking that modernization. It's been 10 years since it's been done, and I look forward to working with them. I invite the member opposite to jump on board with this as well.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cumberland North.

OMHA: CUMBERLAND CO. RECRUITMENT EFFORTS - CONFIRM

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for emergency health care for mental illness.

Today if a person in Cumberland County had an acute mental illness such as a bipolar crisis or attempted to take their own life, they would be taken to our regional hospital, assessed by the emergency room staff, and kept in a locked room or the psych

room, otherwise known as Room Four. Now the patient waits until Truro has a bed, and this can sometimes take up to three to four days.

We need more psychiatrists in Cumberland so that our patients who are having an emergency mental health crisis can be assessed in their own community and not wait three to four days in a locked room.

My question is: Will the minister work with our area in Nova Scotia to recruit and retain doctors who specialize in mental illness, psychiatrists?

HON. BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question.

I think stigma is a significant factor, unfortunately, for many Nova Scotians living with mental health and addiction issues. I've seen it first-hand myself, the impacts it can have on the dignity of our people. I've already reached out to every member in this House to come to their community and visit their health care institutions, and I would do the same with the member as well.

[10:45 a.m.]

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: I will work with the minister to set up an appointment time.

I've raised concerns about this in the past, and one of the answers that I'm given is well, at least there's a mental health crisis team in Cumberland, and that even though people have to wait three to four days to be seen by psychiatrists in Truro or in other facilities, they're assessed. However, depending on when the person has their crisis, they're often not seen. If you're mentally ill between a Friday afternoon and a Monday morning, you're often not seen by any mental health specialist.

My question is: Will the minister commit to ensuring the mental health crisis team is staffed seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and that when people are discharged from Truro, that they're not discharged until there's a treatment plan in place with local community supports put in place?

BRIAN COMER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I think expansion of community-based resources for mental health is something that really needs to be looked at in the province, to be honest. I think the whole point of our implementation of universal mental health care is to be the most progressive mental health care system in the country, so that people don't get to that crisis point in the first place. That's something I'm really looking forward to working on with my department.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth North.

H&W - NO SCHOOL-BASED IMMUNIZATION - EXPLAIN

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. It is excellent news that a vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 is imminent, but I was concerned to hear the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Strang, say yesterday that the government will not be holding school-based clinics for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. In fact, he said they aren't even on the table.

We know that in order to vaccinate as many people as possible we need to make it as easy as possible. That is why we run clinics in schools for other vaccinations and also why Ontario and Alberta have used this strategy for the COVID-19 vaccination.

My question to the minister is: Can the minister please confirm that school-based vaccinations are, in fact, off the table? If so, please explain why.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that when the recommendations come up for childhood immunizations that children get the vaccination in the most age-appropriate way. We want to ensure that primary access is available to them, in support with their parents, to ensure that they do get the vaccine in a timely manner. At this time there are no plans for school-based immunization.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Mr. Speaker, there are tens of thousands of children in Nova Scotia between the ages of 5 and 11. Across the country the fourth wave has seen cases rise among unvaccinated children. We will need as many possible to get vaccinated so they and their communities are protected. For each family without school-based clinics, this means an added hurdle of scheduling and then getting the children to a pharmacy or a doctor's office for their vaccine. Add to that the time they have to take off from school, the time the parents have to take from work, possibly unpaid for many parents and caregivers.

My question to the minister is: Will the government establish paid time off work for these thousands of parents and caregivers to get their children to a clinic?

MICHELLE THOMPSON: Certainly we want to ensure that there is access across this province to primary care providers, like pharmacists, local pharmacists. We will continue to work in the department to ensure that families have access to timely vaccine at times when it is appropriate for them to attend.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

EARI: LAND TITLES INITIATIVE - UPDATE

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Many people would know the work I've done and how near and dear it is to my heart for the Land Titles Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, with only one reference to oversee the Land Titles Initiative in the mandate letter to the Minister of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives, I'm troubled by this. Communities are apprehensive.

The Land Titles Acceleration Act came into play with additional supports, including commissioners to solve competing claims and ensuring the LTI is entrenched into law, making staff permanent. The postings currently are 18-month positions - not permanent - creating barriers for this as well.

My question is for the Minister responsible for the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives: Have the commissioners been implemented?

HON. PAT DUNN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the opposite member for the question. The Land Titles Initiative has been transferred from one department to ours, the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives. We have been very involved with community members with regard to this here. As the member would know, she has been very involved in this particular process and I will be talking to her about her experience with this initiative.

Right at the moment, Mr. Speaker, we have five communities in the province. In Guysborough we have Sunnyville, Lincolnville, and in this area here we have East and North Preston, also Cherry Brook-Lake Loon. They are working through to correct historic rights to have property owners with deeds in their hands so they can look after their properties going forward.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Thank you, minister. I'm well aware of the communities, absolutely, and the work being done.

My question to the minister is: There have been only three files that have been completed under the LTCA, which is very different than pro-rated migration. Under the reports now, I'm currently wondering if there are any more files that have been completed under the Land Titles Clarification Act? This question is for the minister.

PAT DUNN: There are approximately 883 eligible properties in this particular initiative. At this moment, 251 properties have been cleared and they are working on 275 as we speak.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Cole Harbour.

HON. TONY INCE: Race is one of the factors that affects people's access to care. This is why the previous government made collecting and interpreting health race-based data a priority in identification and of the inequities of the health care system and makes evidence-based health decisions ...

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

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 13.

Bill No. 13 - Police Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 13 now be read a second time.

Citizens need to have confidence in police and know that the communities in which they live and work are safe. Nova Scotians know that the Serious Incident Response Team, or SiRT, is in place and will investigate the serious incidents involving police which occur across our province.

SiRT operates independently from police and government. The agency has a mandate to investigate serious incidents such as death, serious injuries, sexual assaults, and other public interest concerns involving police in this province. Since SiRT began investigation operations in 2012, the agency has gained high-regard nationwide recognition for their expertise, professionalism, and skill in providing independent oversight by conducting high-calibre investigations into serious incidents involving police.

They have been called upon to assist other provinces and territories with challenging files and conduct complex investigations into serious incidents involving police. The SiRT model is widely renowned and has been adopted and adapted for implementation in other jurisdictions and regions. Likewise, there have been ongoing discussions with other provinces about the possibility of expanding SiRT and creating a regional oversight agency.

In any discussions of this nature, our first priority always will be to ensure that Nova Scotians' best interests are met first. As you know, Nova Scotia recently reached an agreement in principle with New Brunswick that would allow SiRT to act as an oversight body for both provinces. The changes we are introducing provide more clarity around any

partnership agreements that would enable Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team to act as an independent oversight body within other regions.

Specifically, one of the changes provides authority for the Governor in Council to authorize an agreement for SiRT to act as an oversight body in other provinces or territories on an ongoing basis. These amendments also make it clear that the current provisions, which allow the director to make recommendations to the minister to enter into agreements for SiRT, are intended for case-specific assistance and investigations.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that these amendments will support continued collaboration between our province and territorial partners, enabling the province to enter ongoing regional partnership agreements, also promote shared public safety interests, and remove barriers that may otherwise impact the effectiveness of investigations in some regions.

This change is good for Nova Scotia, it will be good for SiRT, it will be good for New Brunswick and inter-provincial relationships - and it will not result in additional costs to Nova Scotia taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from my colleagues as this bill moves through the legislative process.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Preston.

ANGELA SIMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, collaboration is important, and sharing is important, so when one province has an expertise or a service that can be shared with others, we would, and we should. However, we must recognize and appreciate the differences of our own provinces and the people who live in those provinces.

In New Brunswick, there's a large community base of Indigenous peoples, the Maliseet, and a vibrant francophone community. In Prince Edward Island, there has been an influx of newcomers and members from the BIPOC community, so both have growing populations of diversity. Here at home in Nova Scotia, we have a distinct culture and peoples. Yet despite operating in this province for many years, SiRT continues to face challenges in developing its own cultural awareness, humility, and cultural competency to deal with complex cases here at home. What I mean by this, Mr. Speaker, is that we have heard from community advocates and there is a lack of transparency.

The other issue that comes up is that this is a team made up of four officers investigating their current and past colleagues, which seems to demonstrate a clear conflict of interest and should be looked into. SiRT also appeared to have filled their civilian roles with two retired RCMP officers.

Then finally, the membership of SiRT either needs to be expanded or I would say dismantled. The makeup needs to be reflective of the diversity of Nova Scotians. Community members are not saying that police do not need to be part of this, as their knowledge is valuable when investigating policing matters. But we need to include the perspectives of the diversity of Nova Scotians.

We have to appreciate the cultural differences of our two provinces. Our Indigenous peoples are different. Poverty looks different. Francophone communities are different. Our newcomer populations are different. We know that there is the discretion to add a person or advice to assist on a file, but how effective is this? How many times has a cultural or community adviser been hired or engaged? We don't know that. That information is not shared until afterwards, when we become aware the person who might have been hired felt devalued and that their voice wasn't listened to and that the system failed.

I do actually have two articles that reflect this. Before we venture into another province, Mr. Speaker, we must be able to address the issues and gaps in this province. As Senator Wanda Bernard stated in a recent article, and this pertained to a most recent file with SiRT:

“‘The absence of her voice, the absence of the full story,’ said Bernard. ‘Those are some of the criticisms in some of these serious incidents that have happened that have lead to a lot of questions around how deeply embedded systemic racism is.’

Bernard says the lack of context in the report makes it unbalanced and added she doesn't understand why SIRT (sic) would hire Smith as an observer and then not give him a chance to present his side of the case.”

This begs the question around transparency, Mr. Speaker. While I agree that we absolutely need to share our expertise and services. We need to be mindful that there are still issues with this service here at home. We need to ensure that SiRT is equipped and understands the historical trauma and unique differences within provinces, within the BIPOC community and gender-diverse communities.

THE SPEAKER: Would the member please table a copy of her quote?

The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: As the minister said, this legislation formalizes the agreement that was already announced that Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team would extend to New Brunswick to conduct investigations in that province. I want to echo some of the concerns brought by the member for Preston. I think we want to make sure,

especially after the very high-profile killings of Chantel Moore and Rodney Levi, how critical oversight is.

We need that oversight, but we want to make sure that it is appropriate oversight, that it is culturally appropriate, that it is provincially appropriate, and that it has the right makeup. We need that police oversight. We need to know what happened in these serious incident cases, but we need oversight that's sensitive to the way that Black, Indigenous people, and people of colour are at a fatal risk of overpolicing. We know this. It is true. We also know that we need deep and systemic change in our justice system, and this oversight and bringing these instances to light are a vital part of that change.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and say that I look forward to hearing from stakeholders at the Law Amendments Committee who will speak to no doubt the efficacy or challenges with SiRT and any issues that this House may need to be aware of as we think of extending its services into other provinces.

THE SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank both the members from Preston and from Dartmouth South for their comments . . .

THE SPEAKER: I apologize - the honourable member for Cumberland North.

ELIZABETH SMITH-MCCROSSIN: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to add a few comments to this: An Act to Amend Chapter 31 of the Acts of 2004, the Police Act. I want to say how pleased I am to see the collaboration between Nova Scotia and our neighbouring provinces. With this bill, I'm hoping that we'll see more of this with this government.

Our police forces over the last few years have not been working collaboratively, even though we live in such a small region. Even though we do have other Acts in place like the Cross-border Policing Act, we have not seen law enforcement - we have not seen that collaboration. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and P.E.I. as well, share borders that are in close proximity and it just makes good common sense to see a collaboration and to see us working together. I see this in our border community with illegal drugs coming in, domestic violence, with perpetrators crossing back and forth and law enforcement not sharing information and putting victims at higher risk.

We saw it last year with the ineffectiveness of the emergency alert when we had a gunman come from Moncton into Amherst and there was an emergency alert issued in New Brunswick, but we didn't receive it 40 minutes away in Nova Scotia. A week later there was an emergency alert due to a gunman in Meat Cove, Cape Breton. We received that

alert, six hours away, in Amherst. It highlights the importance that we need to be working together more and see more collaboration.

I do applaud the government on this bill and look forward to seeing more bills presented with this spirit of collaboration here in the Maritimes.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hants West.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to Bill No. 13, the Police Act. As other members have said, Bill No. 13 enables the Province to enter into partnership agreements with other provinces and territories, otherwise known as the SiRT team, to provide independent oversight of policing in respective regions on a continuing basis.

These changes also make it clear that the director of SiRT will maintain the ability to make recommendations to the Minister of Justice to enter into agreements with SiRT to provide police oversight, assistance, and conduct investigations in other jurisdictions related to specific incidents or events.

Earlier this month, our province and New Brunswick announced an agreement in principle that would allow SiRT to act as the police oversight body for both provinces. I feel the collaboration for this ensures that both provinces will benefit from the SiRT expertise and independent oversight and it will benefit public safety for both provinces.

In the almost 10 years since the creation of SiRT, it has distinguished itself as a skilled and professional organization. Because of SiRT, Nova Scotians know that investigations into serious incidents involving police will be handled thoroughly and with the utmost professionalism.

This legislation will encourage collaboration with other jurisdictions, provided the collaborations are in the best interest of the people of this province. This bill will usher a new era of regional collaboration and goodwill that has been sorely missed in recent years. For that reason I am pleased to support Bill No. 13 today.

THE SPEAKER: If I am to recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: I'd like to thank all members for their comments here today. I certainly will consider the comments I heard today that are over and above the passing of this bill. I just want to assure those members of that.

Mr. Speaker, I now move to close debate on Bill No. 13.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 13. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 11.

Bill No. 11 - Protecting Access to Health Services Act.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 11, the Protecting Access to Health Services Act, to be read a second time.

Over the past number of months, we have seen a number of protests in Nova Scotia and elsewhere across the country where individuals opposed to government's Public Health measures have taken their protests right to the doors of hospitals and even to the homes of our public leaders.

Everyone has a right to protest, but peacefully. Everyone has a right to express their displeasure with government decisions. They do not have a right to intimidate, harass, or interfere with Nova Scotians' right to access important health care services. Likewise, our trusted health care professionals, who have been working tirelessly over the past year and a half to keep us safe, do not deserve to be harassed as they enter their workplace to deliver health care to Nova Scotians.

The legislation that we are introducing will protect patients and health care providers while respecting the right to assemble at a safe distance from the entrances of health facilities and clinics, and to still voice opinions, but at the same time, not to interfere with patients' access to health care. These are reasonable limits that strike the appropriate balance between the right of freedom of speech and the rights of patients and health care workers to go to a hospital or another health care facility unobstructed and without fear.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this as plainly as I possibly can: While Nova Scotians do have a right to peacefully protest, protests cannot be allowed to disrupt access to our rights to health care. People need to be able to go to work or access the help that they need without facing intimidation and harassment.

The Protecting Access to Health Services Act will prohibit protestors and other harmful activities in the immediate vicinity of health care facilities and at the homes of

patients who receive health care services at their homes. The legislation will establish a 50-metre safe-access bubble zone around facilities such as hospitals, mental health services, home care services, long-term care services, clinics, doctors' offices, and pharmacies. Peaceful protest can still occur, but within a perimeter.

I recognize and respect the right of labour organizations to picket as part of legal strike action. This bill will not interfere with those rights. Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling a clarification amendment at Law Amendments at the very start to ensure that this is clear. This bill is aimed at protestors and other activities that discourage Nova Scotians from accessing health care services.

Anyone who needs care, provides care, is visiting a sick relative, or has to walk through should not be worried about protestors. The penalties for contravening the law will be a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment of not more than six months or both a fine and imprisonment.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that this legislation is focused on safety. It is also respectful of the freedoms that we hold dear as Canadians and Nova Scotians. We are not alone in this. Other provinces are taking, or have taken, similar steps to safeguard health care facilities. The actions that we are taking with this bill represent an appropriate response to the public protests that we have seen throughout this pandemic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues as this bill moves through the legislative process.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford Basin.

HON. KELLY REGAN: Mr. Speaker, I think all of us here in this House can agree that all Nova Scotians deserve access to health care facilities, whether they're attending those health care facilities as patients or whether they're attending them as workers. I think we can all agree, too, it has been a long 20 months. There were times during the first lockdown when I would wake up and I would think, oh my gosh, it's like the movie Groundhog Day. All I needed was the clock alarm playing "I Got You, Babe" and smacking it down. It does seem longer than 20 months in many ways, but yet it is just 20 months.

In the early days of the pandemic, we all looked for ways that we could express our appreciation to the people who were working very long hours tirelessly to keep us safe. These were the people who were putting their lives on the line, particularly when we really didn't know what we were dealing with in the early days as well. Our health care workers.

We put up signs and posters that talked about our health care heroes, we banged on pots and pans - some of my constituents did their very best to ensure that people had PPE when we finally understood the need for masks, et cetera. We listened to Public Health

throughout the pandemic, and more recently we got vaccinated. We got vaccinated in record numbers compared to elsewhere in the country.

Over that same time, there were some people who got weary and frustrated and maybe went down a different path because they were spending a lot of time on social media and thought that they were experts. I will say, I knocked on doors during the election where I actually had - I mean, I was quite shaken - there was one where a business leader in my community told me he had done research and he was not getting the vaccine. I said, "with respect, you have not done research. You have read a lot, but you are not a scientific researcher." So, we had people who were questioning science, questioning vaccines, masking, vaccine passports, and other measures that have kept us safe.

I want to be crystal clear here. It is absolutely unacceptable to prevent any Nova Scotian from accessing health care services. Not that long ago, we had a debate in this House about the potential for protests to impede the rights of people who are seeking abortions. All parties in this House came together to support a bill proposed by, I believe, my honourable colleague from Dartmouth South, to ensure that people could access those reproductive health services. We all came together and did that, and just as it was unacceptable there, it is unacceptable for any health care worker or patient to be denied or prevented to come into a facility, either to receive or deliver those services.

That's why this bill is a good thing. I don't think it's any surprise if I were to tell you we were looking at doing something similar, and I wouldn't be surprised if the other opposition party was looking at it, too.

There is one difference, and one difference that I would underline, and that is that before we put a bill of this nature forward, we had plans to consult with the people who would be affected by it. I understand that Doctors Nova Scotia has agreed, and they are in favour of this, but while doctors are health care workers, not all health care workers are doctors. I would just urge this government - and this is the voice of experience talking - we make better bills when we consult more. I'm not saying this with any malice or anything like that, but if you take the time - if a minister takes the time - to consult, often they will learn things they didn't know.

I know that the minister has indicated that he plans to introduce an amendment that would make it clear that this would not affect unions, but it's not in the bill now, and so I feel it's incumbent upon me and other members of this House to be very clear that we want to ensure that unions have the opportunity to exercise their right to protest. This is part of our democracy. I know, because the Premier says it all the time, that he's committed to transparency, so I know that in the future he will want to (a) consult and (b) ensure that the bills that come forward are more clear on matters such as this. I understand that during the briefing, he said, oh no, it won't affect unions, but that was not clearly indicated in the original bill, so I just want to make sure.

[11:15 a.m.]

Just a few words of advice from someone who's been here for a while. When things are coming forward, consultation is very useful. Sometimes it's kind of a pain. Sometimes you learn things you don't like. But knowing those things makes our bills better, makes our legislation better. That's our role over on this side of the House, for the new members.

We're not here, as the Premier alleged the other day, just to say - I think it was a sunset when it's a sunrise, or something to do with the sun. I don't know. We're not here to oppose for the sake of opposing. Our job is to make sure that at the end of the day, the legislation that comes out of this House does not have unintended consequences and that they're the best bills they can be. That's our role, and that's why we're doing what we're doing.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Dartmouth South.

CLAUDIA CHENDER: I'll keep my comments quite short. I do think, of course, that we all agree in this House, and as my colleague pointed out, we had this conversation not long ago at all, that people should not face intimidation or fear when they are trying to access vital health services or when they're going to work in a health care facility. Again, I will reiterate that our health care workers have done far more than ever should have been expected of them and continue to do so during the pandemic.

I also want to flag - I was listening to a conversation recently with Dr. Françoise Baylis, who's a quite well-known medical ethicist and, I think, recipient of the Order of Canada. She said that when she hears about programs concerning health, the first question she asks, no matter how popular or well-received the program is: who will this harm? She takes that as her jumping-off point of looking at the issue.

So I will register the same concern that any time we put forward legislation in this House that limits people's rights, particularly Charter rights like the right to free assembly and the right to protest, we need to make sure that we're doing that in a justifiable and minimally impairing way. There have been some mixed messages on this bill, so we will look forward to an amendment if it comes forward and also to hearing from folks at the Law Amendments Committee.

To that end, I think the notion of consultation is very important when it comes to legislation and travelling across the province and having conversations is good and showing up in people's place of work is good. But with any legislation, there are unintended consequences. It's not only health care workers and patients who are potentially impacted by a bill like this. There are many other people who, again, are just exercising their right to free expression, to make their opinion heard among them. I have no time for folks who disagree with science, but I do have a great deal of respect for our Charter, so I

want to ensure as we go forward in the legislative process that this legislation has been carefully thought through in that regard.

I will say that the bill itself looked quite familiar when I saw it. We did go through that process, but we will continue to review what other provinces are doing and I am certain that at the Law Amendments Committee we will hear from health care workers and patients, likely from labour unions and other folks who will have a say on how this bill does or could affect them.

I want to thank the government for bringing it forward. I think it is timely, as has been said. It's something that is happening across the country. As we pointed out in Question Period, we want to make sure that everyone gets vaccinated. This is the timeliness of this bill, this is clearly where this bill is directed, so to that end we are very supportive, but we remain open and somewhat concerned about unintended consequences.

Provided that we are satisfied that those aren't there, we'll be happy to support the bill.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of the Public Service Commission.

HON. COLTON LEBLANC: Thank you to my colleagues across the aisle who have provided some comment to this bill. I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 11, Protecting Access to Health Services Act.

I think it goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, but Nova Scotia's health care workers have a very tough job and many of us in this House have been in that place before, prior to our political careers. I think that at least since my time, I can say with confidence that the job of my past profession of a paramedic has certainly intensified, with significant pressures from different angles. That's something that I'm proud that our government has taken initiative in its first six weeks and it will continue to do so, as the Minister of Health and Wellness has said.

Over the past 18 months across the health care sector, I think it goes without saying there's not just COVID-19 fatigue but COVID-19 exhaustion. I feel it sometimes and as the member for Bedford Basin said, early during the pandemic it felt like the *Groundhog Day* movie and sometimes it still feels like this. Maybe once we are in the Legislature for a few more weeks you'll feel the same way, too.

What has impressed me beyond - let's take away the COVID-19 exhaustion piece here - what has impressed me immensely is the amount of dedication and the sacrifice and the resiliency of our health care workers, who show up day in and day out and sometimes it's around the clock. Speaking to my mom last night, for example, she was going to work until one o'clock this morning and finds out that she's back to work six hours later, with a six-hour break in between.

It's health care workers who are feeling the pinch themselves that want to fill the gaps, that want to make sure that Nova Scotians are getting the best care they can, and with the support of our government and things and comments that the Minister of Health and Wellness and the Premier have heard during their recent tour I think we will accomplish that - rather, I know we'll accomplish that.

As has been said on the floor this morning here, some of the actions that we've seen during the pandemic, with disagreements on Public Health policy, are quite alarming. When you show up to the place of residence of those who are making recommendations to government, who are the face of public health every day; to the homes of those who are providing care to those in time of need; to interfere with the place of work, the place where when we're sick or injured that we show up to, that our families want to visit, it's unacceptable.

There have been some comments about limiting the rights of Nova Scotians, but this does not take away the right of peaceful protest. It just sets a safe barrier around the access zone to ensure that those trying to access their place of work and access the care that they need in that time can do so safely.

From my personal experience, Mr. Speaker, I would not want to have a critical patient - or any patient, for that matter - in the back of my ambulance show up at the entrance of a hospital to have to delay care further because there are folks demonstrating in disagreement Public Health, for example.

I think the clarifications that will be brought forward by the Minister of Justice will address the union labour side of this discussion and the lack of clarity when it comes to the piece of legislation. This is about ensuring the health and safety of Nova Scotians and the health and safety of our frontline health care workers who have gone above and beyond over the last 18 to 19 months.

For me, this is what that bill does. It means that we are not getting harassed, that the challenges in health care that we currently experience, as I mentioned before - we're not adding that extra level of barrier to accessing care with zero risk of intimidation for patients, their families, or staff.

Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia health care workers have shown up day in and day out, like I mentioned, to do a great job. It's our responsibility as government to make sure that they're supported and that they feel safe when showing up at their place of work. I'm very proud to stand behind this bill and ensure that, once this bill passes, they will continue to be able to do so. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Colchester North.

TOM TAGGART: I'm very pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 11, the Protecting Access to Health Services Act.

I'm going to start by saying what this bill does not do. It does not prevent protestors from protesting. It does not stop pickets during labour disputes. What it does is protect health care workers. It protects Nova Scotians trying to get those services from these workers, but Bill No. 11 lets all of these things happen safely. People can express their views in a protest. They just have to be 50 metres from a health facility when they do that.

Bill No. 11 doesn't interfere with the rights of labour organizations. For me, this is a bill about respect. It respects the rights of protestors and it respects the selfless service of those dedicated Nova Scotians who work so hard to help us when we are sick.

I want to echo the words of the speakers before me who have praised our health care professionals. These services during the pandemic have shown us all how valuable they are to the well-being of our population. Making sure that they are able to get to and from their workplace safely is something I strongly support. Ensuring they can go about this important work without being harassed or intimidated is the least we can do.

After all that health care workers have done for us in the last 18 months, I believe this bill is a necessary gesture and an important protection. I'm very pleased to support it.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Wellness.

HON. MICHELLE THOMPSON: I hadn't planned to speak today, but I feel I would be remiss if I didn't, as the Minister of Health and Wellness and as a registered nurse for 30 years.

I just want to say again that we want people to have the opportunity for peaceful protest. Certainly we heard over the tour that health care workers have been under an incredible amount of stress. They have had to carry out decisions that we as decision-makers made in the best interests of the public.

When you work for 12, 16, 18, or 24 hours, you're attuned to your patients. You're attuned to the families. You're attuned to your colleagues. The emotional toll that that can take is significant. When you go into those helping professions, you do that because that is really the gift that you have to offer people.

To have spent 12, 16, 18, or 24 hours caring for people, losing patients, being with people on the worst days of their lives - some days we're there for the best days, but not often - whether we lose a patient or a family member loses someone they love, to walk into a crowd of people who are berating you and screaming at you and giving you an incredibly hard time for doing your job and carrying out the orders that you've been asked to do is an incredible burden.

We want people to protest. We don't want everyone to agree with the things we do, but we have to wrap our arms around health care workers. We need to support them. They need to know that we see them and that we hear them, and that the work they do is integral, and that we know that they're under an incredible amount of strain. I think it's an incredibly important bill for us to pass.

[11:30 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: If I recognize the minister it will be to close the debate.

The honourable Minister of Justice.

HON. BRAD JOHNS: Going once, going twice.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to once again thank all members who have made comments in this House. I think I would never stand up here and say that I don't think all members of this House recognize the importance of health care workers in this province. Regardless of where we sit, we all recognize that. I do thank all members for their comments here today.

As I have said, there will be a clarification amendment coming forward, and I certainly hope that Opposition members of the Law Amendments Committee will be able to support that and hopefully support the bill as well.

I rise to close debate now on Bill No. 11.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is for second reading of Bill No. 11. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, would you please call the order of business, Government Motions.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

THE SPEAKER: The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: Mr. Speaker, I move that the adjourned debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be now resumed.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Lunenburg.

HON. SUSAN CORKUM-GREEK: Mr. Speaker, it appears many people appreciate Lunenburg. It is an honour. I'm truly privileged to rise before you and all members of this House of Assembly today. As I look out upon new colleagues on both sides of the House, I am deeply affected to realize that I have achieved a dream that I had not always admitted, even to myself.

Certainly, I was fortunate to have grown up never doubting that I as a woman could seek public office. This was made plain to me many years ago when as an adolescent I watched my late mother, Heather Corkum, a dogged campaigner in her day, work to get Mahone Bay resident Maxine Cochran elected as the MLA for the former Lunenburg Centre following the death of her husband, the Honourable Bruce Cochran, Minister of Tourism.

The Honourable Mrs. Cochran went on to become Nova Scotia's first female Cabinet Minister. It was clear to me that should any woman in Nova Scotia aspire to provincial politics, it was certainly possible. Not that I envisioned such a career for myself. Indeed, like the aforementioned Mr. Cochran, my first career was in journalism, a critical and too often undervalued component of our modern democracy.

While I recognize that in this new adventure of mine I might not always appreciate the attention of the media to our government, or my portfolio, I will defend the critical importance of the media with every fibre of my being. Of course, a career in media is a career apart from partisan affiliation. Certainly in my time, it was considered most improper to hold a membership in a political party lest you impact your ability to provide coverage that was free of bias in both fact and public perception. I embraced that freedom, keeping my voting choices to myself while covering politics with genuine interest and zeal. I will note being here on the floor of the House is quite different from that.

In close to two decades as a working journalist, I came to admire many individuals who represented our County of Lunenburg and led our province. They spanned all major parties.

Today, two individuals are front of mind. The first is the Honourable Michael Baker, MLA for Lunenburg from 1998 until his death in 2009. During his time, Michael served as Minister of Justice and was Minister of Finance at the time of his passing. I always liked Michael. He always returned calls to the local newspaper, no matter how busy he was at Halifax - and I'm starting to understand how busy you can be at Halifax. (Laughter) He gave endlessly in his service to the community he loved - the community I now serve.

I was also recently reminded of a humorous moment that occurred one Shrove Tuesday when Michael had taken his then-young sons to the annual pancake supper at St.

Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The former church hall at St. Andrew's is built on a hillside and has two storeys. On the upper storey are the large meeting spaces, and down below, on the lower level, the washrooms. Heading downstairs to - I quite enjoyed myself and I was a little sticky, so heading downstairs to wash my hands, I encountered Matthew and Daniel Baker and some other little boys hanging upside down from the Sunday school coat racks, as boys are wont to do.

Recognizing me as a Sunday school teacher, one of the other boys, in a move of raw self-interest, declared in a loud voice, "Guys! We better be good or we'll get in trouble with the minister!" I cannot say which of Michael's boys it was that said in reply, "Don't worry, my father is the minister."

Ironically, the other person in my mind today is the minister to whom the first boy was referring, also Lunenburg's longest-serving mayor, the late Laurence Mawhinney. I grew up listening to Reverend Mawhinney in the pulpit. He had a deep, melodic voice, often joining the church choir for special performances. He led a youth group called the Minister's Muppets. It was the 1970s. (Laughter)

Laurence was always interested in politics. He ran provincially in 1970 and federally in 1972, both times unsuccessfully, but then in 1976, in a by-election called when my late father, Chris Corkum, stepped away from a seat on Lunenburg Town Council mid-term, Laurence ran and was elected. Two years later, he was elected mayor of Lunenburg, a position he would hold for a remarkable 33 years.

I never realized how much I learned from these two individuals. Certainly, I did not recognize how they mentored me for a future career path that I'd not yet chosen. What I did know at that point - what had been bred into me from a young age by my father - was the value and importance of public service and the respect that was due to anyone who put their name on a ballot, be it for my parents' beloved Progressive Conservatives or another Party, because, after all, in spite of differing approaches and diverging paths, we all want the same thing: a better Nova Scotia.

Madam Speaker, I am forever grateful to the community of people that came together to support me when I realized there was a role for me in the betterment of our province. While our honourable Premier has often observed that many people enter politics because they were either angry or asked, in my case, I was inspired.

My involvement in two community-based initiatives - the first, to secure and revitalize the working waterfront of Lunenburg; and the second, to establish a world-class music school as anchor tenant of a reimagined Lunenburg Academy - convinced me of the great untapped potential of this province and the power of a mindset that fixates not on all the reasons something will not work, but rather on all the reasons we must make it work.

Such became the mindset of my campaign team, led by my devoted campaign manager, Peter Zwicker, and stalwart official agent, Matt Durnford. It grew from a small collection of highly committed individuals to a medium-small collection of people ready to be committed.

Working together, we covered hundreds of miles and thousands of doorsteps across a constituency that runs from the coastal villages of Blue Rocks, Stonehurst, Indian Point, and Riverport; inland through the Cornwalls and Northfield; along the LaHave River through Cookville, Pinehurst, and New Germany all the way to North River; and east through Barrs Corner, Maplewood, Parkdale, Newburne, and Walden. It includes the towns of Mahone Bay and Lunenburg. Between our beautiful beaches and stunning inland waterways, a vibrant arts cultural scene, internationally recognized built heritage, and history, it continues to be one of the most popular visitor destinations in our province. (Applause)

Thank you. And no wonder. The authenticity and hospitality are incredible. I saw it on each doorstep, though Public Health precautions and my determined team prevented me from accepting the many invitations to come in and sit down.

Along the campaign trail, I rediscovered communities in which I had not driven or visited since my early years as a journalist. I happened upon hilltop vistas I had never before experienced and hidden lakes I would threaten to jump into, given the heat and humidity of our summer election period. We became a close-knit group, friends to whom I will be indebted for the rest of my life. Importantly, I also connected with the extraordinary people of my county: resilient farmers, fishers, foresters, people working in the service industry, in manufacturing, and in tech. I witnessed home-grown ingenuity and outright innovation, often where I least expected it.

That inspiration that caused me to seek nomination as a candidate grew and grew. You can only imagine my great delight and honour to be assigned the portfolio of ultimate possibility, the Department of Economic Development.

Madam Speaker, I would be remiss, and even in a bit of trouble, if I did not thank those closest to me today: my husband of 30 years as of next month, long-suffering Jody Greek; my strong, compassionate son, Nathan; and my bold and graceful daughter, Maddie. They sacrificed our family's traditional summer activities, like camping and travel, and weekends from mid-February forward through the Spring while I campaigned and are now learning to fend for themselves a bit more while I'm in Halifax, though, thankfully - as I was never much of a cook, more of a bottle washer - heat and serve isn't such a big change.

I would also acknowledge my sisters Sandy and Stephanie, both of whom campaigned with me even though it was an experience initially outside their comfort zones. Finally, a special word for my mother-in-law, Joanne Greek. Although mothers-in-law are the butt of a thousand jokes, mine is one of the most inspiring people I know. For years,

she juggled full-time work while raising her family and being the engine of her church and community. At Christmas, she spent days baking pies and making up baskets for people who were alone or of limited means. Upon suffering a devastating stroke, she shocked medical personnel with a degree of recovery that they thought impossible. A decade later, in spite of mobility challenges and words that fail her otherwise-sharp mind, she wakes every day with gratitude and purpose. We should all be so fortunate.

Madam Speaker, I began these comments referencing my privilege in being here today and will close with the following thoughts. I realize not every Nova Scotian sees themselves in this Chamber, that for them, my realization as a 12-year-old girl that I could run for office if I wished is not yet their experience. I challenge myself and all my honourable colleagues here to be ever mindful so that we may use our privilege to address inequalities and uplift others so that every Nova Scotian can dream big, achieve their greatest potential, and make and enjoy a better life. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (Applause)

[11:45 a.m.]

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bedford South.

BRAEDON CLARK: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in my place as the member for Bedford South. It's also an honour to follow the member for Lunenburg, who spoke very well. I'll mention that I, too, am a member of that most distinguished group of people: journalists turned politicians. We have a lot of company in the Chamber, which is great.

I am truly humbled to have the chance to serve in this building which, as we all know, is the cradle of democracy here in Canada. I also want to recognize all new MLAs on their election. The class of 2021 is a big group, a great group full of people who I've gotten to know over the past couple of months, who I would say, without exception, are dedicated, hard-working, smart, and conscientious people who are trying to do the right thing. It's great to serve with all of you. (Applause)

In particular, I do want to recognize my new colleagues in the Official Opposition - a bit of favouritism, I know - the members for Preston, Halifax Armdale, Clare, Annapolis, Northside-Westmount, and Cole Harbour-Dartmouth, whom you will hear from over the coming days and who I am sure will do very well.

As MLAs on all sides of the aisle know, a campaign is the product of countless tiny acts of political courage: a knock on a door, a phone call to a complete stranger, a sign appearing on a street corner or a lawn. To everyone on my campaign who did these things and so much more in the heat of Summer, thank you. To my campaign manager, Joanne Bouchard, who has known me since I was born and is now my constituency assistant and has done so much great work for me, including running a very tight ship during the

campaign; my official agents - I actually had two during the campaign; and everyone who crunched numbers, set up walk routes, and always knew where to point me next, thank you. To my parents, Cindy and Gerry - I've reached my cry quota for the day, so I'm going to try to keep it together here - my parents who built and installed all of my campaign signs and who lit the spark of public service in me, thank you.

I don't think my mom is a political animal by nature - I think she would admit that - but she has always supported me and believed in me and did yeoman's work. My father, who was and is a political animal - like all good Liberals of his generation, we had photos of Pierre Trudeau hanging over the mantel in the house, so I guess I got that trait by osmosis. He did teach me about the value of politics and of public service, and really, I don't think I would be here without that advice.

As I said, my parents did build and install all of my campaign signs. I do want to apologize that those signs are still taking up all of the space in their garage. That might last a while.

To my wife, Caitie, thank you for everything, but most especially for believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself, which sometimes is the case. We've come a long way since the second floor at Risley Hall at Dal, when we met in the Fall 2006. I'm sure neither of us thought we would be where we are today, so it's wonderful.

Last, in terms of personal connections here, my children. Beau, who is four and is pre-Primary right now is having a great time, I am sure. It's lunchtime, so he's probably very happy. I came home yesterday and he said, "Dad, you were on TV. I was watching with Grampy. It was amazing." I said, "Yes, Beau, you were one of 100 watching, so congratulations. Thank you." (Laughter) He's very excited about that.

My daughter, Heidi, is one. She turned one during the campaign on July 25th. She's walking, she's a firecracker. She's the best. To them, I have to apologize. I missed a lot of bedtime stories during the campaign, and, Heidi, I have to apologize in particular that your first birthday was spent at a campaign office. I think the member for Bedford Basin was there, and Clayton Park West as well. I'm sure she will look back in ten years and be quite upset or confused. We shall see.

Of course, to the people of Bedford South - they put their trust in me and I will do everything that I can do repay that trust in kind.

Bedford South is a new constituency - one of the new ones - and it is growing very quickly. I'm sure anyone who spends time in Larry Uteck or West Bedford will know what I'm talking about. During the campaign as I knocked on every door and trudged up and down every apartment stairwell, I got to know the place pretty well, so I will take you on a very quick tour.

On the west side of Highway 102 is West Bedford. Not long ago, the area was trees and rocks, not much more than that. Now, there are thriving neighbourhoods, new schools, new schools under construction, exceptional sport facilities like the BMO Centre, and a growing small- business community. The geographical centre of my constituency is in and around Larry Uteck Boulevard. This is a busy, busy, dynamic place full of new arrivals, new businesses, and new opportunities for growth. It also offers - if you're going up Larry Uteck - some of the best views of the basin that you'll find anywhere. Take a look when you're up there.

Bedford South also includes wonderful older neighbourhoods like Cresthaven and Wedgewood - thank you to the member for Clayton Park West for passing those along. In fact, I spoke to one woman who'd been there since the early 1960s, I believe. she still remembered when Kearney Lake Road was little more than a dirt path. It's changed a lot, there's no doubt.

It is tempting, I think, to think of Bedford South as little more than endless rows of houses and clusters of apartment buildings, cranes, construction, and everything new, but this overlooks the natural beauty that surrounds the area, that is included in the area. In the heart of the constituency is beautiful Kearney Lake, home to the Maskwa Aquatic Club. Southwest of the lake is a true gem in HRM: the Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area, which is about the size of the peninsula of Halifax. Here, you can hike, canoe, snowshoe, ski, and do it all just minutes from downtown. It's truly a wonderful place.

Finally, along the Bedford Highway is Hemlock Ravine Park. As a history buff, I really do love this place. It includes what was the estate of John Wentworth, who was the second Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. In the late 1700s, the estate was also home to Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, who was Queen Victoria's father. It's truly a historic spot.

That's the nature and the history of Bedford South, but as is always the case, it is the people who give a place its life. It is almost impossible in my view to define or categorize the people who live in Bedford South. They have come from every corner of the world to make their home here, and we are all much, much better for it. On any street corner, you are as likely to hear Arabic or Mandarin as English, we need cricket pitches as much as soccer fields, and new restaurants are serving amazing food from all over the world.

I was so lucky to have many recent immigrants volunteer on my campaign throughout. Whether they had come from Nigeria or China, Egypt or Kenya, I noticed something that they all had in common - a genuine desire to be involved in politics and to make a difference. As a group, I would say they were not cynical, which was a refreshing change from many of the political types I have met over the years. They were interested in policy, not partisanship. They saw our political opponents as people worthy of dignity and respect, not as enemies. For the 55 of us who have been lucky enough to be elected to this

body, there is an important lesson to be learned there that I think we should all take with us.

As I mentioned off the top, I did start my career in journalism, and there is an old saying in that profession that I learned at journalism school that stuck with me. Journalists, I was told, comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. (Laughter) It's good. It's not mine - not an original - but good. I think the same should apply to us as politicians.

To be clear: this doesn't mean that we should ignore the concerns of the wealthy or the powerful. What it does mean is that we must focus on the problems of those who can't advocate for themselves or simply don't know how. I'm talking about the ordinary people of this province who too often feel that no one is listening to them or worse, that no one cares.

During the recent election campaign, many voters asked me a simple question: Why are you running? Of course, I'm sure we all got that. Like most simple questions, this one was actually very hard to answer in a succinct way. I'm not sure I ever gave a great answer, to be honest, during the campaign. Since then, I've given it more thought and I think I can explain it a bit better by talking about my grandparents.

Both sets of my grandparents were born and raised and lived and died in Hants County and many generations further back, as well. As a group, they smoked too much and drank too much, but I don't blame them for that. They lived hard lives in a hard world. They were smart but not educated, if you know what I mean. They worked in factories and shops, in the woods and on the farm. They built things with their hands, including the house my father grew up in which is still standing on Kitchener Street in Stewiacke. They raised families and hoped that their kids would be better off than they were. In that, they were successful.

My grandparents had many things, but one thing I don't think they ever had much of was political power. I think politics and the reason why I ran for office boils down to that one simple concept: power. The essence of what we do in this Chamber comes down to power. Who has it and what do they do with it? Perhaps more importantly, who doesn't have power and why they don't.

Most Nova Scotians give very little thought to their political power or lack thereof. They're busy. They have jobs to do, kids to raise, lives to lead and I don't blame them for that. It's not their job to think about it. It's our job to make sure that power is not given only to those with the loudest voices or the deepest pockets. (Applause)

In the system we work under, my colleagues on the government side have the lion's share of the power. I hope in all the decisions they make they consider the many Nova Scotians who are silent, but who are deeply impacted by the decisions they make.

My grandparents are long gone now. Their graves are in small cemeteries on lonely country roads not far from the places where they lived their lives. The circumstances of their lives and the lessons I have drawn from them cut across time and space. It doesn't matter if you live in a village or a town or a city. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor. It doesn't matter where you were born or what you do for a living. Every Nova Scotian deserves a government that makes them a part of the democratic process. That is a simple and fundamental request, but it's not always fulfilled.

My goal as a Member of this Legislative Assembly - however long I have the privilege of serving here - is to do everything I can to make sure this place lives up to its great promise. In the words of Joseph Howe - under whose gaze we all work - let us strive to always do what is right, what is just, and what is in the public good. Thank you. (Applause)

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

LISA LACHANCE: Kwe', Madam Speaker. Medulyn. Teluisi Lisa Lachance. Tleyawi Kjipuktuk, Mi'kmaki.

Madam Speaker, I start today in Mi'kmaw as part of my acknowledgment and gratitude for rising today on the traditional and unceded territory of Mi'kma'ki. We are all treaty people.

I would like to start by offering congratulations to our leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Premier, and all new and returning members of the House. I already appreciate the support, camaraderie, and patience that we have offered to each other as we get started.

[12:00 noon]

I plan today to talk about my community of Halifax Citadel-Sable Island as it is now, in a period of dynamic change and growth.

J'aimerais aussi partager des histoires de nos citoyens que j'utilise en tant que fondation pour mon travail et ma vie. Je vais continuer en anglais, mais j'ai hâte d'avoir les occasions pour m'exprimer en français.

So just quickly, I will share stories of Nova Scotia today, the stories that built the foundation for me. I'm going to continue in English, don't worry, but I would also like to say that I am very excited to have opportunities to communicate in French in the House.

We all come here carrying the stories of our constituents in our communities. We know and share the what and we ask together, now what? I also want to highlight areas of work where I think we need to undertake collective action to make positive change.

As so many members have noted, we don't get here alone. I am thankful to my family, of course, for their support. My wife Heather, who isn't surprised any more when I come up with a project, even this one. I thank my two children: Jason, who is 18, put in many kilometres and many hours of canvassing; and my daughter Keira, who at 15 found the idea of door-to-door canvassing cringy, but kept a keen eye on elections social media, texting me updates such as the Liberal Leader says he is going to do this, what's your Party going to do about it?

The support of my broader family has been important, beginning with uncles, aunts and cousins who surrounded me with love, growing up. Perhaps the importance of family has been more keenly felt this past year as we mourned the sudden passing of my father-in-law, Dr. David Gass. I felt his love and support from day one. I had only just joined the family when he bought me this jacket I am wearing over two decades ago when I couldn't afford what I needed for a job interview. He was so excited about my campaign. One of my last memories is him telling me I was amazing. What a remarkable gift, he was so supportive of another person's dream.

Halifax Citadel-Sable Island has amazing volunteers and we built a strong campaign. In particular I would like to thank Peter Glenister, Nana Moore, Don Carney, Mahbubur Rahman, Ada McNally, Will O'Connor, Robyn Smith, Cameron Pye and so many others for their tireless work on the campaign.

I am honoured to stand here today in the structure built to support good governance. I come to this role as part of a lifelong journey dedicated to making things right, to searching for justice for all. I graduated from high school in Canning and then came to the big city for university. After completing a Bachelor of Arts in International Development Studies at Dalhousie, I worked and backpacked around the world for a few years. Eventually I decided it was time to come home to Nova Scotia and come home to my mum.

I then completed a Masters of Public Administration, also at Dalhousie University. This field of study responded to my desire to understand how to organize and manage government in ways that not only respond to the needs of society but enhances and moves forward our collective well-being. If the honourable Premier was here, I would assure him that I do understand supply and demand in economics. In fact, my concentration in my Masters was economics.

I also met my wife while doing our Masters together, so I can admit that sometimes I was a little bit distracted from my quest to understand how to build good public policy. My wife, Heather, and I were lucky to both land jobs with the federal government . . .

THE SPEAKER: A call to order. The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island should not refer to other members' presence. Thank you, continue.

The honourable member for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island.

LISA LACHANCE: Madam Speaker, I worked for the Canadian International Development Agency and represented Canada around the world at the U.N. and regional human rights bodies. Through our federal Manager Development Program I learned with a diverse group of colleagues how to implement principles of accountability, transparency, innovation, integrated risk management, sound financial controls and yes, economic policy. I also worked at the Privy Council Office, focused on negotiations and other issues on behalf of the Prime Minister.

Heather, Jason, Keira and I returned to Halifax in 2008 when I joined the Nova Scotia Department of Finance. I'd like to say to my former workmates across the street, every day I value what I learned about this province during that time.

I come to this role as an MLA with a deep appreciation for the practice of good public policy and governance, a clear understanding of the challenges, an unwavering belief that we can always do better, and that we need to constantly evaluate the outcome of our efforts, address where we have fallen short of our objectives, and build on success.

My conviction in our ability to do good and do better is not naïve. I have faith that all of us working together will make Nova Scotia a just and equitable home for generations to come.

I also want to share some stories about when government as a collective abandoned young people, families, and communities, stories about what we asked Nova Scotians to do just to survive. I will share stories that underscore what we miss when we allow inequality and injustice to persist.

My constituency of Halifax Citadel-Sable Island has not had a maiden speech since 2006, so I will give an overview of where the community is now. Halifax Citadel-Sable Island is the community where I've lived, worked, played, volunteered, and studied for over 30 years. Prior to the electoral campaign, I thought that I knew this community well, that I knew it in all its diversity. I was unprepared for the intimacy of the campaign. As you approach people in their homes and on the phone, often in the evening with the pressures of the day behind them, I'm honoured by the trust that so many placed in me and my team, sharing their dreams and frustrations, and I carry their stories and trust with me.

To describe the community: First, Halifax Citadel-Sable Island is an astoundingly beautiful community, bordered by the ocean on three sides. Nova Scotians and global visitors alike come to our community to enjoy unrivalled public spaces. We have the Halifax waterfront, with unique spaces to play, fish, dock, enjoy a meal, or shop. The Public Gardens, where the beds change according to the season, inviting you to walk through often. Citadel Hill provides a piece of history from the early days of this colony, great sunset views, and a challenge for runners and walkers. Point Pleasant Park is an exceptional urban forest.

We also have the Northwest Arm, home to rowers, sailors, paddlers, swimmers, and so much more. Spring Garden - I like to call it Nova Scotia's high street - rises like a phoenix and will be back better than ever with restaurants, cafes, shopping, and small businesses such as the iconic Jennifer's of Nova Scotia. We also found a home for our constituency office on Spring Garden Road and look forward to watching the street come alive again. We have three universities headquartered in the riding, offering cultural, intellectual, and recreational opportunities for the entire community.

Halifax Citadel-Sable Island is a diverse community by any measure. It is a time of rapid change in the riding as well. Every day on the campaign trail, I met people who had recently moved back to Nova Scotia, often exchanging lives in larger urban centres such as Toronto or Vancouver for the community where they grew up. I met many people who moved to Halifax because they wanted something different and found Halifax to be a perfect mix of opportunity and ocean. I also met many international community members living in Halifax Citadel-Sable Island as permanent residents, on a work permit, or on student visas.

Artists of all types are drawn to live and work in Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, and we, of course, have the IWK and the QEII as trusted provincial institutions. This is also a community where people retire, attracted by cultural activities and hoping for accessible services.

I will now turn to stories that matter, of people who have deeply affected me and contributed to the development of the key principles that guide my work and life. Firstly, I dedicate this address to the memory of my mother, who passed away years ago. The stories start with her. As a young person growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, Mom struggled with undiagnosed learning disabilities and a legacy of poverty. Her story is intimately linked to mine, of course. I stood by her side as she faced the effects of prejudice and inequality.

As a single parent in the 1970s, she was repeatedly denied rental accommodations despite her dedication to and steady employment in nursing. In her later life, my mom struggled to access much-needed services in Nova Scotia. Mental health stigma, limited services, domestic violence, and limited financial means all impacted her health. I watched as she was stigmatized as she sought help for mental illness. I stood with her as we arrived at the Chrysalis House transition shelter for the first time. She lived in rural Nova Scotia, which may have affected how she could access services, but really, there was no supported path to wellness and stability.

It was largely just Mom and me over the years, and despite this challenge, she instilled in me an analytical mind and undefeatable joie de vive.

Fast-forward to my own life as a parent. My partner, Heather, and I had been in Ottawa and had two young children, and we realized we wanted to raise our children with grandparents and extended family. We also knew that we needed support parenting our

children. The story I need to tell you about our experience fighting for our family is not only mine to tell. Both my children have overcome incredible hurdles and accomplished so much already, and I know that my words will become a permanent record today, so I take care with these words.

Jason was a funny, communicative, and loving child. He read independently on his own as a toddler and was assessed to be reading at university level in grade one. He always loved learning at school but was also challenged to manage in a typical classroom. By Grade 3, he was on an endless rotation of school exclusion and school reintegration. We were struggling at home too. We spent an initial two years on the IWK wait-list for services. We sought private support, but that only got us so far and got us nowhere in the IWK system. Mental health programs were not long enough, progress seemed to be lost. We would stand by as our child expressed mental distress so severe that we needed to access help via 911 dozens of times, at school, at home, and in the community.

We kept saying we need to do better for our child and begged government officials and health professionals to agree. We knew we had a loving son who needed support, yet we were not provided with services or funding that we needed. In the most harrowing moments, we were told additional services were only available if we relinquished our child to the care of the Province, but he wasn't a child in need of care and protection, he was a child in need of medical treatment.

I cannot let the story end without telling you that Jason is an amazing young person who contributes much to his family, schools, and communities since those difficult times. When I have watched him achieve significant milestones - establishing a business, graduating from high school, and starting post-secondary - I catch my breath and think about what we would have missed, what we all would have missed, if we had not fought for him and our family. (Applause)

My daughter Keira has her own story. She has encountered anti-Indigenous racism at school. Her ADHD is often misunderstood. We've received constant school reports that state, Keira would be more successful if she would just concentrate. These statements of the obvious reflect how little educators understand about this neurodevelopmental disorder. Along with managing Tourette's and dyslexia, she works twice as hard every day to overcome her learning disabilities.

At the same time, she has retained her caring spirit for others, sometimes arguing too loudly or too much on behalf of others she feels have been wronged, but also doing small considerate actions. She finds solace in artwork and under pressure as a competitive hockey goalie - and I spent lots of time in Bedford South at the BMO Centre, so I take advantage of all the new businesses.

Our family story is just one of many. It is not an exaggeration to say that my partner or I are contacted on a weekly basis by parents or those supporting complex child and youth

health issues and being left on their own to do it. If it was just one story, if I thought my story was really unique, what value would it be in sharing it? What I know is that this happens every week in Nova Scotia, where children, youth, and families are put on the edge being told there is nothing for them.

I shared with you a bit about my friend Adam Richardson yesterday, and when he was our neighbour, we also got to know his parents. They confided in us about his struggles in school. As a child with autism, despite being academically gifted, he was overwhelmed by the classroom environment. His family undertook extraordinary efforts to support him. They were Adam's biggest supporters as he became passionate about scootering and snowboarding. They tried moving to a small town in Nova Scotia. They tried a private school. They used the media to plea for better services.

[12:15 p.m.]

Last spring, I became aware that Adam was back in Halifax in junior high and the circumstances that he faced. Adam was in the revolving door of school integration, alone during each and every day with an EPA in a small room. Outside school, we learned he faced incessant bullying. At this point, he had fallen through the cracks at so many formal services and also ones offered by community organizations.

My daughter was excited that they would be at Citadel High together. Instead, in June of this year we received the devastating news that Adam had died alone at the age of 14. Instead of celebrating his 15th birthday together on October 12th, my daughter, Keira, and I spent time on the Commons skate park where there is a large Adam memorial. You can see it the next time you drive past.

The stories go on. Stephen Kimber recently wrote in the *Halifax Examiner* about a child from Nova Scotia whose family needed help to support her. To get that support, she was relinquished into the care of the province, but then Nova Scotia sent her to B.C. because we don't actually have the services to support her. When she became a parent back in Nova Scotia, there was actually a birth alert issued that resulted in the automatic removal of her own child.

Perhaps these stories sound familiar. We have grappled with our failings toward young people before. In 2004, a youth who was waiting for services, whose plans for stability and progress had been missed and not implemented and whose life was already full of charges, ended in an accident that resulted in the death of Theresa McEvoy. The Nunn Inquiry team spoke with hundreds of people across Nova Scotia. The report pieces together the young life of the youth in question, one characterized by lack of access to appropriate services.

We committed, as a province, to do better, to make sure we support young people and their families in communities easily, early, and appropriately; that if a young person

needs services we would provide them in collaboration with others; and most importantly, that children and youth could access what they needed without ending up in the youth justice system or without needing to enter the child welfare system.

I can tell you so many more stories, some of young people like Adam who we lost in death, and some who we continue to lose in life. We cannot, as a province, afford to step away from anyone, our families and young people in particular. We can no longer shy away from the complexity that those situations raise.

I am not naïve. I am well acquainted with government structure and organization. In the federal government, the PCO, and at the provincial Department of Finance and Treasury Board I often found bureaucratic escape and questions of jurisdictional and departmental responsibility. I wrote those notes that said, this issue is not my portfolio but I will be pleased to pass this along to my colleague, or I have taken the liberty of sharing your letter with the provincial government of - any jurisdiction.

Pushing issues towards the people who have the jurisdiction to address them is sometimes a legitimate step. But when we see the same problem time and time again, without resolution, I believe that's a signal to us here in this Legislature that this suggests a complex problem affecting Nova Scotians where we cannot step away and where solutions require collaboration and creativity.

I think we can all recognize that there are many issues before us that require our collective determination and collaboration. Housing was the number one issue on the doorstep in Halifax Citadel-Sable Island. The housing crisis affects residents at all different income levels. In 2006, the newly-elected MLA Leonard Preyra spoke about housing pressure facing single parents and students. Now it is a rare Halifax Citadel-Sable Island resident who does not have concerns about housing. Even homeowners recognize that the decrease in housing security affects everyone's quality of life. Residents treasure living in a diverse neighbourhood and know that doesn't happen by accident. Rather, there is a need to ensure that each resident has access to what they need.

On one of my first campaign phone calls I spoke to a woman who lived in her own home on Inglis Street. When I asked what was on her mind, she talked about being so worried about people living rough in the Winter. She was anxious for her neighbours. She knew that the tents and shelters represented a huge failure in our community. Throughout the campaign, thousands of people told me how they felt that this current situation is unacceptable.

Residents who have been renting also face precarity. On Brunswick Street, I spoke to a provincial civil servant who had been living in the same apartment for about 10 years. Two years prior, he watched as his building was sold, the rent was dramatically increased, and many of his neighbours left. Then he watched as services decreased, from cleaning up common areas six days a week to one day a week and repair services outsourced, so that a

call to the super for something that previously would have gotten fixed in an hour now takes waiting four or five days. He was at his last straw. One more rent increase and he needs to move but he doesn't know where he could afford. In the meantime, he was documenting the garbage in the hallways, rodents and insects, and the general dirtiness of the building, trying to make things better even if he is not able to stay.

I have also been speaking to many residents who occupy a building near Point Pleasant Park who struggle with the same concerns. One resident had her post-surgical home care withdrawn because of the pests in the building.

The housing combined boom and crisis is also changing who can buy homes in our neighbourhood. A volunteer in my campaign is an elementary school teacher and he and his wife, who is also a professional, would like to buy a house in the neighbourhood, but based on their salaries, they cannot. Residents are despondent because they know their children and grandchildren can't afford to live nearby.

Everyone has a right to safe and secure housing. Furthermore, we need to consider what kind of communities we want to have. After speaking with thousands of residents, I can attest to their concern and compassion and their ongoing desire to live in a diverse and vibrant neighbourhood.

Residents are also concerned about Nova Scotia's health system. Parents spoke about managing the immunization schedules of their babies and young children through walk-in clinics. These same folks, in their role as children, worry about access to health care for their aging parents and agonizing waits for tests, diagnoses, and treatments that they know, and that we must acknowledge, affect the quality and length of their life.

Not surprisingly, but perhaps more concerningly, I heard from dozens of medical professionals who live in the riding. Nurses, doctors, specialists, and other allied health care providers talked about their own fears: how they knew that they were waiting too long to get tests and diagnoses for their patients, especially with issues when time matters like cancer; facing maximum capacity in hospitals, with people in hospital beds who need long-term care; and people suffering and repeatedly showing up in the ER who cannot be admitted. They also talked about leaving Nova Scotia, because they felt that what they are asked to make do with in Nova Scotia does not match how they want to care for patients.

People also spoke about the unacceptable wait for mental health care, from children to seniors. They also want to make sure we take action on providing good quality long-term care.

There were a couple of other issues that voters framed as fundamental, that if we don't act and achieve progress on these issues, nothing else would work. They saw the challenge of reconciliation as intimately connected to how we move forward as a society. Voters also demanded integrated climate change action across all areas.

As mentioned before, this is the first maiden speech from the constituency of Halifax Citadel-Sable Island since 2006. In reviewing this past address, I can say the old adage « plus ça change, plus ç'est presque le même » applies in this situation. One issue that was highlighted in 2006 and persists today is the question of infilling on the Northwest Arm. A long-term solution is needed.

It's hard to say anything original with regard to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the entire global community. It has been the challenge we all face. On the positive side, I truly believe there are many heroes around the world who reacted quickly, used the best science available, and guided communities through the worst. In Nova Scotia, we saw some of the best of our culture: people coming together to help neighbours, Nova Scotians building community networks - small and large - to provide connection and safe spaces, and ensure basic needs were met.

As the world changed rapidly, citizens were watching. In my past work, I have supported youth to mobilize to address various problems. They learned a lot as they watched the world shut down and then restart in sometimes unrecognizable ways. They watched, along with all of us, frequent updates from governments at all levels. What they have said to me, based on their experience, can be summarized like this: Now we know. Now we know that when government wants to do something, it can turn on a dime. So if nothing happens, we know government is making a decision not to act.

I was joined in my campaign by many volunteers, and I appreciate the contributions of every single one of them. I most recall my time on doorsteps with my son Jason and another young person, Jack Baker, a 17-year-old student at Citadel High School. Together on election day, I invited them to reflect on our shared experience, noting we can never unknow what has been shared with us. The question is, what now? What will we do with this knowledge we have to make lives better?

It was disappointing that the government did not show their vision for advancing together as Treaty people. Inequity persists. We have yet to elect a Mi'kmaw MLA in Nova Scotia. We have the road map from the Royal Commission, the TRC, and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I encourage all of us to work to amplify the priorities of Inuit, First Nations, and Innu communities in Nova Scotia. As a parent, I have sat in healing circles and participated in ceremonies, and I can attest to the fact that people have shared their stories, and now is the time for action.

I also wanted to see more in the Speech from the Throne on equity issues, particularly in the wake of a significant decision that articulated how Nova Scotia had failed disabled Nova Scotians and their right to housing. Furthermore, as a province we have accessibility goals that need to be met between now and 2030.

As you have learned through this speech, I am passionate about improving mental health care for all Nova Scotians. Sadly, I think the government is missing the mark and

focusing on increasing access to private therapy. To start, as they have noted, we don't have enough clinicians to meet demand.

More fundamentally, providing traditional therapy divorced from other services, in isolation from context and in a typical approach that can only work for people with specific needs, not a high level of acuity, a therapy session every few weeks can be an important part of mental health, but for a very limited number of people with specific diagnoses. We need a functioning, stepped-care approach that ensures folks get the right service at the right time at the right place.

We are seemingly isolated from important research, evaluation, and practical experience across Canada and globally that outline key elements for positive mental health outcomes. These include systems built on the principles of community integration, youth and family engagement, and peer support.

I also want to know more about how the government will address substance use. In both mental health and substance use, we have a huge gap in Nova Scotia, where in-patient treatment is both short-term and in short supply and there are no step-down services. People have only started to stabilize when they are discharged to work with community mental health, which is not designed to meet their needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated Public Health measures have laid bare many issues of inequality. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 can be seen and felt with the many communities already struggling due to various forms of systemic oppression such as racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. The 2SLGBTQ+ community already faced serious challenges related to employment, poverty, violence, bullying in schools, homelessness, and mental health problems because of that pervasive homophobia, transphobia, and heteronormativity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced existing social inequities. Some jurisdictions are doing something about supporting their 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Earlier this year, the Yukon released its interdepartmental strategy to support the community, along with announcing policy changes to provide the best gender affirming care in Canada. Many cities such as Ottawa, with almost the same population as Nova Scotia, also have plans to articulate how they will strengthen outcomes for 2SLGBTQ+ folks.

I am the only 2SLGBTQ+ spokesperson identified amongst the caucuses. I invite all the caucuses to consider if there are any members who would like to also act as a spokesperson. (Applause) I'm a big believer in going further together with understanding and shared effort.

What do we need to do to enhance the outcomes of 2SLGBTQ+ Nova Scotians? Creating an inclusive and just context benefits all of us. When my wife, Heather, and I started our careers and family, we did not see a future for ourselves in Nova Scotia.

Employers did not recognize our relationship. We were forbidden from adopting children.

We moved to Ottawa where our employer treated us like any other couple and where we are allowed to adopt. We also became one of the first legally married couples in Canada under equal marriage. (Applause)

We continue to lose people to other places where they can be themselves. I can share the story of Rose, who grew up in Halifax, completed her first degree at King's College, and was a page in this Legislature for two years, yet moved to Ottawa to transition. In health, our MSI coverage for gender-affirming care needs to be extended so that we can provide care at national and international standards.

In education, we need to teach stories of diversity and achievement and ensure mental health and anti-bullying curricula pay appropriate attention to 2SLGBTQ+ young people. 2SLGBTQ+ seniors have long faced the prospect of going back into the closet as they enter long-term care. We need to support the good efforts of Northwood in supporting its residents so inclusive housing is available province-wide. (Applause) 2SLGBTQ+ folks want to travel and need to see themselves reflected in tourism and cultural opportunities, which also helps people know they are safe.

[12:30 p.m.]

Language is ever evolving as we discover and create new ways to describe ourselves and our communities. It's an imperfect tool to express publicly what we feel inside. I appreciate the support of this House, its staff, and all members in supporting me to carve out space that is comfortable and will support me in doing my best for Nova Scotians.

In closing, I appreciate having the time to share stories of a few Nova Scotians and consider what they mean collectively. I hope to have shared my inspiration and determination to do better for all Nova Scotians. Let us all have the bravery and spirit necessary to recognize the sticky issues of Nova Scotia that require our collective action.

To our caucus staff, thanks for starting early, staying late, and showing me the ropes. To all of you in the House, I look forward to this session and the next and the next, where we have been given the responsibility of representing our constituents. (Applause)

THE SPEAKER: I would ask the honourable member to adjourn debate.

LISA LACHANCE: I move to adjourn debate on Address in Reply.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the debate be adjourned on the Address in Reply. All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

The honourable Government House Leader.

HON. KIM MASLAND: That concludes government business for today. The House will rise to meet again on Tuesday, October 19th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Government business will be Address in Reply. Just a note that Law Amendments Committee will be held on Monday, October 18th, commencing at 5:00 p.m. in the Red Chamber to review Bills No. 1, 4, 11, and 13.

I would like to wish everyone a great weekend and safe travels home.

THE SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now rise to meet again on Tuesday, October 19th, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

All those in favour? Contrary minded? Thank you.

The motion is carried.

We stand adjourned.

[The House rose at 12:32 p.m.]